

Is 2025 the Year to Go Brick-and-Mortar? Here's Why More Startups Think So

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Digital channels carried thousands of start-ups through the pandemic. Apps, pop-ups and delivery vans generated revenue quickly while keeping overhead low. Five years later, customers still enjoy tap-to-buy speed, yet they increasingly want the reassurance that only a physical place and a committed team can provide.

From the vantage point of a company that began with online consultations and mobile services, we've seen how a physical hub can convert online momentum into durable market leadership. If you lead a digital-first company, here's how to open a location that repays itself from day one.

Related: Thinking of Opening a Physical Location for Your Online Store? Ensure Success With These 4 Tips.

Build demand before investing in a physical space

A storefront should open only after you know exactly which customers will walk through the door. The fastest way to learn that is to serve them where they already are and pay close attention to the patterns that emerge.

For example, measurable demand tied to a specific geography could include repeat orders for your core services and a

growing waitlist for offerings that require a dedicated facility. At that point, the logical next step is to sign a lease to serve an audience with whom you already have a relationship.

This sequence strategically converts a business's early adopters into its most effective ambassadors. The customers who justified the expansion in the first place become advocates who champion the grand opening as a shared success. Earning loyalty first and locking in real estate second ensures that a physical location serves as an extension of proven demand rather than a speculative investment built on fixed costs.

Use behavioral data to pinpoint growth opportunities

Pinpoint your best growth opportunities by watching what customers do, not just what they say. For any entrepreneur, your operational data reveals true demand in a way surveys cannot. Operational signals like clicks, page views, reschedules, mileage and other first-party behaviors now outrank surveys and polls when teams gauge true demand. For example, an online store reports that the most frequent search term on their website was for a product they didn't carry. While customers were buying other items, their search behavior revealed a clear, unmet need.

This insight is far more powerful than a survey asking, "What should we sell next?" as it provides a data-driven path to a profitable product expansion. This approach is crucial because in any business, resources are finite. Grounding a major decision, such as launching a new product line or signing a lease, in observed behavior guarantees that your investment aligns with proven interest rather than relying solely on intuition.

Related: Why Online Retailers Are Opening Brick-And-Mortar Stores

Choose a location that fosters belonging, not just visibility

Demand maps would usually tell us where a clinic should stand, but choosing the exact spot requires a different lens. Traditional retail says chase foot traffic and bright signage; our experience says chase belonging. Clients already interact with us on their phones and in their neighborhoods, so the clinic must feel like the natural next stop to that digital journey.

We narrowed our search to the same blocks our mobile teams serve every day while looking for a building that strengthens the loop we have with those families.

Once you have circled the right few blocks, evaluate each address for its ability to feel like home to the customers you already serve. Look for a building that commuters, local shoppers and parents on school runs can reach without changing their daily route.

Check whether delivery vans can slip in and out easily and whether the space can be configured for both hands-on service and small community gatherings. A site that blends into the neighborhood's rhythm does more than just house your business – it signals that your brand belongs there as naturally as the corner café.

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Seize the 2025 opportunity to show

up in person

Five years of rapid ecommerce growth have shown that while digital convenience wins the first sale, it seldom secures the next one. As shoppers return to workplaces and community venues, they gravitate toward brands that can serve them both online and across a counter. A storefront has shifted from being a discovery tool to a loyalty machine while offering demos and face-to-face guidance that deepen trust.

Real estate conditions also favor quick movers. While retail vacancies remain low, many landlords are still willing to negotiate flexible terms with businesses that can demonstrate an existing customer base. Locking in space now allows digital-first brands to plant themselves near their busiest delivery routes and convert online rapport into walk-in traffic.

This brief alignment of consumer expectations and accessible leases is unlikely to last. Acting in 2025 lets founders turn a well-chosen storefront into the physical heartbeat of their brand – an anchor that closes the loop on your customers' digital journey.

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