LaMACCHIA GROUP

TRUST STILL HAS AN ADDRESS

WHAT CONSUMERS SAY ABOUT BRANCHES IN 2026

INTRODUCTION

WHAT CONSUMERS SAY ABOUT BANK AND CREDIT UNION BRANCHES IN 2026

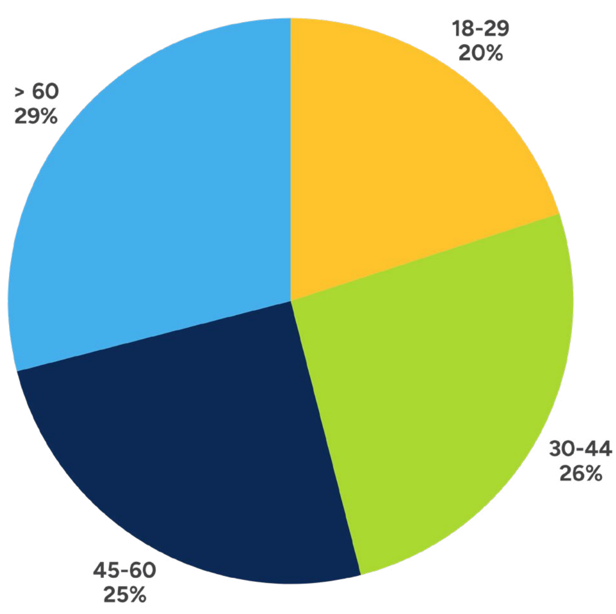
To understand how consumers think about bank branches in today's banking environment, the insights team at La Macchia Group polled more than **1,100 U.S. consumers** in January 2026. Similar to previous years, what we found was that physical branches continue to play a central role in how consumers evaluate and engage with their financial institutions.

Year over year, a growing majority of consumers associate a strong physical presence with being established and trustworthy. This connection between branches and credibility is particularly strong among younger consumers, reinforcing the role of physical locations as trust-building assets.

Branches also remain an important part of the overall banking experience across all age groups. Most consumers say it is important that their bank maintain physical locations, with importance increasing as consumers age. This consistency over time underscores the enduring relevance of branches alongside digital channels.

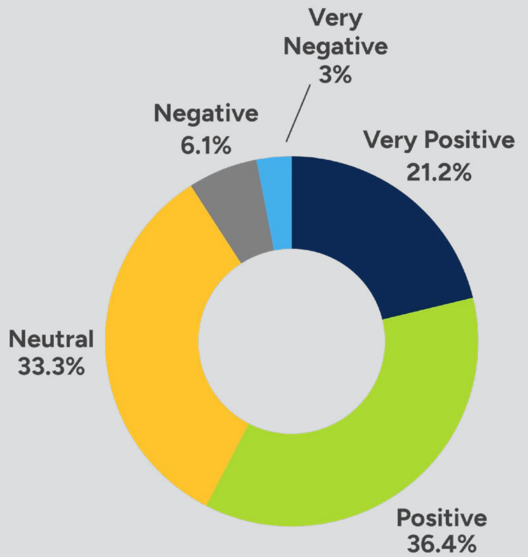
CONSUMERS ASSOCIATE A STRONG PHYSICAL PRESENCE WITH BEING ESTABLISHED AND TRUSTWORTHY.

SURVEY RESPONDENT AGE GROUPS

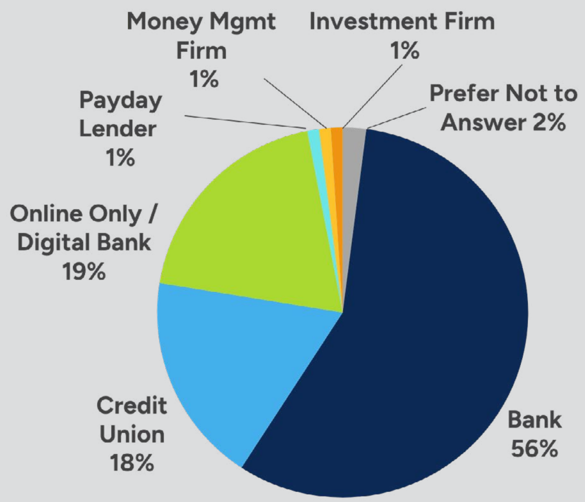


FINANCIAL UTILIZATION

IN GENERAL, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS?

