MKTG 8604

New Frontiers in Retailing: Magic and Logic

Digital-First Brands going Physical

Yukako Eto
Yaxin Liu
Maya Lopez
Benjamin Ovenshire
Kathy Tao
Benjamin Yang

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Columbia Business School

Advised by: Prof. Oliver Chen and Prof. Kinshuk Jerath[1]

Executive Summary

Today's rising rents, increasing construction costs, and unpredictable consumer spending make expanding into physical retail a riskier proposition for digital-native brands.

This paper will explore three theses:

Thesis 1: Success in physical retail depends on a repeatable physical retail playbook and a truly omnichannel sales strategy.
Among the eleven digital brands analyzed in this paper, successful retail expansions followed a consistent pattern. First, test various retail formats through pop-ups. Next, scale to a pilot cohort in strategically chosen gateway cities. Then, invest in infrastructure to ensure unit economics were consistent across digital and physical channels. Finally, once the playbook was validated with a small store fleet, scale further.

Thesis 2: Success in physical retail depends on in-store technology that enhances customer experience, improves business strategy, and enables omnichannel engagement.
Warby Parker developed a proprietary point-of-sale system that captures customer data to enable personalized remarketing. Reformation tracks which styles customers try on but don't purchase. These brands exemplify how physical retail can serve not just as a distribution channel, but as a valuable source of customer insight.

Thesis 3: Success in physical retail depends on stores offering an experience that immerses the customer in the brand.
Leading DTC brands use stores as immersive brand touchpoints. Warby Parker locations encourage touching the product and offer services like eye exams. Curology's and Oura Ring's in-store displays educate the consumer and present an aspirational lifestyle. Glossier designs photogenic spaces for social sharing, which deepen engagement and build loyalty beyond transactions.

Introduction & Problem Statement

The idea that physical retail boosts sales for digital-native brands is well established. Since the early 2000s, many brands have expanded into national and global store fleets. Research identified three common benefits: online sales lift, lower customer acquisition costs, higher retention, and reduced return rates. The "halo" refers to a 6.9% average increase in online sales within a given trade area over the 13-week period following the opening of a new store. This effect is even more pronounced for emerging DTC retailers, who experience an even higher 13.9% boost in online sales when opening a new location. Physical locations also provide access to new customer segments. Mejuri, a Toronto-based jewelry brand, saw 70% of shoppers in their physical showroom were new customers. Furthermore, the educational value of physical retail also cannot be overlooked, especially for complex or high-consideration products. Best Buy is the quintessential example of this strategy with their creation of dedicated Dyson Demo Experiences or their Amazon Alexa and Google Home experiences, which have been proven to drive purchases. Finally, depending on the product category, physical retail locations can potentially reduce return rates due to in-store education and trial and avoid return costs that drain margin. Altogether, these benefits offer a compelling case for physical retail investments.

Unfortunately, realizing the benefits of physical retail is capital intensive and brands today face added pressures from limited capital and rising enablement costs. During the zero interest rate policies (ZIRP) of 2020-2022, many brands leveraged cheap capital to finance rapid growth. Today, higher interest rates have forced brands to rein in spending. Furthermore, venture capital investment in DTC brands has fallen 97%, from $5 billion in 2021 to just $130 million in 2023, further reducing accessible capital for digital-native brands. Beyond limited capital, brands also face challenges like rents rising by approximately 2% in 2025, continuing the momentum from 2024's record-high rents. Additionally, construction costs continue to rise since the pandemic with most brands seeing a 30-40% increase above pre-pandemic levels, and premium stores with substantial in-store technology seeing a 66% increase in construction cost per square foot. These trends are expected to continue and even worsen as recent tariffs increase structural steel costs may rise by 6-9% for commercial projects. Beyond direct material impacts, tariffs and economic volatility are expected to have a sustained impact on prices. A 2018-2020 tariff analysis showed that 68% of material price increases become permanent even after the economic climate settles.

Amidst rising costs, competition for digital impressions is increasing and volatility in consumer demand is making every touchpoint a critical interaction. Consumers are expecting more seamless, integrated shopping experiences with consistent and personalized interactions across all channels. Consumers are simultaneously becoming more budget-conscious, with only 68% of US respondents making at least one splurge purchase in November 2024, down from 82% a year prior. The following theses describe the actions brands must take if they hope to sustain physical retail locations in the face of these challenging conditions.

Methodology

This white paper takes findings from multiple sources designed to evaluate the opportunities and challenges facing digital-first brands expanding into physical retail. The methodology combines quantitative financial analysis, qualitative case studies, and forward-looking trend mapping to provide a holistic view of the evolving retail landscape within digital-first brands.

The analysis was structured around three core pillars:
1. Macroeconomic Drivers: Impact of rising rents, consumer spending shifts, and supply chain disruptions.
2. Operational Benchmarks: Metrics including customer acquisition cost (CAC), average order value (AOV), and return rates.
3. Strategic Innovation: Emerging models like third spaces, pop-up retail, and AI integration.

