



“Leading the fight against climate change within the hospitality sector”

by Sonu Shivasani

OPINION ARTICLE

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# Year end 2011 – Birth of a New Tradition

## Rethinking Small Business Saturday

By Dr. John Hogan, CHE CHA CMHS

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*At every turn when there has been an imbalance of power, the truth questioned, or our beliefs and values distorted, the change required to restore our nation has always come from the bottom up from our people.* - Howard Dean, American politician and physician who served six terms as the 79th Governor of Vermont.



We have had Black Friday, Cyber Monday and sales coming at us from every possible medium the past six weeks.

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Over the last month, I have received a number of similar emails on a topic we all understand- supporting local businesses. Some of these emails have come from people I know well and others from casual acquaintances. Some have politically oriented messages in them, while others express a sense of real frustration with politics as usual.

The portion of these messages I have appreciated revolves creating a mind-set for this year's gift giving to be different. This year, people can give the gift of genuine concern for other people in their town and state. The mind-set change is to realize there is no longer an excuse that nothing can be found that is produced locally. Oh.... Yes there is!

These messages sent to me have urged readers to think creatively, a bit outside the proverbial box. Who says a gift needs to fit in a shirt box?

Remember, this isn't about big national chains. This is about supporting your local, home town operated and owned businesses that have their financial lives on the line to keep their doors open. Now many local businesses are franchises of national brands, but locally owned and operated. Profits remain in your community, as do most of the jobs and tax revenue.

Some thoughts shared so far from others include:

1. Everyone – yes EVERYONE gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from your local Hometown hair salon or barber?
2. Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages who are thinking about some health improvement.
3. Who wouldn't appreciate getting their car detailed? Small, locally owned detail shops and car washes would love to sell you a gift certificate or a book of gift certificates.

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gizmo made who-knows-where which benefits someone from far-away? Why not consider having their driveway sealed, or lawn mowed for the summer, or driveway plowed all winter, or games at the local bowling alley or public golf course within your community?

5. There are hundreds and thousands of locally operated and owner-run restaurants – all offering gift certificates.
6. As an option to dinner, what about a half dozen pre-paid breakfasts at the local breakfast shop?
7. How many people couldn't use an oil change for their car, truck or motorcycle done at a shop run by the local small business?
8. Thinking about a heartfelt gift for mom? Mom would LOVE the services of a local cleaning lady for a day.
9. My computer often could use a tune-up, and I KNOW I can find some young entrepreneur who is struggling to get his/her repair business up and running.
10. OK, you were looking for something more personal. Local crafts people spin their own wool and knit them into scarves and hats. They make jewelry, and pottery and beautiful wooden boxes.
11. Plan your holiday outings at local, owner operated restaurants and leave your server a nice tip.
12. How about going out to see a play or ballet at your hometown theatre? Community colleges and local community theatre offer excellent shows at a bargain price.
13. Musicians need love too, so find a venue showcasing local bands.
14. Do you REALLY need to buy another ten thousand imported lights for the house? When you buy a five dollar string of light, about fifty cents stays in the community. I wonder where the rest goes.....
15. Leave the mailman, trash truck driver, babysitter or anyone else who provides you a service throughout the

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and appreciated by all.

17. Many in the local hotel business offer gift certificates – consider using them locally. Many provide excellent packages and there are advantages in trying something closer to home sometimes.
18. Hotel owners and managers at times find themselves cash strapped, but creativity can balance that. Consider reciprocal arrangements with comparable properties as gifts for deserving staff and their families. The cash cost is negligible and the appreciation can be enormous.
19. How many more ways can you think if to support your locally owned and operated hometown businesses?

The term Small Business Saturday sounded great to me at first glance, but seemed to evolve into just another promotion from the credit card companies or advertising agencies. I have no problem with the term, but we need to make it real.

Christmas and the end of the year holidays should not be about draining hometown pockets so that some other country can build another glittering city. It should be about caring about US (We the People Everywhere ) and encouraging hometown small businesses to keep plugging away to follow their dreams. When we care about others in our hometown, we care about our communities and the benefits come back to us in ways we could not imagine.

Let THIS be the new tradition!! By Dr. John Hogan, CHE CHA CMHS

Alan Jackson wrote about this a few years ago – he sings the message very clearly:

<http://youtu.be/qP-806jXUzQ>

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*Action expresses priorities.* Mohandas K. Gandhi

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John Hogan, Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE), Certified Hotel Administrator (CHA), Certified Master Hotel Supplier (CMHS)

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and seminar leader at many hospitality industry events. He is Co-Founder of [www.HospitalityEducators.com](http://www.HospitalityEducators.com) , which delivers focused and affordable counsel in solving specific challenges facing hospitality today.

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by *José Koechlin & Gabriel Meseth*

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