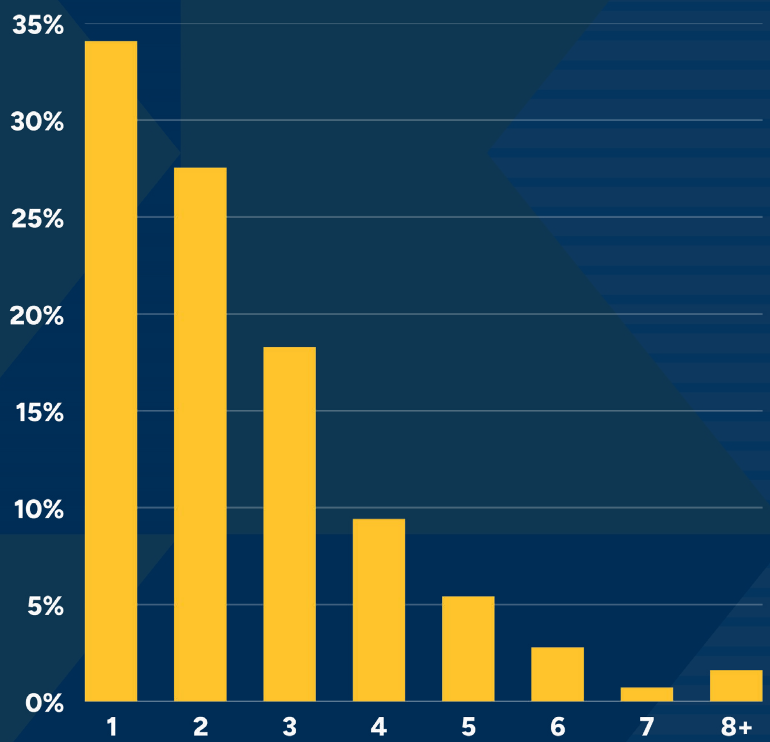


WHICH TYPE OF INSTITUTION IS YOUR PRIMARY FINANCIAL PARTNER?



Positive sentiment toward financial institutions is strong overall, with **57% of consumers reporting a positive or very positive perception.** This is led by those under age 45, where more than 60% express favorable views, compared with 53% of those over 45, reinforcing that younger consumers are the primary drivers of this momentum.

HOW MANY ORGANIZATIONS DO YOU USE TO MANAGE YOUR FINANCES?

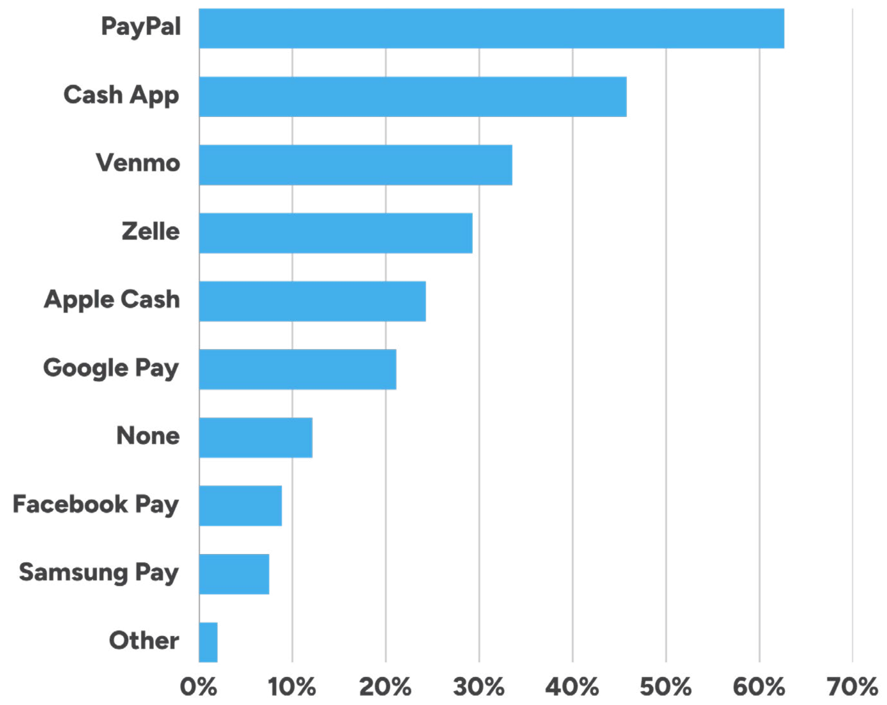


Consumers show a strong preference for consolidated financial relationships, with 62% using one or two organizations and nearly 80% using three or fewer. This pattern holds across every generation and becomes more pronounced with age, as 55% to 67% rely on just one or two providers and more than three-quarters in each cohort use no more than three.