The key findings were written based on:
Retail Landscape
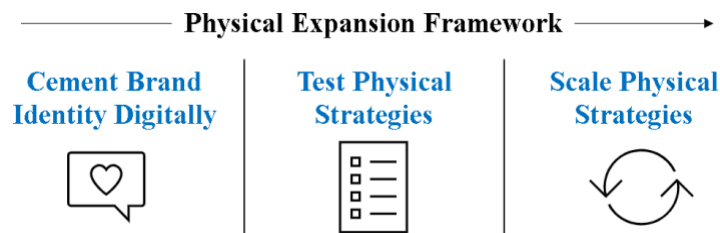- Data Sources: Peer-reviewed studies from ICSC, NRF, and MIT Sloan, Crunchbase funding data, market research reports from various institutions.
- Determined the various players across the retail landscape and examined the trends among:
  - Retail consumers
  - Digital-first brands
  - Traditional brick-and-mortar retailers
  - Technology advancements
  - Non-retail players (landlords, government)

Detailed Case Study Development
- Data Sources: SEC filings, earnings call transcripts (2021–2025), executive interviews with brands
- Conducted deep-dive analyses of various brands (i.e. Warby Parker, Curology, Reformation, Purple) across diverse:
  - Categories (i.e. apparel, beauty, home goods)
  - Expansion strategy (owned stores, partnerships, pop-ups)
  - Publicly available data points (financial disclosures)

Thesis 1: Success in physical retail depends on a repeatable physical retail playbook and a truly omnichannel sales strategy

Across eleven case studies, digital-first brands have had varied results in their physical retail expansions. Some, like Purple Mattress, treated stores as marketing tools and faced financial distress when 2/3 of the stores failed to achieve profitability. Others, like Warby Parker, tested multiple concepts before scaling nationally and are on track to operate 900 stores by 2026. In today's capital-constrained and hypercompetitive environment, brands often get only one chance to bet big on physical. The difference between success and failure is a proven and repeatable, playbook for physical expansion and omnichannel sales strategy. Successful brands usually follow a three-stage path:

Physical Expansion Framework

| Cement Brand Identity Digitally | Test Physical Strategies | Scale Physical Strategies |

Figure 1: Physical Expansion Framework

Stage 1: Validate Product-Market Fit and Unit Economics Digitally
Before committing to physical, brands like Warby Parker and Curology proved their concepts online. Digital sales and social media allowed Warby to validate demand and unit economics. Similarly, Curology differentiated its products through digital marketing. The primarily digital phased allowed brands to explore the needs of their core customers, crystalize their brand identity, and develop a captive following before the capital-intensive process of opening physical stores. Both of these brands cited rising digital acquisition costs as a driver for physical expansion supporting the hypothesis that there is a point of diminishing returns for digital marketing at which acquiring new customers digital is not sustainable.

Stage 2: Test Physical Concepts
Warby Parker's approach was methodical. An in-office showroom generated $3M in annual sales, then regional pop-ups and a traveling showrooms tested creative concepts and collected data used to gauge consumer demand before Warby opened the first flagship in NYC. Similarly, Oura tested displays without screens, with screens, and full shop-in-shop models with Best Buy before scaling their retail footprint to Walmart, Target. This stage is about learning what works and what doesn't while maintaining focus and minimizing risk.

Stage 3: Scale with Discipline
Warby Parker plans to open 45 stores in 2025, but their initial expansion was slow and deliberate. They made early decisions based on digital sales data and traffic data from pop-ups and boutique partnerships. In contrast, Purple Innovation and Outdoor Voices, assumed performance would be consistent across locations with similar demographics and co-tenants and faced mass closures when stores failed to be profitable. Today's environment favors intentional and data-driven growth, often just 5–7 new stores per year, unless a brand is generating free cash flow, through demand, scale, or operational maturity.

Omnichannel Scaling and Considerations

A truly omnichannel strategy is not optional. Successful brands invest in supply chain and inventory infrastructure to ensure unit economics are aligned across channels. They leverage technology to capture customer data, personalize experiences, and integrate online and offline journeys. Unified inventory, flexible fulfillment (BOPIS, ship-from-store), and seamless returns are table stakes. Brands that master this integration see higher sales, customer loyalty, and operational efficiency. Wholesale and retail partnerships (e.g., Oura at Best Buy, Glossier at Sephora) are increasingly essential for reach and sustainability. Pop-ups and experiential activations remain critical for lean, flexible market testing. Innovative partnerships (Simon Property Group, Shopify, Leap) are lowering barriers to entry, allowing digital brands to test physical concepts with reduced risk.

Thesis 2: Success in physical retail depends on in-store technology that enhances customer experience, improves business strategy, and enables omnichannel engagement.

In today's retail landscape, digital-first brands expanding into physical spaces must leverage technology to create seamless omnichannel experiences that connect online and offline customer journeys. Warby Parker, Curology, and Reformation exemplify this evolution—these brands proved their concepts digitally first. Their successful transitions into physical retail spaces demonstrate how innovative technology solutions can connect digital and physical retail spheres.

Warby Parker developed a proprietary "Point of Everything" POS system by 2015, which integrated customer online profiles with in-store experiences, allowing staff to [follow up with personalized emails including purchase links](#) for frames tried on in-store. Their in-house system allowed them to charge customers when merchandise shipped (rather than at checkout), input structured data like eyeglass prescription information, and integrate customer browsing and purchase history into a unified CRM. [This custom POS enabled Warby Parker to merge online and offline shopping experiences, giving them better data aggregation and personalization capabilities. This integration created a 360° view of each customer and enabled more personalized service, which Warby Parker credits as helping drive both higher conversion rates and long-term loyalty.](#)
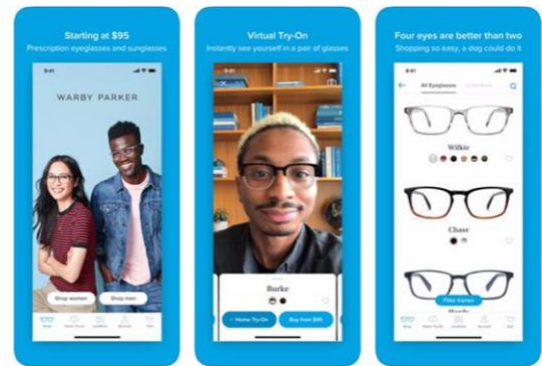

Figure 2: Warby Parker Mobile Try On

Curology took a different yet equally technology-driven approach. Without operating standalone stores, they expanded to Target in December 2022. Physical shelf presence introduced the brand to new consumers and enabled product trial in a low barrier setting. To encourage cross-channel engagement, they [integrated QR codes on packaging that led to digital resources](#), including product information and access to Curology's personalized online service. These digital bridges transformed physical retail from a distribution channel into an [on-ramp to deeper digital interaction](#), using in-store exposure as a top-of-funnel acquisition tool that complemented their online subscription model.

