

Buy Local. Build Partnerships.

Discover how local partnerships benefit your bottom line

Stop for a moment and try this easy buy local exercise: Stretch both hands out in front of you, fingers wide. Now, tally-up the number of local businesses that you depend on to operate your company. Who do you depend on locally to run your day-to-day operations? What businesses do you enlist when you are in a pinch?

For most businesses in this area, those ten fingers most likely fill up with local businesses here in the Yampa Valley. When businesses account for all the people and establishments that they depend on for everything from local food suppliers to personalized consulting services, it becomes clear that no business works alone.

Here in Steamboat Springs, it's understood each business can't survive independently. What makes our local economy special is that Steamboat is a community of partnerships, not just relationships. Partnerships are collaborations that encompass themes of teamwork and unity. When businesses form partnerships with one another, there is a level of commitment, establishment and trust involved. These factors allow businesses to collaborate and create networks that benefit all parties.

Like most other communities, businesses in Northwest Colorado need other businesses in order to be successful. The foundation for a thriving local business environment is building strong partnerships within the community.

Steamboat Springs business owner Delisa Laterzo, President of Touchstone Promotions, Inc. (formerly Adventures in Advertising) takes a clear position when discussing partnerships within her business.

"Our philosophy is to do business with other local businesses," noted Laterzo. "It is so easy to do business here in town. Not only is it easy, but you might surprise yourself by meeting a new friend, creating a local business connection, opening the door to future business opportunities and establishing a sense of belonging and community by supporting another local business."

Laterzo also emphasized that building partnerships within the Steamboat business community is a great reason to buy locally. "By opening up new avenues and new business opportunities with partnerships you are strengthening Steamboat Springs," Laterzo stressed. "Buying local and building partnerships; it is just good business."

Tom Ptach, owner of Pilot Office Outfitters shares similar views about buying local and building partnerships.

"When running a small business here in town, profits aren't always our number one motivator," says Ptach. "Of course making a profit is important, but we also have an emotional attachment to the community, our employees and the local environment. Our company has a vested interest in the welfare of this community. By buying locally we are directly supporting these aspects of Steamboat Springs."

Ptach also notes that, "Creating business partnerships keeps us looking out for each other and encourages us to do business with those who are doing business with us."

Another important part of the Chamber's Buy Local campaign, relating specifically to the Build Partnerships theme is the concept of Strive for Five. The philosophy behind Strive for Five is quite simple and is something everyone can get involved with. This motto challenges consumers to make 5% more of their out-of-town purchases into local purchases.

"The Strive for Five idea relates directly to local businesses building partnerships," says Tracy Barnett, Program Manager for MainStreet Steamboat Springs. "When locals make a concerted effort to make at least 5% more of our purchases in town, those dollars will continue to circulate throughout our community."

Barnett went on to parallel the Strive for Five concept with why businesses should buy locally. "If your company buys from another local company, they will tend to return the favor and buy from you. The whole idea is to create a circle of partnerships; this is all a great example of what goes around comes around and partnerships coming full circle."

Part of the buy local, build partnerships theme is simple act of business referrals. Make an effort to refer your neighbor businesses as being an extension to your own offerings. Know what your competition has to offer and if you don't have something make sure to send that customer to another business within the community. Remember, we are all in this together.

The Steamboat Springs Chamber Resort Association, in partnership with a dedicated group of local business owners, launched the **Buy Local Campaign** in hopes of bringing attention to the importance of supporting local commerce, especially in a tough economic environment.

Whether you are a local business owner or a simply a concerned consumer, it is easy to see how buying locally and fostering community partnerships can make a big difference.

Side bar Information

BUY LOCAL

Build Partnerships.

- Businesses support other businesses by buying products and services locally.
- Refer customers to fellow local businesses to keep dollars in town.
- Know what your competition has to offer and support each other when you can.
- Strive for Five – Try to move 5% of your out of town purchases to local ones.
- Recommend and talk favorably about other businesses as often as possible!