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Black Friday's not just for big boxes: Small retailers benefit from shopping frenzy, too

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Black Friday isn't just for big box retailers anymore.

Small, independent businesses have figured out how to cash in on what traditionally has been called the biggest shopping day of the year and make it their own, said Brad Plochow, spokesman for San Francisco-based Womply, which provides data and software to businesses across the country.

"Black Friday has inadvertently become a big day for independent retailers," he said. "Small businesses should put out their own marketing plans and expect to have a big day."

The day-after-Thanksgiving shopping bonanza is built into people's brains, Plochow said.

"They get out of the house and hit the streets to shop," he said.

Big-box chains like Walmart, Target and Best Buy have grabbed headlines and long lines with blowout deals. But small businesses are winning, too.

Last year, Colorado retailers in general had two of their biggest revenue days on Black Friday and Dec. 23, according to Womply data.

On Black Friday, revenue was 185 percent of normal daily sales — a bigger jump than the national average, which was 177 percent of normal daily revenue. And on Dec. 23, it was 151 percent in Colorado, thanks to shopping procrastinators, says Womply.

"If you are small business, take advantage and hijack that value as much as you can," Plochow said.

Consumers nationwide say they will spend an average of \$967 this holiday season — up 3.4 percent from what they said they would spend last year, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation.

Retail sales in November and December are expected to hit \$678.7 billion across the country. Online sales will grow about 10 percent this holiday season, making the big, themed shopping days — Black Friday, Dec. 23 and Small Business Saturday — even more important to Main Street businesses, Plochow said.

Analysts at New Jersey-based NetElixir, a retail search marketing firm, are predicting that Amazon.com Inc.'s share of total online holiday sales nationwide will grow to 34 percent this year. Last year, Amazon's holiday sales were about \$23 billion. This year, sales will reach over \$28.5 billion, the report says.

"Amazon's share will continue to increase, driven by aggressive promotions, growth of the marketplace, and new devices like the Echo and Echo Dot," the NetElixir report says.

"Everybody talks about Amazon, there is a reason to be concerned what that means for local commerce -- big companies like Amazon are trying to win local," Plochow said.

"But what is encouraging is that 90 percent of all global sales still take place in brick and mortar [stores]."



MONICA MENDOZA

True, a clothing boutique at the Stanley Marketplace in Aurora, is among the more than 50 locally-owned, businesses in the marketplace, 2501 Dallas St., Aurora.