Figure 3: QR code to digital resources

Reformation's smart mirror technology transforms the fitting room into a data-rich, interactive space that benefits both customers and store associates. These mirrors allow shoppers to view available sizes, request new items, and browse styling suggestions directly from the fitting room, eliminating the need to flag down a salesperson. As Hali noted during our conversation, the real innovation lies in how these tools empower store associates, not replace them. By automating

Figure 4: Reformation in store mirror

basic tasks like size checks and inventory lookups, the mirrors free up associates to focus on deeper, more meaningful customer interactions, such as personalized styling or education about the brand's sustainability mission.

These brands leveraged technology not just for customer experience but for strategic decision-making. Warby Parker uses aggregated website browsing behavior, home try-on participation rates, conversion rates by geography, and customer density heatmaps to prioritize new store locations. Curology uses customer data to inform their retail strategy, carefully selecting seven of their best-selling non-prescription products for Target stores to create a strategic retail presence that reinforces their brand mission while functioning as a top-of-funnel acquisition tool for their subscription service. Reformation's 'magic wardrobe' technology captures detailed try-on behavior data, tracking items brought into fitting rooms versus those purchased, which not only optimizes inventory and merchandising decisions but creates a valuable feedback loop between physical and digital channels that informs product development and marketing strategy.

As digital-native brands like Warby Parker, Curology, and Reformation demonstrate, the future of physical retail lies in technology that not only enhances customer experiences but transforms stores into data collection points that inform everything from merchandising to marketing to expansion strategy, ultimately making physical retail a vital component of an omnichannel business model.

Thesis 3: Success in physical retail depends on stores offering an experience that immerses the customer in the brand.

Evolving consumer preferences have demanded physical retail stores pursue innovative strategies to capture business. One strategy defining the future of retail are "third space" environments, social hubs where customers gather to relax, connect, and engage in meaningful activities. These areas blend community and experience in a commercial environment, serving as a destination beyond shopping. Retailers are leveraging this concept to drive foot traffic and foster deeper brand loyalty by transforming stores into vibrant community destinations.

Figure 5: Glossier NY store

Glossier stores are a tangible extension of their digital DNA. Success lies in its focus on visually appealing and highly "Instagrammable" spaces. For example, the New York City location has a full, mosaic-tile mural of florals in large scale and a wooden subway-style bench, both designed as a perfect selfie moment for store visitors. The aesthetic elements create a sense of place and encourage consumers to share photos on social media, converting everyday customers into small-scale brand advocates. Beyond store aesthetics, Glossier also prioritizes interactive product engagement. All stores feature dining-inspired tables and product trays that physically invite customers to try the products. The company's CEO has emphasized the role that in-store product trials have on sparking innate beauty discoveries, making the hands-on retail experience a key lever for driving sales.

Mejuri evolves the fine jewelry retail experience by translating its online identity of accessibility and everyday luxury into physical stores. A core part of their retail strategy is creating open and inviting store layouts, compared to closed-off displays of traditional jewelers. This design allows customers to freely explore and try on pieces, fostering a comfortable and approachable atmosphere. Co-founder Majed Masad highlights the importance of offering a hands-on experience, allowing customers to connect with the jewelry and the brand on a more personal level, to deepen relationships. Mejuri also prioritizes personalized service and community engagement. Their stores feature stylists offering tailored advice and they host events like piercing parties that turn retail locations into social hubs.

Figure 6: Traditional Jewelry Store

Figure 7 : Mejuri Jewelry Store

Figure 8: Warby Parker Store

Warby Parker reimagines the eyewear retail experience by translating its online identity of accessibility and customer-centricity into physical stores. A key element is establishing a straightforward and inviting "showroom" environment where customers can touch frames. This is achieved through open, accessible displays and strategically placed mirrors, fostering a relaxed, pressure-free atmosphere. This approach moves away from the traditional optical shop model in favor of a curated showroom experience. Warby Parker further enhances its retail presence by incorporating eye exams into many locations, which has allowed it to serve as a one-stop-shop for vision care and further increased customer engagement.

Overall, these digitally native retailers have redefined the purpose of a physical store. These retail locations have evolved beyond points of transaction into an immersive space that translates the brands' online ethos into tangible experiences. By prioritizing community, engagement, and exploration, these brands offer a richer experience that has deepened and extended customer relationships beyond the digital frontier and into the real world.