Overall, roughly 90% of consumers work with four or fewer institutions, underscoring the strength of the primary financial relationship. relationships.

PEER-TO-PEER PAYMENTS

WHICH, IF ANY, "PEER-TO-PEER" (P2P) PAYMENT TOOLS HAVE YOU USED?

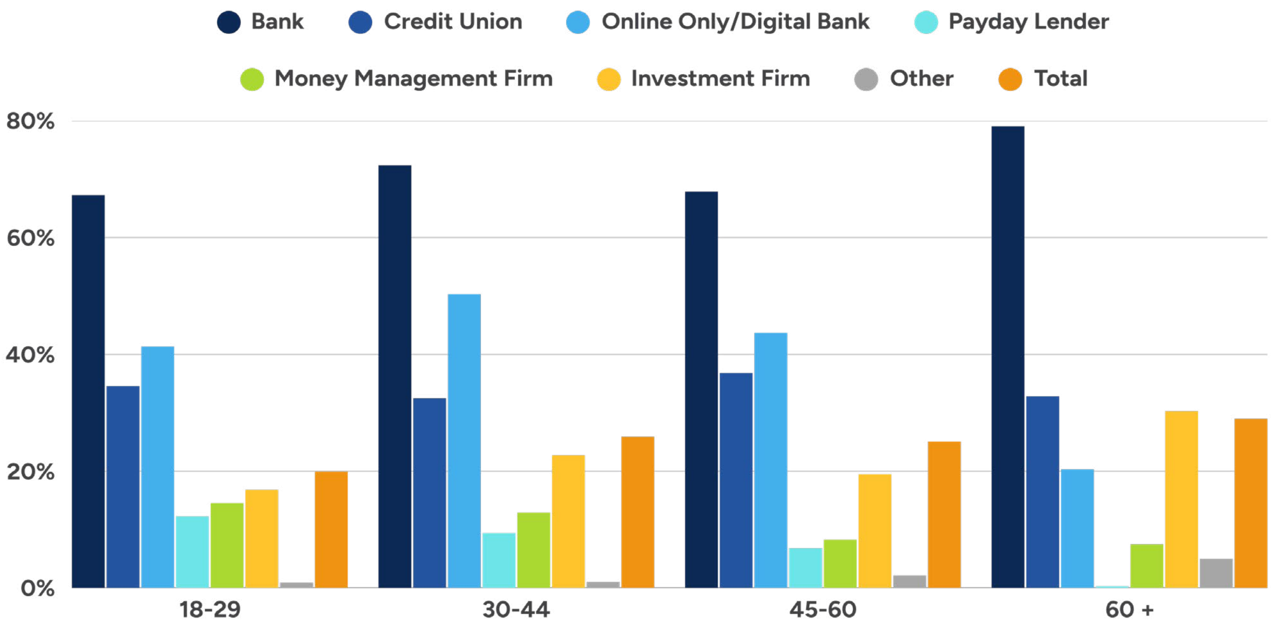


Peer-to-peer payment adoption is widespread, with **PayPal leading by a significant margin at 63% of consumers, followed by Cash App at 46% and Venmo at 34%.** Bank-connected tool Zelle reaches nearly three in ten users, while Apple Cash (24%) and Google Pay (21%) demonstrates the growing role of digital wallets in everyday transactions. Only 12% of respondents report not using any P2P payment platforms, meaning the vast majority have incorporated these tools into their financial routines, often across multiple services.

WHEN WE LOOK AT AGE, peer-to-peer payment usage is highest among consumers under age 45 and declines notably with older cohorts. In fact, fewer than 4% of those ages 18–44 report not using any P2P tools. PayPal is the most widely used platform across every generation, exceeding 70% among those 30–60 and remaining above 50% even among the oldest group. Cash App, Venmo, and Apple Cash are particularly strong with younger consumers (led by 18–29 year olds) while usage of digital wallet options like Google Pay drops sharply among those over 60.

