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TOP TIPS FOR RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL HIGH STREET BUSINESS IN 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Running a high street business in 2025 means balancing more roles than ever — marketer, strategist, financial planner, content creator, customer service lead — often all in the same day. Costs are rising, competition is everywhere, and customers expect more.

But the opportunities are bigger too. People value local, authentic, and personal experiences, and technology can help you work smarter, save time, and grow faster. I've spent nearly a decade supporting thousands of high street businesses, and I know what works. Here are my top tips for thriving this year.

Having the Right Offer

If your offer doesn't fit your market, nothing else will work. The strongest marketing in the world can't sell something your local audience doesn't want or understand.

FIT YOUR LOCAL AREA AND AUDIENCES

Start by mapping your immediate catchment area — not just geographically, but demographically and behaviourally.

- **WHO LIVES, WORKS, OR VISITS HERE?** Are they families, professionals, students, tourists?
- **WHAT ARE THEIR SPENDING HABITS?** Do they shop for convenience, luxury, or experience?
- **WHAT DO THEY VALUE MOST?** Price? Sustainability? Speed? Craftsmanship?

Visit other local businesses, both direct competitors and complementary ones. Notice their pricing, their range, their customer base. Look for gaps you can fill or ways you can do something better or differently.

EXAMPLE: A bakery in a commuter town shifted from traditional bread to high-protein, grab-and-go breakfast items after noticing most customers visited between 7am and 9am.

DEFINE YOUR TARGET CUSTOMERS CLEARLY

If you try to please everyone, you end up resonating with no one. Identify your “bullseye” customers — the 20% of people who will generate 80% of your profit. Build your offer, pricing, and marketing around them.

ASK YOURSELF: If I could only keep one type of customer, who would it be?

BE CRYSTAL CLEAR ON YOUR USP

Your Unique Selling Points should be specific, tangible, and customer-focused.

- “The only coffee shop in town roasting beans in-house” is stronger than “Great coffee.”
- “Same-day bike repairs guaranteed” is stronger than “Friendly service.”

COMMUNICATE YOUR OFFER EVERYWHERE

Your “hero message” — a short statement that sums up your offer — should appear on your website, your social media profiles, printed materials and even in your staff’s conversations.

TIP: Avoid jargon. “Handmade chocolates from local cocoa suppliers” is clear. “Premium confectionery solutions” is not.

Building a Strong Brand

Your brand is more than your name and logo. It’s how people feel when they think about your business — and in 2025, that feeling is what drives loyalty.

KEEP YOUR VISUAL IDENTITY CONSISTENT

A consistent look across your shopfront, packaging, website, and social media builds recognition and trust. This means using the same colours, fonts, and tone of photography everywhere.

If you haven’t yet, create a brand kit — a one-page reference with your logo, colours, fonts, and key imagery style. Share it with anyone who creates materials for your business.

TELL A COMPELLING STORY

Why did you start? What do you care about? What challenges have you overcome? People buy into people. Share parts of your journey in-store, on your website, and in local media interviews.

EXAMPLE: A family-run bookshop that survived the pandemic by delivering books by bicycle now uses that story in all marketing, reinforcing its local roots.

HAVE A MEMORABLE TAGLINE

Your tagline should capture your promise or difference in a few words. “Baked fresh while you sleep” is better than “Quality bakery.”

LIVE YOUR VALUES AND PURPOSE

If sustainability is a core value, it should influence your sourcing, packaging, and even your energy provider. If community is your focus, support local events and charities. Customers notice when your actions match your words.



Nailing Your Marketing Mix

Visibility is everything. You can have the best shop in the world, but if people don't know about it — or forget about it — sales will suffer.

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

This is your digital shop window for anyone searching locally.

- Add high-quality, up-to-date photos (including inside shots).
- Update hours regularly (especially around holidays).
- Reply to all reviews — positive or negative — within 48 hours.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2025, Facebook and Instagram remain essential for local engagement.

- Post at least 3 times a week.
- Mix product posts with behind-the-scenes content, customer shoutouts, and local stories.
- Use video and Reels for reach.

FLYERS WITH A MODERN TWIST

Distribute them where your ideal customers go — coffee shops, community centres, events — and use QR codes to track uptake. Pair them with an offer (e.g., “Show this flyer for 10% off”).

LOCAL SEO AND BLOGS

Write short blog posts or news updates targeting search phrases your audience uses (“gift shop in Brighton”). Add them to your website and share on social media.

EMAIL MARKETING

A monthly newsletter keeps you top of mind. Automate birthday offers, review requests, and lapsed-customer emails using your EPOS or CRM system.

WINDOW DISPLAYS

Think of your window as a rotating stage. Update at least every season — more often if you can — and make displays interactive or Instagrammable.

PRESS COVERAGE

Build a list of local journalists and bloggers. Send them story ideas, not just promotions — for example, a behind-the-scenes look at your busiest day of the year.

LOCAL COLLABORATIONS

Team up with complementary businesses. A florist and a chocolatier could run joint Valentine's promotions. A café could partner with a nearby gallery for art evenings.



Delivering a Gold-Standard

Customer experience is your strongest defence against competitors and your best driver of word-of-mouth.

GO THE EXTRA MILE

Small touches — free samples, helping carry bags, remembering orders — cost little but have huge impact.

RUN A LOYALTY SCHEME

Whether it's a stamped card or an app, reward customers for coming back. Offer something meaningful enough to change behaviour.

TRAIN STAFF THOROUGHLY

Staff should know your products, your story, and how to handle common questions. Mystery-shop your own business to spot gaps.

DESIGN YOUR STORE FOR ENGAGEMENT

Create "hot spots" near the entrance with high-margin or seasonal items. Ensure clear pathways and logical product groupings.

STRONG VISUAL MERCHANDISING

Group items to tell a story — e.g., a “Perfect Night In” display with candles, wine, and snacks. Use signage to guide customers. product groupings.

IN-STORE EVENTS

Workshops, tastings, launches — they give people a reason to visit and help you connect beyond the transaction.



Staying on Top of the Numbers

Knowing your numbers turns guesswork into strategy.

USE ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Xero, QuickBooks, or FreeAgent can save you hours and reduce errors. Link them to your EPOS.

TRACK PROFIT MARGINS


Don't just look at sales volume — know what you actually keep after costs.

ADJUST PRICING STRATEGICALLY

Small price changes can make a big difference to profitability. Test different price points for key items.

BE DATA-DRIVEN

Look for patterns in your sales data — busiest days, top products, average spend — and adjust staffing, stock, and marketing accordingly.



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