Key Assumptions

Thesis 1

- Consumers prefer an in-person option for physical products with a sizing/fit component (e.g., beauty, apparel, accessories, jewelry)
- Convenience will continue to be a priority as consumers are expecting more seamless, integrated shopping experiences with consistent and personalized interactions across all channels
- Capital constraints will persist in the near future as interest rates remain high and investor sentiment remain low given economic volatility
- Any brand exploring physical expansion has invested in the infrastructure (technology, methodology) needed to measure sales, unit economics, and overhead (SG&A)
- Testing via pop-ups/shop-in-shops reduces failure rates compared to direct large-scale expansion

Thesis 2

- Shoppers prefer customized, novel experiences (e.g., smart mirrors) over traditional interactions
- Customer insights (e.g., Warby Parker's POS data) justify technology investment through a higher customer lifetime value
- Unified systems (e.g., CRM + POS) create stickier customer relationships

Thesis 3

- Experiential retail, such as "third spaces", is becoming the next step in customer journey, as customers look for more than just convenience
- Social commerce amplifies reach and converts customers into stronger brand advocates

When Digital-First Brands Go Physical: A Framework for Success

Problem Statement

Rising rents, increasing construction costs, and waning consumer spending make expanding into physical retail a risky proposition for digital-native brands.

Success with physical retail depends on:

1. **Stable Economics**: Stable product market fit, omnichannel sales, and a repeatable physical retail playbook
2. **Social Commerce:** In-store technology that enhances digital marketing & omnichannel engagement
3. **Experiential Retail:** An experiential component that immerses the customer in the brand

Physical Expansion Framework
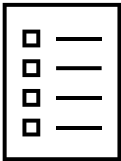
Cement Brand Identity Digitally	Test Physical Strategies	Scale Physical Strategies
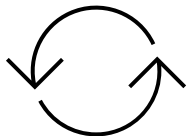
Headwinds

60% Increase	82% Decrease
Build Cost	Consumer Spend
2% Increase	**97% Decrease**
Rent Costs	VC Funding

Tailwinds

Falling Tech Costs	Demand for Experiences
Plug & Play Services	Wholesale

Executive Summary

- Apparel brands gain customers and drive sales by: (1) adopting a truly omnichannel strategy where margin across physical and digital channels is equitable, and (2) replicating reliably profitable retail concepts across markets

- In-store technology (PoS, fitting room tech, and mobile CRM tools) enables social commerce by enriching digital marketing channels, revealing customer needs, and equipping associates to provide personalized service

- Not every brand / city needs a physical store. Wholesale distributors and department stores are viable and less capital intensive

Takeaways

Thesis	Supporting Stats/Arguments
Physical expansion requires stable product market fit, omnichannel sales, and a repeatable physical retail playbook	• Warby tested its physical presence with a single HQ pop-up, followed by a traveling bus and then five stores in Tier 1 cities. Curology studied in-store experiences at Target before launching other retailers • Unit Economics: Reformation requires stores be profitable and configured the supply chain to ensure unit economics were consistent across digital and physical channels. Conversely, Purple funded stores as a marketing tool and is now struggling to sustain growth
Physical expansion requires In-store **technology that enhances digital marketing** & omnichannel engagement	• Warby Parker built a custom POS that allowed personalized digital remarketing • Curology implemented QR codes to educate customers on Curology products and enrich customer profiles for customers shopping in physical retailers • Reformation in-store technology collects data on sizing and items tried on and not purchased while also empowering associates to provide personalized service with preferences and shopping data • 71% of consumers expect personalized interactions and 76% get frustrated if they do not exist
Physical expansion (into owned locations) must have an **experiential component** that immerses the customer in the brand	• In eyewear, 87% of sales occur in person – Warby's showrooms met customers where they were • Glossier utilizes experiential pop-ups to promote social media engagement and community • Skims immerses shoppers in the design ethos of the brand • Tiffany Café, LV Restaurant, Polo Bar, and Ralph's Coffee drive traffic and make shopping an event • 73% of shoppers across markets purchased in-store after discovering the item on social media • 20% of buyers aged 18-24 prioritize a sense of belonging from brands they support

YUKAKO ETO
(646) 285-2302, YEto25@gsb.columbia.edu

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York, NY
MBA, Strategy & Product Management, May 2025
Leadership: AVP of Professional Events, Technology Club; VP of Events, Japan Business Association   2023 - 2025

KEIO UNIVERSITY   Tokyo, Japan
BA, Economics, March 2019   2015 - 2019
Study Abroad: Exchange student at University of California, San Diego (2017 - 2018)
Internship: Major League Baseball Sponsorship and Marketing Intern (2018-2019)

EXPERIENCE

TARGET CORPORATION   Minneapolis, MN
Supply Chain MBA Intern- Last Mile Delivery Sortation Center (June - August)   2024

- Improved productivity from 71 to 79 packages per hour, leading to an annual cost reduction of $126K by implementing process enhancements and layout optimization in the sortation center
- Developed a tool to determine the optimal number of sort lanes based on package volume, establishing a standardized process for lane usage adjustment; trained operations managers on the tool, ensuring consistent application
- Streamlined package induction by redesigning task allocation, reducing cognitive load on workers, and introducing direct package placement onto conveyors with in-motion scanning/labeling; achieved a consistent induction speed

AMAZON   Tokyo, Japan
Product Manager- Amazon Business Marketplace (2021 - 2023)   2019 - 2023

- Created shared vision across tech, marketing, sales, and legal teams in US, Japan, and China by building consensus on priorities for the 2023 Japan Consumption Tax Reform Project; secured tech resources and implemented 4 new features that enabled 200K+ sellers to be compliant with new Japanese Tax Laws
- Gained leadership buy-in to fund 10 headcounts on Tax Project by presenting financial and customer feedback analysis via survey and customer focus groups; recruited and managed 8 sales members and 2 marketing members across Japan and China for adoption activity, surpassed product adoption goal by achieving 98% rate among sellers, 3 months ahead of the scheduled timeline
- Organized and conducted webinars in collaboration with the National Tax Agency to educate sellers about the new law; developed content tailored to the sellers' interests, resulting in an attendance of 1,000+ sellers
- Launched "Custom Quote Engine" to allow sellers to offer discounted price for business customers buying in bulk, by localizing the product for Japan via A/B tests and designing Go-To-Market plan; achieved 90% quote response rate from sellers, and contributed to 3% increase of total sales for division
- Developed training for future new PM hires by working with major partner teams (Engineering/ Business Intelligence/ Customer Research/ Customer Success); these tools were used to train 15 employees during tenure