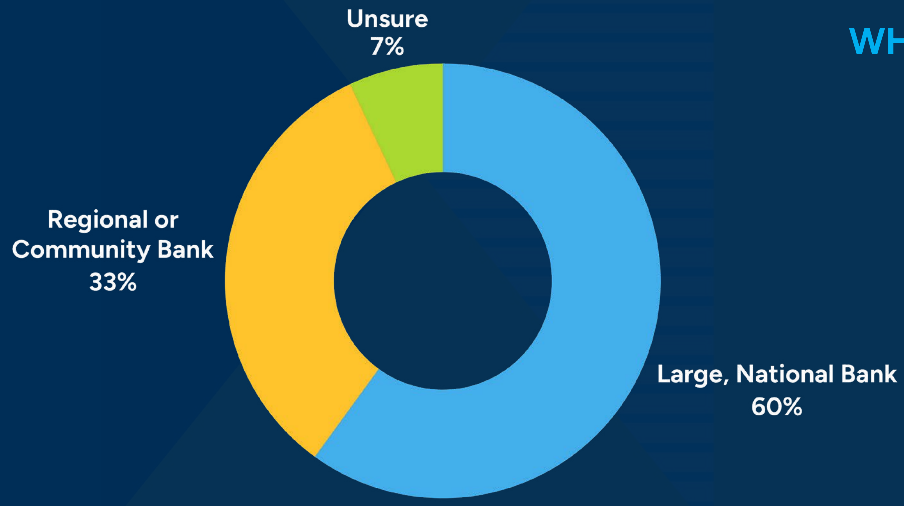
PREFERRED INSTITUTIONS

WHICH TYPES OF FINANCIAL INSTUTIONS DO YOU USE? *Select all that apply.*



Traditional banks remain the primary financial relationship across all age groups, used by roughly two-thirds of consumers, with the highest penetration among those age 60 and older. Credit union use is consistent across generations at about one-third of respondents. Digital-only banks skew younger, reaching 41% of those 18-29 and peaking at just over 50% among ages 30-44. Together, the data highlights the enduring role of traditional banks, the strong mid-career adoption of digital banking, and the growing emphasis on investment relationships later in life.

PHYSICAL VS. DIGITAL BANKS

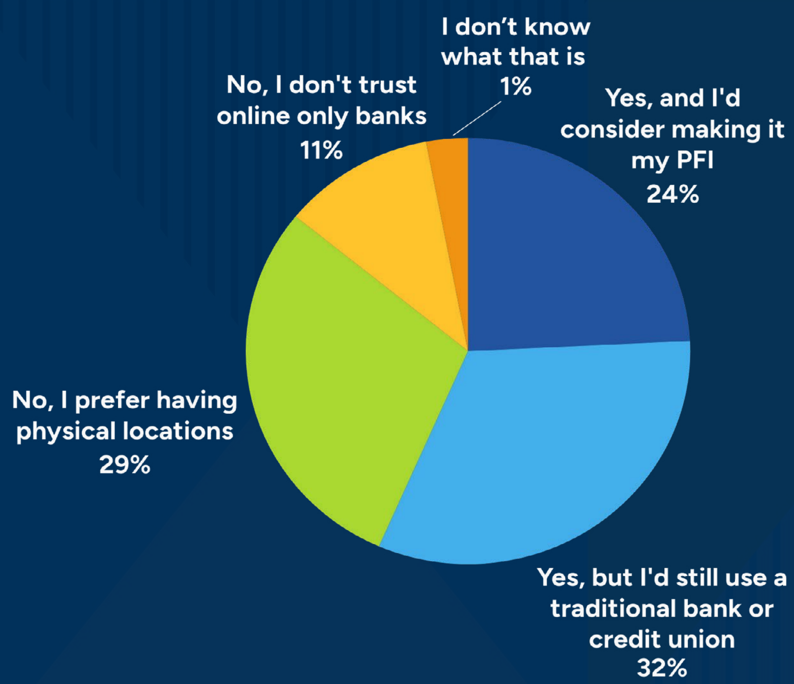


WHAT KIND OF BANK DO YOU USE?

Across all age groups, large national banks are the most commonly cited primary institution, used by roughly 60% of consumers in every cohort. Regional and community banks represent a strong secondary presence at about 30%, peaking among those ages 30–44 and 60 and older.

