

Industry Insights

5 NRF research tools to help small businesses level up

Working in retail means constantly adapting to shifting consumer behavior, economic trends and seasonal demands. The NRF research team keeps a close eye on the industry to create resources that help all retailers — including small businesses — stay informed.

TIP 1: Stay competitive with the [NRF Retail Monitor Plus, powered by Affinity Solutions](#)

This monthly dashboard offers additional insight into the powerful purchase data behind the CNBC/NRF Retail Monitor, letting members take a deep dive into consumer spending in 14 individual retail sectors and 10 subsectors. Small business owners can use this tool to benchmark performance and keep track of consumer spending.

TIP 2: Stay ahead of economic shifts with retail economic perspectives

Get expert analysis on the latest economic indicators affecting retail from NRF's Chief Economist and Executive Director for Research Mark Mathews. In [blog posts](#) and [social media videos](#), Mathews breaks down topics like consumer confidence, policy impacts and spending forecasts to make them approachable and digestible so retailers can adjust their strategies accordingly.

TIP 3: Maximize seasonal sales with [NRF retail holiday and seasonal trend headquarters](#)

NRF's holiday headquarters contains data and insights for consumer spending events throughout the year, including Valentine's Day, Back-to-School, Halloween and the winter holidays. Whether planning themed promotions, adjusting inventory or preparing store displays, these resources help small retailers align with consumer expectations and budgets to maximize seasonal opportunities.

TIP 4: Plan ahead with [Retail Weather IQ Dashboard](#)

NRF collaborated with [Planalytics](#) to develop a weekly report on the impact of weather on the retail industry and keep businesses up to date on how weather is affecting product categories and retail segments throughout the seasons. Use this dashboard to inform decisions about product placement for in-demand items and predict and plan for surges in traffic. Learn more about how small businesses can leverage this resource [here](#).

TIP 5: Strengthen your advocacy with the [Retail's Impact report](#)

Show your community and stakeholders the value of retailers like you. This report highlights the economic and employment contributions of the industry, helping small retailers advocate for support and recognition.

The National Retail Federation is committed to helping the retail industry thrive — and small businesses make up 98% of the industry. NRF's research tools are here to help you stay up to date, inform your strategies and support your growth. For more resources, data and insights, visit the [NRF Center for Retail & Consumer Insights](#).