Account Manager- Amazon Business Marketplace (2019 - 2021)

- Recruited manufacturers and distributors to sell products on Amazon for business customers by making cold calls, attending trade shows, and creating sales pitches; resulted in recruiting 60 sellers (28% over target)
- Increased marketplace sales by supporting sellers with pricing, product selection, search engine optimization, and advertising; resulted in growing sales by 50% over target, ultimately receiving 1st place award out of 28 sales colleagues 2 consecutive years
- Analyzed nursing care supply industry by attending industry conferences, volunteering at nursing home, and assessing industry reports; recruited 20 brand owners and 4 key player distributors to offer products by building an insightful pitch, and expanded listings by 150K+ products on Amazon Business website
- Developed roadmap to build customized service for Uber Eats to sell delivery bag exclusively to delivery partners through Amazon; generated additional $6M+ sales in year 1 by collaborating with Warehouse, Legal, PR, and Customer Experience teams
- Won 4 *Amazon Our Leadership Principles Awards* from 2019 to 2020; received fast track promotion to Sr. Account Manager

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dual Work Authorization: US & Japan citizenship
Skills: SQL, Tableau, Jira, Amazon Seller Central, Shopify

YAXIN LIU
(347) 446 - 9184, yaliu25@gsb.columbia.edu

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL — New York, NY
MBA, Finance and Marketing, May 2025 — 2023 - 2025
Honors: Forte Fellow
Leadership: Cluster Chief of Staff, AVP Partnerships & Sponsorships Beauty Club
Member: Marketing Association, Retail Luxury Goods, Health and Wellness, Gourmet, Tech, Women in Business

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, Leonard N. Stern School of Business — New York, NY
BS, Finance and Operations, *Minor:* Psychology, May 2017 — 2013 - 2017
Honors: Dean's List, 6 semesters
Leadership: Asian American Women's Alliance, President; NYC Asian American Student Conference, Events Chair
Study Abroad: NYU Shanghai Study Abroad (Spring 2015)

EXPERIENCE

DANONE — New York, NY
Top 10 Food & Beverage Company in the US (Dannon, Oikos, Horizon Organic, Silk) — 2019 - 2023
Finance Manager – Happy Family, Brand & Innovation (2022 - 2023)
- Led team of 8 cross-functional partners across Marketing, Operations, and Business development to create cost models for new product innovation launches, improve sales volume, retail channel, and price assumptions, and deliver $24M incremental sales
- Developed product margin analysis to propose elimination of low profit SKUs, improving P&L margin by 0.5%
- Supported Aptamil brand launch in US during formula crisis through budget planning and execution of +$8M in A&P to market across consumer touchpoints (retail, online, TV); delivered +300k units of formula ($19M retail sales) to families in 6 months

Finance Manager – Happy Family, FP&A (2021 - 2022), **Senior Financial Analyst – Happy Family** (2019 - 2020)
- Managed $45M A&P and OPEX budgets as key finance partner on team of 5; supported 20+ business partners while leading business integration of Happy Family within Danone, including systems and process design for future-state finance organization
- Overhauled A&P budgeting process with team of 12 marketers by creating monthly review process to monitor under-spend and manage frozen funds; developed ROI analysis to align on sales channel investments to support profit targets
- Implemented budget management process for total company; trained 15+ budget owners on financial terms and established consistent reforecasting cadence; landed the year, post-implementation of new process within 5% forecast accuracy

NEWELL BRANDS — Hoboken, NJ
Leading Fortune 500 CPG Home Goods Company (Rubbermaid, Yankee Candle, Sharpie) — 2016 - 2019
Senior Financial Analyst, Corporate Financial Reporting (2018 - 2019)
- Developed monthly/quarterly reporting packages comparing actuals vs. forecast of P&L (across 7 divisions and 35+ brands), highlighting drivers of performance, emerging trends, and risks presented to Executive Finance and Investor Relations teams
- Provided decision support to senior management team of 15 as needed (ex: forecast accuracy, invoice sales dashboard) to improve overall P&L management

Analyst, Strategy and Transformation (2017 - 2018)
- Delivered $100M in cost savings during marketing org. redesign; built cost tracker consisting of 5K+ individuals across 8 divisions; led 4 rapid design sessions for marketing leads to structure new organization; prepared final proposal to CMO
- Prepared business case to outsource in-house consumer service function to Manila to achieve $15M in savings

Intern, e-Commerce (2016 - 2017)
- Optimized product layout on 10 retailer websites (incl. Bed Bath and Beyond, Walmart) for food brands (Calphalon, Rubbermaid, Ball) to increase brand presence, product accessibility, and ease of navigation
- Analyzed consumer engagement data and competitor landscape during Prime Day to improve Rubbermaid set piece sizes/color; updated 800 SKUs on Amazon Vendor Central with new graphics and copy to enhance product experience for consumer

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Volunteer: Send Chinatown Love – Gift-a-Meal Finance Lead, Start Small Think Big – Finance Advisor
Languages: Mandarin Chinese (conversational)
Interests: Broadway theater (Funny Girl, Hamilton), Wundabar Pilates, dining at new restaurants

SANDRA MAYA LOPEZ
732.403.1838, slopez25@gsb.columbia.edu

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York,NY
MBA, Retail Strategy, May 2025   2023 - 2025
Honors: AVP of Retail and Luxury Goods Club Treks, Consortium, Merit-based scholarship recipient
Special Project: Advisory work for HOKA, Venture Capital diligence project

AMHERST COLLEGE   Amherst, MA
Bachelor of Arts, Art History, May 2019   2015 - 2019
Leadership: Curator for MEAD Museum's *Mexican Codex Reborn* & *Embracing Differences*.
Internships: Roberta Roller Rabbit (2016), Moda Operandi (2017), Rosie Assouline (2019), Kirna Zabete (2019).