WOULD YOU EVER USE AN ONLINE ONLY/DIGITAL BANK?

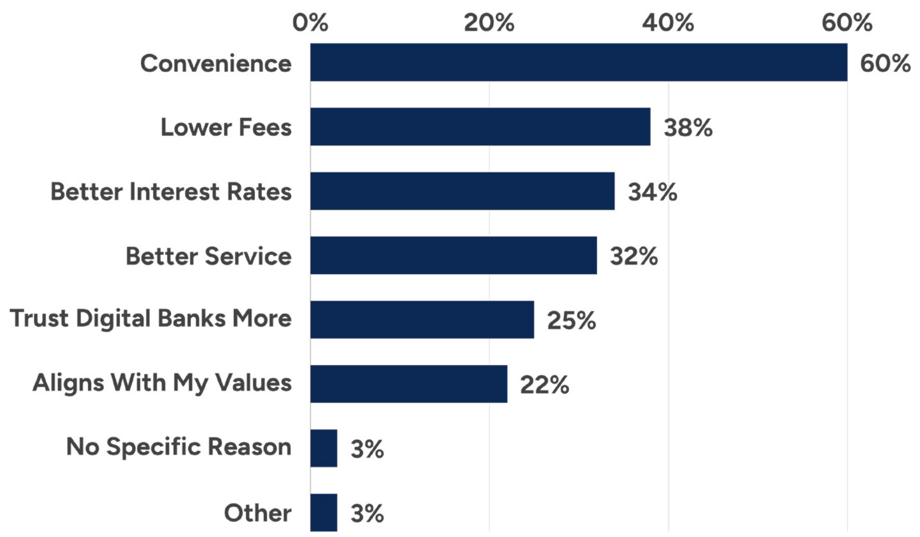
40% of consumers remain hesitant to use digital-only banks, driven primarily by a preference for access to physical locations and, to a lesser extent, concerns about trust. While a majority are open to digital options, this sizable segment underscores the continued importance of the branch in establishing confidence and meeting customer expectations for a tangible presence.



WHY DO YOU USE AN ONLINE ONLY/DIGITAL BANK?

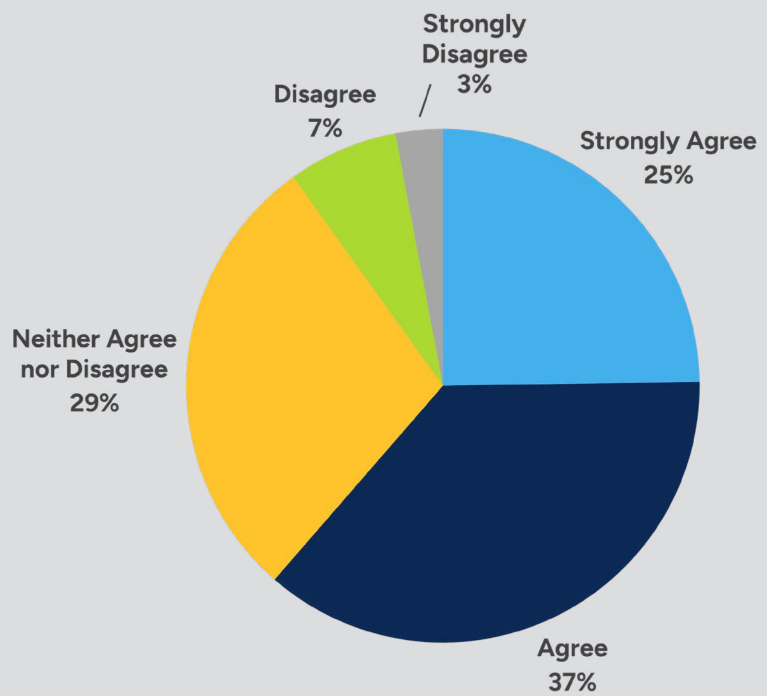
Select all that apply.

Convenience is the primary driver of digital-only bank adoption, cited by 60% of users. Financial benefits also play a major role, with 38% pointing to lower fees and 34% to better interest rates. About one-third say they experience better service, while a quarter report greater trust in digital banks.



