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Small Business Holiday Trends



The following findings highlight how small business owners are navigating the 2026 holiday season, from managing rising costs and operational demands, to embracing technology and finding new ways to engage customers. Together, the results point to the pressures facing small businesses and opportunities for technology to help owners work more efficiently and get more time back for themselves during the holidays.

The holidays can take a personal toll on small business owners.

18%

have cried because of business demands during the holidays.

Small business owners are turning to AI to manage holiday demands.

45%

plan to use AI tools to simplify business operations during the holiday shopping season. And 44% expect to increase their use of customer-facing AI tools, including chatbots and virtual shopping assistants.

Big expectations for the holiday shopping season:

25%

anticipate Black Friday lifting sales, followed by Small Business Saturday (22%) and Cyber Monday (20%).

Technology disruptions highlight the importance of operational reliability.

28%

have experienced internet, phone, point-of-sale, payment or other IT issues while running their businesses during the holidays.

Rising costs and consumer spending pressures are weighing on small business owners heading into the holidays.

51%

report being at least moderately stressed about the impact of rising costs and tariffs.

Most small business owners (84%) would welcome relief from at least one day-to-day responsibility during the holidays.

34%

would welcome help creating social media content, the most commonly selected responsibility.

Small businesses are looking beyond traditional shopping holidays to drive sales.

45%

anticipate their own social media posts or activations helping lift holiday sales.

Latino owners feel the cost squeeze most:

37%

of Latino small business owners are very or extremely stressed about rising costs and tariffs, compared with 24% of non-Latino owners.

About the survey

Verizon Business surveyed 600 U.S. small business owners and decision-makers at businesses with 1–500 employees, including an oversample of 100 Hispanic/Latino respondents. [fielded 10/30/2026 - 11/9/2026 by RepData]. Respondents span retail/e-commerce (30%), personal services (17%), technology/IT (11%) and other industries; 35% are solo entrepreneurs. Some questions allowed multiple answers, and figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.