EXPERIENCE

LOUIS VUITTON   New York, NY
NEO Intern   October 2024 – Present
- Conducted UAT testing and website tracking for TWIST SHOWROOM launch in Mexico & Brazil, ensuring a seamless omnichannel client experience.
- Prepared weekly reports analyzing customer behavior and website performance, identifying trends and insights to optimize digital engagement.
- Supported go-to-market strategies across multiple regions, working with internal teams to enhance digital clienteling initiatives.
- Collaborated with finance teams to conduct FSS Tax testing for Canada, ensuring smooth and legal tax posting for each state in Canada

                                                                                                                                            New York, NY

Woman's apparel brand focused on creating future vintage
FOUNDER   2024 - Present
- Completed the LANG Center Startup Incubator and Stanford's Galvanizer program; leveraged resources to accelerate growth
- Developed product strategy, go-to-market plans, and inventory management systems; led negotiations with global factories and suppliers for samples

FIT:MATCH   New York, NY
Saas Technology Company focusing on sizing and fit issues in the retail space.
Product Manager & Product Design Manager (2022 - 2023)   2021 - 2023
- Spearheaded fitting room technology with Savage X Fenty, resulting in 600% increase in conversion rate, 30% higher AOV, 80% drop in returns, and a 200% increase in loyalty sign-ups
- Designed a white label bra fitting app for Macy's; increased AOV by 20%, conversions by 40%, and UPT by 20%, transforming shopping habits in a $13B market
- Initiated a weekly data analysis project to identify insights, trends, and innovation opportunities, resulting in product development improvements; improved consumer adoption of B2C app by 50%
- Founded the UX/UI team with 3 direct reports; onboarded JIRA, built out workflows for engineering and product teams, reducing average go-to-market timelines, cutting development time by 33%
- Led an R&D team developing new applications with LiDAR technology for virtual try-on, metaverse, and digital twins; pitched to LVMH, Kering, HBC, Amazon, and Apple for innovative shopping solutions to improve purchase rates, customer fitting accuracy, waste reduction, and body data and analytics

Digital Marketing Manager (2021 - 2022)
- Pioneered a holistic social media strategy across TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn; managed media coverage and implemented creative workflows, resulting in +200% in followers, +40% in likes, and +300% in profile views
- Launched B2B marketing initiatives, including webinars and newsletters, resulting in 300+ subscribers; won the Innovation Lab $40K grant, PI Apparel Grant, and Curve guest speaker nomination for enhanced brand and sales awareness
- Authored international press releases published in Vogue and Forbes in partnership with Rihanna's Savage X Fenty, generating over 40K clicks and securing a celebrity endorsement highlighting value of FIT:MATCH to customers and companies worldwide
- Assumed Head of People responsibilities; facilitated coffee chats, team happy hours, and internship programs; planned two retreats and led growth of team from 10 to 40 people in under a year instilling values and forging cross-functional relationships

Digital Marketing Coordinator (2021 - 2022)
- Established robust data collection and consumer testing programs enabling development of machine learning algorithms and largest industry database of over 100K human body scans; deployed for customer segmentation, pattern accuracy, and purchase trend analysis
- Orchestrated market research and competitive analysis to identify AI and VR trends and competitor offerings in fit tech space
- Advanced brand positioning by implementing branding guide book with custom colors, fonts, and document templates, enhancing communication across sales, product, and marketing teams; leveraged for new sales and funding pitch decks, increasing brand continuity
- Supervised a team of 5 web professionals; optimized website SEO, decreased bounce rate by 70%, and increased dwell time from 2 seconds to 2 minutes

SAKS 5TH AVE   New York, NY
Product Supervisor   2019 - 2021
- Identified and resolved $52M in missing sales by conducting quality assessment and executive reporting of women's RTW for global e-commerce website
- Led product strategy, unit forecasting, and inventory management for Saks.com, reorganizing workflows and increasing efficiencies for a team of 80+
- Curated onboarding program, reducing lead time by 50% and increasing product uploads by 400%.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Certificates: Fashion Design (Istituto Marangoni), Pattern Innovation (Central St. Martins), Product Management School | *Languages*: B2 Italian, B2 Spanish, beginner French and Russian | *Interests*: Vintage fashion, classic novels, global travel (Italian-Mexican descent) | *Volunteering*: RAISEfashion

BENJAMIN OVENSHIRE

847-501-0828, bovenshire25@gsb.columbia.edu

EDUCATION
COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York, NY
MBA Strategy, Operations, Finance May 2025   2023-2025
Clubs: AI, Technology, General Management
Relevant Coursework: Adv. Business Analytics, Gen AI for Business, Transformer Models, ML & AI Market Map Study