PHYSICAL LOCATIONS

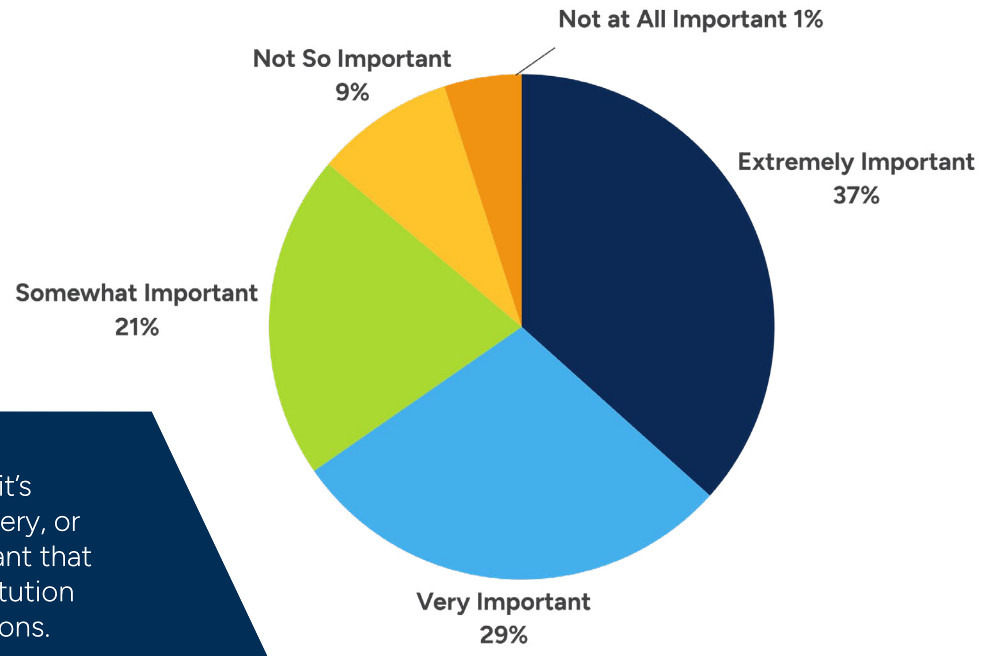
DO MORE PHYSICAL BRANCH LOCATIONS MAKE A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION SEEM MORE ESTABLISHED AND TRUSTWORTHY?



62% of consumers say the more physical locations a financial institution has, the more established and trustworthy it feels.

Younger consumers are the most likely to associate a larger branch network with trustworthiness, with about 72% of those ages 18–29 and 66% of those 30–44 agreeing or strongly agreeing. Agreement softens slightly among ages 45–60 at 61%, while those 60 and older are the most neutral.

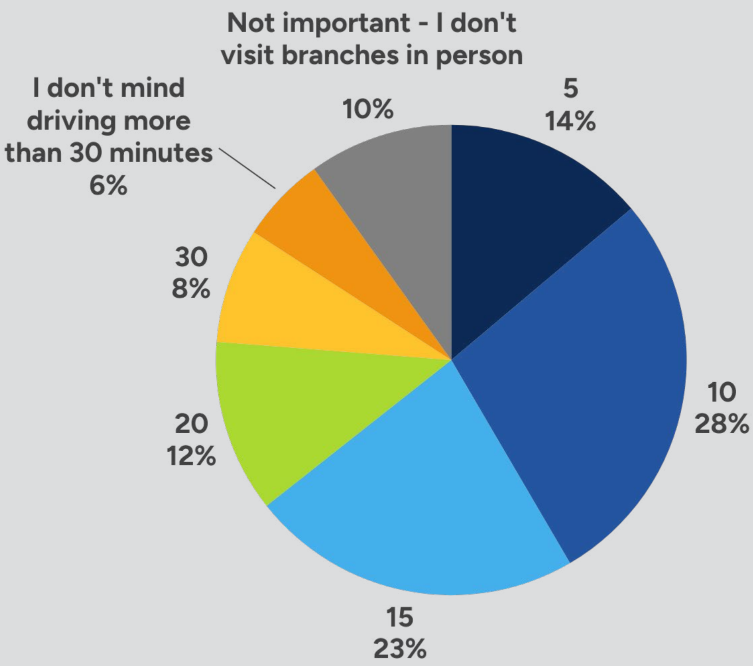
HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT YOUR BANK OR CREDIT UNION HAS PHYSICAL LOCATIONS?



87% of consumers say it's either extremely, very, or somewhat important that their financial institution has physical locations.

