

Retailers that align with their communities will thrive

As Champion Green's 'Treats for a Tenner' drive to encourage people to shop local this autumn begins, retailers themselves need to be more than just 'local' advises [Bank of Ireland](#) head of Retail Owen Clifford.

The relationship between consumers and their local retail outlets is symbiotic and Covid-19 has reinforced this.

This week [Champion Green](#) launched a 'Treats for a Tenner' drive to encourage shoppers to stay local and to shop local this autumn.

Running until 12 September, the shop local campaign comprises consumer marketing and small business supports to emphasise the significance of the local economy, and help ensure the survival of SMEs. Shoppers can check out <https://championgreen.ie/> for top bargains at just a tenner each, many heavily discounted by local makers, stores and service providers.

Boosting the local economy

From left: Ian Talbot Chamber Ireland; Damien English Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail; Marian O’Gorman, chair Champion Green/Kilkenny Design; Graham Byrne, SFA chair; Jonathan Forde, head of Merchant Sales and Acquiring, Visa Ireland

“In addition to driving forward our small businesses, looking out for local enterprises and shopping locally allows consumers to impact their community, both economically and environmentally, as well as producing societal impacts that benefit everyone in the community,” said Minister for State for Business, Employment and Retail Damien English, TD.

Small business represents the bulk of Irish enterprise and employs two-thirds of people in the private sector, generating 46pc of turnover, Sven Spollen Behrens, Small Firms Association Director, said, calling on people to shop more consciously.

“If every household in the country spent just €10 extra during Champion Green Week on a ‘Treat for a Tenner’, that’s a huge €1m injection into the local economy that’s badly needed”.

A Champion Green survey in June showed greater recognition of the need to support local, with 49pc claiming to now spend more in smaller local businesses. Over one quarter, 28pc of all adults, say they spend additionally online with local businesses too.

Supported by Kilkenny Design and Visa, in association with Retail Excellence, Small Firms Association and Chambers Ireland, Champion Green is about highlighting the simple ways everyone can make a difference and help the recovery of small business.

The initiative is backed by a €1m investment to drive consumer support for local enterprise and to help SMEs adapt business.

Champion Green founder Marian O’Gorman said that with the pandemic alone adding €3bn to the country’s debt, it makes sense for everyone to help keep money in circulation in the country,

“There is a definite sense that more people will choose to continue shopping in their local communities in the weeks and months ahead, so retailers and service providers need to give them every reason to do so”, Marian O’Gorman says.

More than two-thirds of the €5bn that Irish consumers spend online each year disappears overseas and, by buying outside of the country, we lose the local multiplier effect, trade organisations say.

“Every €10 spent in the local economy could be worth up to €50 in the community,” said Ian Talbot, CEO of Chambers Ireland. “The money recirculates locally, spent on more local goods and services, producing wages which, in turn, are spent locally.”

The detail in retail

Owen Clifford, head of Retail at Bank of Ireland

Initiatives that stimulate and raise awareness of the benefits of supporting local retailers are a positive development,” said Bank of Ireland head of Retail Sector Owen Clifford.

“In Northern Ireland, a £140m stimulus programme will be rolled out later this month with each citizen aged over 18 receiving a £100 voucher which can be redeemed in-store in local retail and hospitality businesses pre-30 November 2021.

“The Irish Government has no plans at present to implement a similar scheme – therefore the Champion Green awareness week is a timely initiative. Covid-19 and the associated growth in people working remotely from home has led to a renaissance in local shopping.

“This trend is expected to continue in 2021/2022 as we all seek to support the vibrancy of our local economies.

“However, being ‘local’ is not sufficient – proactive engagement and support of community initiatives will be key for retailers to demonstrate their bona-fides in this regard. This aligned with consistent service, standards, quality and value will ensure that loyalty is generated and lifeline shoppers ultimately become lifetime customers.”

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