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY   Dallas, TX
BS Mechanical Engineering & Mathematics, 3.94 GPA   2015-2019
Honors: Summa cum laude, M Award (awarded to <0.5% of students for leadership)
Leadership: Student Senate, Residential Assistant, University Advisory Board, Board of Trustees Committee on Student Affairs

EXPERIENCE
SPOTIFY   New York, NY
Product Management Capstone Project   Spring 2025
Customer Research and Feature Proposal
- Designed and pitched an advertising product expected to drive $1.6M in annual revenue by conducting 10 ethnographic interviews, developing a Figma prototype, outlining Alpha, Beta, and GA release strategy, and collaborating with a senior PM

EXPANSIVE THERAPY   New York, NY
MBA Intern   Summer 2024
EBIDTA Analysis and Growth Strategy
- Boosted 2024 projected EBITDA 35% by distilling EBITDA into core metrics, identifying inefficiencies in lead conversions and marketing spend, and implementing a data-driven marketing strategy across 5 platforms including Google and Instagram
- Increased Instagram engagement 610% and increased monthly conversions 16% by leading a marketing campaign across paid and organic Instagram channels and teaching the team to measure the quality of creative concepts with strategic metrics

DELOITTE CONSULTING LLP   Dallas, TX
Consultant (2021-2023)   2019-2023
Competitor Technology Benchmarking and Process Automation
- Enabled six CIO clients to benchmark their technology investments against peers by developing a playbook to derive operational insights from a keyword analysis of 4,000+ 10K filings and quantitative insights from 10 years of financial data
- Reduced research time 50% by collaborating with engineers and data scientists to automate the 10K analysis with Python and AI

Growth Strategy and Go-to-Market Partnership Incubation in Deloitte's Ecosystem & Alliances Team
- Identified 31 internet-of-things, wearables, and edge computing use cases across five industries, including restaurants, healthcare, transportation, government, and technology, through 11 listening sessions with sales and engineering leaders
- Generated $5M of sales, 70 pipeline opportunities, and secured a $250K investment by managing four people to research the market for a life science technology partnership, develop a go-to-market strategy, and execute the strategy with two major clients

Data Analytics, Strategy, and Culture Change for Deloitte's Office of the CEO
- Co-created the hybrid work strategy and facilitated a 4% increase in co-location for 80K employees by collaborating with HR, recruiting 480+ change agents, and facilitating a firm-wide education campaign including 1:1 briefings with C-level leaders
- Achieved a 15% increase in client expense budgets by analyzing discretionary spending and reallocating funds across practices
- Achieved a 3% reduction in overall emissions from travel by collaborating with data science teams to create an emission tracking dashboard, identifying sources of emissions, and coaching executives to adopt more sustainable co-location behaviors

Technology Capability Assessment and Organization Design at a Fortune 100 Pharmaceutical Company
- Identified design requirements and success factors for organization design workshops by facilitating 21+ IT voice of customer interviews, synthesizing insights, and collaborating with nine subject matter experts to assess the maturity of 27 tech capabilities
- Eliminated duplicative responsibilities across eight roles and united a divided team around a shared mission by collaborating with Office of the CIO leaders to develop a 90-day roadmap and illustrate how existing initiatives evolve to meet new priorities

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Skills: Social Ads (Meta, Google), Python
Publications: "Got Data? Now Build the Right Operating Model" CIO Journal Wall Street Journal, January 2022
Interests: SaaS GTM Strategy, Growth Stage Tech Companies, Data Infrastructure, Data Quality

KATHY TAO
(571) 420-1983, Ktao25@gsb.columbia.edu

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York, NY
MBA, May 2025   2023-2025
Honors: Forte Fellow
Leadership: VP of Communications – General Management Association, VP of Social – Asian Business Association
Member: Technology Club, Retail and Luxury Goods Club

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA   Charlottesville,VA
B.S in Commerce (IT and Marketing Concentration with Business Analytics Track)   2016-2020
Honors: Dean's List, Athletic Honor Roll
Involvement: Women's Rowing Team (NCAA, Division I), Alpha Kappa Psi Co-ed Business Fraternity
Study abroad: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Spring 2019)
Internship: Ernst & Young, Lincoln Property Company, U.S. Department of the Treasury

EXPERIENCE

TIKTOK   San Jose, CA
Seller Onboarding MBA Intern   2024 Summer

- Developed and maintained a Seller Onboarding wiki and training materials, synthesizing inputs from 8+ cross-functional stakeholders (Product, Risk, Ops, Engineering, etc) to drive internal process clarity and operational efficiency. Continuously updated documentation to align with evolving policies.
- Audited seller rejection cases and identified gaps in KYC/KYB processes; collaborated with Moderation team to refine policies, reducing seller onboarding friction and improving seller approval rates.
- Conducted competitive benchmarking of Amazon, Walmart, Wayfair, and eBay, identifying opportunities to simplify onboarding while maintaining KYC/KYB compliance, and presented findings to leadership for strategic alignment.
- Created comprehensive guidelines for verifying Non-Driver Identification of sellers, outlining acceptable forms of alternative identification and verification procedures. Led training with the Moderation team to implement the new guidelines, ensuring effective adoption and compliance.