PHYSICAL LOCATIONS

HOW MANY MINUTES FROM YOUR HOME TO YOUR BANK OR CREDIT UNION LOCATION IS PREFERRED?



Branch proximity matters for most consumers, with about two-thirds preferring a location within 15 minutes of home, led by 10 minutes as the most common choice. Only a small share are willing to drive 30 minutes or more, while 10% (13 respondents) say branch access is not important because they don't visit in person.

65% OF CONSUMERS

PREFER THEIR PRIMARY BRANCH LOCATION IS WITHIN **15 MINUTES OF THEIR HOME**

WHEN ASKED WHAT THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THEIR MOST RECENT VISIT WAS, the majority (80%) said either deposit, withdrawal, or check cashing. The remaining (all around 5%), include account opening, consultation, issues, loan application, or other services.

WHY DID YOU GO TO A BRANCH TO COMPLETE THIS ACTION?

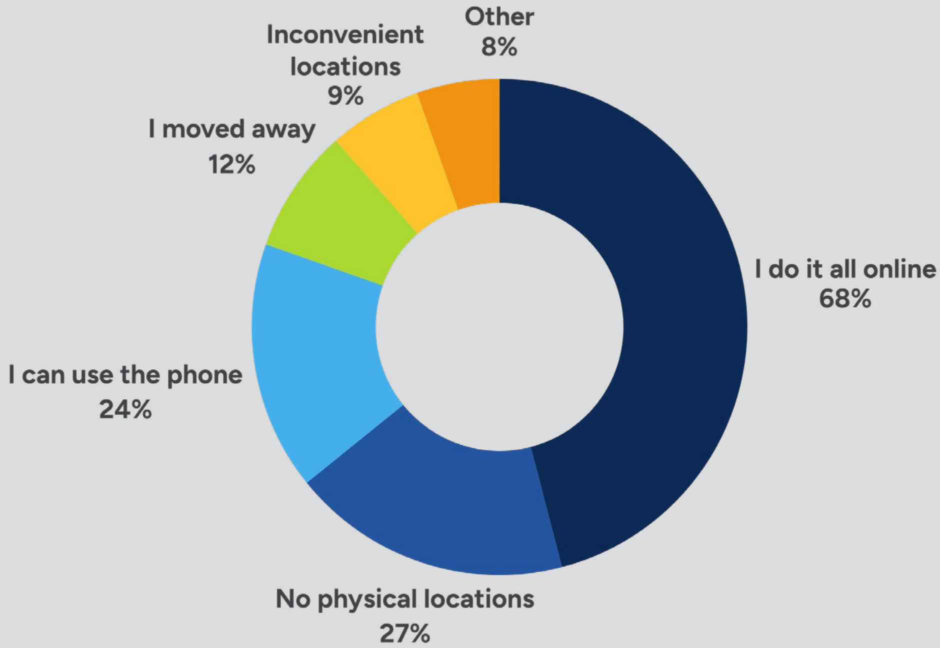
40% NECESSITY

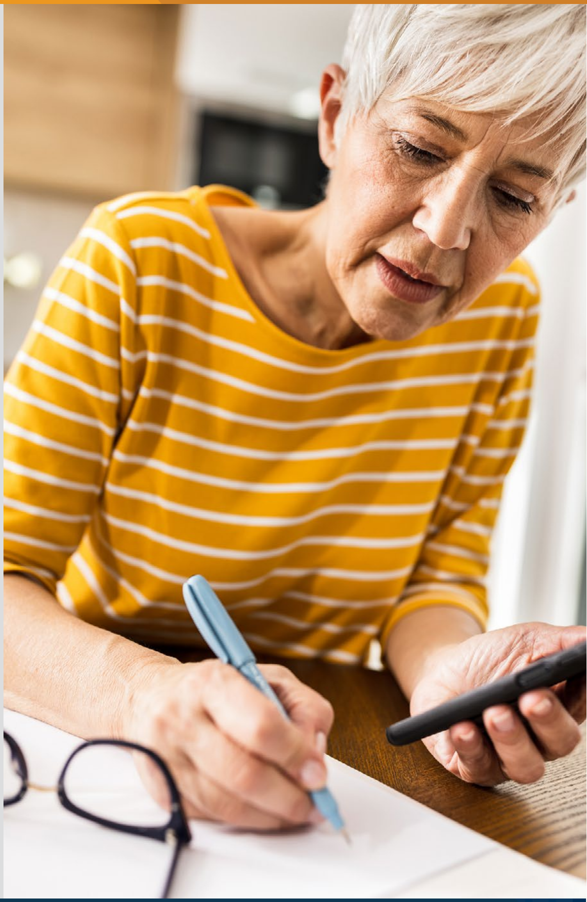
60% CHOICE

PHYSICAL LOCATIONS

WHY DO THE 10% OF RESPONDENTS WHO DON'T VISIT BRANCHES IN PERSON CHOOSE NOT TO?

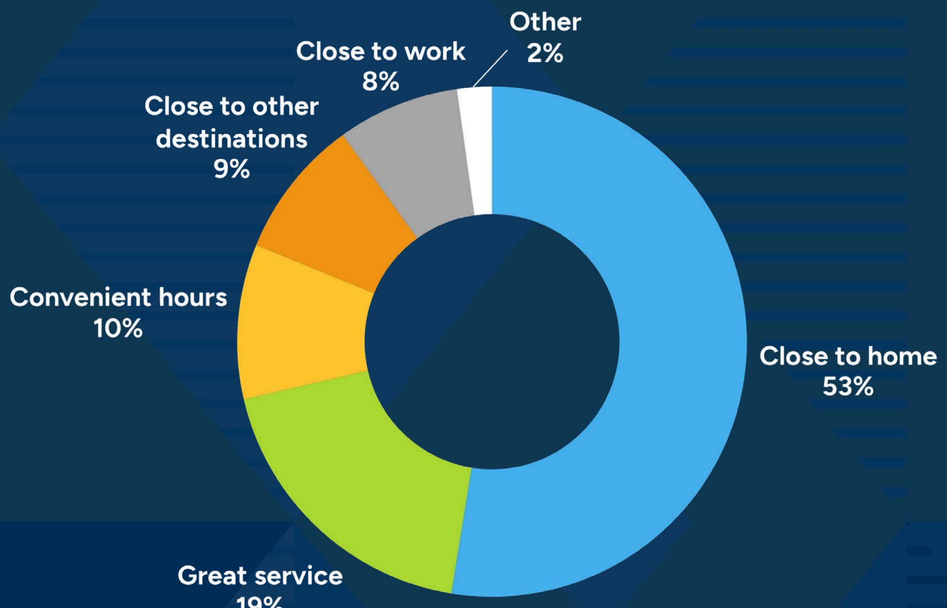
Select all that apply.





THINKING ABOUT THE BRANCH YOU VISIT MOST OFTEN, WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON YOU VISIT THIS PARTICULAR LOCATION?

Branch behavior reflects two distinct but complementary realities: digital convenience keeps many consumers away, while proximity drives those who do visit. Among non-visitors, 68% say they can handle everything online and about one-quarter rely on phone service or use institutions without physical locations. For those who do go to a branch, the decision is overwhelmingly location-based as 53% choose the branch closest to home, followed by strong service, convenient hours, and proximity to work or other errands. Together, the results show that digital capabilities reduce the need for visits, but when a branch is used, convenience and experience determines which location wins.



THE TAKEAWAY

IN CONCLUSION

While digital tools and P2P platforms are now deeply embedded in consumers' financial lives, the data makes clear that the physical branch remains a powerful driver of trust, primary financial relationships, and competitive differentiation. Most consumers still concentrate their finances with one or two institutions, value having a location close to home, and overwhelmingly choose branches based on proximity and service quality. Larger networks continue to reinforce perceptions of stability, and even digitally engaged users show a strong preference for maintaining a connection to a traditional provider. **In this environment, the branch is no longer just a transaction point, it is a strategic asset that signals strength, deepens relationships, and anchors the overall customer experience in ways digital alone cannot replicate.**

THE DATA MAKES IT CLEAR THAT THE PHYSICAL BRANCH REMAINS A POWERFUL DRIVER OF TRUST, PRIMARY FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATION.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

La Macchia Group is a full-service design/build firm specializing in strategic planning, branding, architectural design, construction management, and technology integration. We customize every project to meet the unique goals and needs of our clients, creating spaces that are both highly functional and true to their brand. With an exclusive focus on financial institutions, we bring a deep understanding of the industry's challenges and opportunities, allowing us to deliver solutions that are innovative, practical, and impactful.

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