DELOITTE CONSULTING LLP   Arlington, VA
Consultant   2020-2023
Program and Product Management Experience:

- Managed program operations for a major federal agency's budgeting transformation, working closely with engineering, product, and business stakeholders to scope initiatives, track execution, and resolve blockers.
- Conducted a comprehensive analysis of the budgeting process to identify inefficiencies and risks; successfully implemented a process improvement plan that boosted efficiency by 35% and reduced downstream data errors by 12%
- Facilitated requirements gathering sessions to align key stakeholders on the design and architecture of a custom budgeting interface; managed the project from initiation to close, leading to a 100% adoption rate across all divisions.
- Led cross-functional teams in developing, testing, and deploying a custom financial reporting solution, introducing automation that improved data accuracy and ensured compliance with federal reporting requirements.
- Developed and executed training efforts for new budgeting interface and financial reporting functionality, leading 10 training sessions, creating documentation, and writing user guides that reached over 300 employees across the agency.

Strategy and Operations Experience:

- Developed a comprehensive 1-year and 3-year digital strategy roadmap for the client, securing C-suite approval and aligning five business units on key priorities.
- Facilitated prioritization sessions across five divisions to identify immediate needs and long-term digital transformation goals, uncovering three key initiatives that shaped the 3-year strategic plan.
- Collaborated cross-functionally with software developers, client stakeholders, and subject matter experts to determine scope and level of effort for key initiatives. Proposed Deloitte's partnership for execution, leading to a contract amendment that expanded Deloitte's role.
- Owned executive reporting for a multi-year transformation initiative, developing dashboards and narratives to track progress, surface risks, and communicate impact to senior leadership.

Skills: Program Management, Product Management, Process Improvement, Design Thinking, Software Development Lifecycle, Python, Java, R, SQL, Microsoft Excel, Tableau
Languages: Chinese (Fluent)
Interests: Sustainable Fashion, Running (Training for the 2025 TCS New York City Marathon), Animal Rescue

BENJAMIN YANG
713-820-7707, BYang25@gsb.columbia.edu

EDUCATION

COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL   New York, NY
MBA, Strategy and Operations, May 2025   2023-2025
Honors: Dean's Honors with Distinction (Top 5% of Class), Columbia Fellow (Merit-Based)
Leadership: Career Management Center (Fellow), Management Consulting Association (VP Case Prep), Small Business
Consulting (VP Education, Engagement Manager for KRUSH dating app growth, marketing, and product strategy), Hermes Society

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN   Austin, TX
BS, Mechanical Engineering, May 2019 | GPA: 3.92/4.00   2015-2019
Honors: Graduated with High Honors (Top 10% of Class)
Internship: Manufacturing Engineer at Texas Instruments, Product Design at UT Medical Device Lab

EXPERIENCE

ALVAREZ & MARSAL   New York, NY
Summer Consultant - Consumer Retail Group   2024-2024
- Conducted operational data analysis, scenario modeling, C-suite client interviews, and industry benchmarking to identify $19M headcount and vendor savings across IT and supply chain for international beauty client
- Formulated methodology, template, and roadmap to realize new operating model savings, including application rationalization for 1k applications, service request demand shaping from 37 markets, and logistics outsourcing
- Crafted and presented optimized organizational structures with accountability frameworks for all functional activities to client's CIO and CSCO, facilitating working sessions to incorporate feedback and secure stakeholder alignment on future reorganization

MAVENEER   Atlanta, GA
Boutique supply chain consulting firm and integrator, growing revenue 80x over 4 years of employment   2019-2023
Engineering Consultant (2022-2023), **Design Engineer I/II** (2020-2022), **Engineering Analyst** (2019-2020)
Operational Strategy Client Engagements:
- Spearheaded distribution network redesign for national books distributor by leading 4-person internal team, researching market trends across 16 automation vendors, and modeling new operational scenarios to propose technology (auto replenishment, picking robots, conveyance) that improves baseline labor productivity by 33%
- Secured $150M implementation contract by persuading 25+ person big-box retail team to invest in new warehouse automation across 3 facilities through labor data analysis, process modeling, system sizing, and financial assessment
- Created and pitched executive storyline from complex data models and sensitivity analysis across 6 facility layout scenarios, acquiring leadership approval to relocate a large warehouse to capture $4M annual operational savings
- Managed weekly solution design workshops over 4 months with 30+ senior executives, warehouse operators, finance directors, engineers, and automation vendors to ensure cross-functional team alignment and meet delivery milestones

Warehouse Automation Client Implementations:
- Rectified 3-week delayed, $14M warehouse implementation for leading retailer by evaluating sales KPIs across 30k seasonal products, remodeling new storage scenarios, and leading daily onsite sessions to capture stakeholder agreement
- Directed peak-season outbound operations during $23M go-live warehouse implementation for large food e-commerce, overseeing 15+ operators and refining new picking processes through real-time KPI evaluation
- Designed and deployed custom carts to store equipment and increase facility's storage density by 80%, iterating on end-user feedback from weekly interviews in entire product design lifecycle and achieving $600K annual operational savings
- Wrote and launched IT logic for new automation process, integrating with client's legacy systems to enable $3M annual savings

Internal Initiatives:
- Pioneered internal standardization initiatives as company's 5th employee, creating new structured data analysis tools to reduce computational complexity and automation modeling set-up time by up to 50% per client project
- Built company's inaugural training program with video tutorials and simulations to mentor a direct report (new college graduate)
- Trained 25+ new employees on advanced SQL data analytics, Excel modeling, automation design, and client communication

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Skills: Coding (SQL Server, Excel VBA, Python, MATLAB), 2D/3D-modeling (AutoCAD, Fusion360, SolidWorks)
Volunteer Work: Back on My Feet (helping unhoused people gain self-sufficiency and confidence through weekly 5am group runs)
Languages: Mandarin Chinese (advanced speaking proficiency)
Interests: Hip-hop dance teacher, half-marathon runner (PR: 1:44), weightlifter, 13-year musician (violin, trombone, euphonium)