

ATM Business — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into action. You will model the unit economics of a real machine, qualify and pitch actual locations, plan your processing and connectivity, and build the cash and reconciliation systems that keep an ATM route profitable. Work through each section as you study the matching course module, and use the templates to keep your numbers and contracts in one place.

How an ATM Business Makes Money

Build the per-machine profit intuition and decide which role in the business fits your capital and time.

Exercise: Model the Unit Economics of One Machine

Pick a real or imagined location and estimate its monthly transactions. Set your surcharge, interchange, and processing cost, then compute net profit per machine and the payback period on the equipment.

- How many transactions per month do you expect, and what surcharge plus interchange will you earn per transaction?

- After subtracting processing cost and any location split, what is your net revenue per transaction and per month?

- At that monthly profit, how many months does a new (about 2,500 dollar) machine take to pay back?

Worksheet: Business Model Decision

Decide whether you will run as a full owner-operator, provide processing in a merchant-owned model, or partner with a placement company. Fill in each field honestly for your situation.

Starting capital available for machines and vault cash

Hours per week you can commit to loading and servicing

Tolerance for personally carrying and handling cash (low / medium / high)

Chosen model (owner-operator / merchant-owned processing / placement partner) and why

Target number of machines in your first 12 months

Checklist: Economics Readiness

- I can explain the difference between surcharge and interchange
- I understand that dispensed cash is my own money, reimbursed via settlement
- I can calculate net revenue per transaction after processing fees
- I can compute a machine's monthly profit and payback period
- I have chosen a business model that matches my capital and time

Machines, Processing, and the Plumbing

Choose the right machine, line up a processor, and plan the connectivity and monitoring that keep it running.

Worksheet: Machine Selection Spec

Specify the machine you will buy for your first location. Match brand, cash capacity, and condition to the site, and confirm compliance before purchase.

Location type and expected monthly transaction volume

Chosen brand and model (Genmega, Hyosung, Triton, or Hantle)

Cash cassette capacity and expected refill frequency

New or refurbished, with target price and the distributor

Confirmed EMV chip reader and current encryption (yes / no)

Exercise: Compare Two Processor Offers

Request or research terms from two ATM processors (for example Columbus Data Services and Switch Commerce, often via a distributor). Compare the fees and contract terms that determine what you actually keep.

- What is the per-transaction processing fee, and is there a monthly minimum or gateway fee on each offer?
 - What is the contract length and the early-termination penalty for each?
 - After fees, which processor leaves you the most net revenue at your expected volume, and why?
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Worksheet: Connectivity and Monitoring Plan

Plan how the machine connects, how it is secured, and how you will watch it remotely. Fill in each field for your first placement.

Connection method (cellular 4G LTE, wired internet, or merchant WiFi) and why

Anchoring method and placement relative to the location's cameras

Remote-monitoring data you will track (cash level, transactions, faults)

Low-cash and error alerts you will enable

Repair plan and parts/support source for jams and printer faults

Checklist: Machine and Processing Readiness

- Selected a major-brand machine sized to the location's volume
- Confirmed the machine is EMV-capable with current encryption
- Chose a processor and understand its per-transaction and monthly fees
- Understand settlement timing for surcharge, interchange, and dispensed cash

- Planned connectivity, anchoring, and camera coverage
- Enabled remote monitoring with low-cash and fault alerts

Winning and Keeping Locations

Qualify high-traffic sites, pitch the owner, and lock in the placement with a protective contract.

Exercise: Qualify Three Real Locations

Visit or research three nearby businesses that fit the high-cash-demand profile. Observe traffic and existing ATM presence, and rank them by likely transaction volume.

- For each location, what is the venue type, observed foot traffic, and how customers pay (cash vs card)?

- Does each already have an ATM, and if so is it reliable, stocked, and well-placed?

- How far is the nearest free bank ATM, and which of the three is your strongest target and why?

Worksheet: Pitch Script and Offer

Prepare the pitch you will deliver to a target owner. Fill in each field so you can walk in ready to ask for a yes. One-sentence benefit opener (customer spending and zero cost to them)

What you provide (machine, cash, processing, service, insurance)

What you need from them (space, power, connection)

Surcharge split or flat fee you will offer

Two likely objections and your response to each

Exercise: Draft the Placement Terms

Using your strongest target location, outline the placement agreement terms that protect your investment and revenue.

- What placement term (two to five years) and exclusivity language will you require?

- How will the surcharge be controlled, and what split or flat fee will the owner receive?

- What notice period and machine-removal rights will the termination clause include?

Checklist: Location and Contract Readiness

- Identified venue types with genuine cash demand and high foot traffic
- Observed each target at peak hours and checked for existing ATMs
- Prepared a benefit-led pitch and a surcharge split or flat-fee offer
- Have a one-page agreement ready to sign on the spot
- Secured exclusivity so no competing ATM can split volume
- Retained surcharge control and machine-removal rights in writing

Cash, Compliance, and Running the Route

Fund and reconcile the cash, secure the machines, and meet the legal requirements that keep the route running for years.

Exercise: Size the Vault Cash and Float

Estimate how much cash your first machine needs and the total float across your planned fleet, accounting for the one-to-two-day settlement delay.

- How much cash does the machine dispense per week, and how much will you load given your visit frequency?

- Including a safety buffer, how much cash must sit in the machine at any time?

- Across all planned machines, what total float (in machines plus in transit plus awaiting settlement) must you fund, and is self-loading or a vault-cash provider the better fit?

Worksheet: Reconciliation and Security Plan

Define how you will balance each machine and protect the cash. Fill in each field for your operating routine. How you will record cash loaded on every visit

Where you pull dispensed totals and surcharge reports (processor portal)

How often you reconcile loaded minus dispensed against remaining cash

Physical security measures (anchoring, safe codes, skimmer inspection)

Cash-in-machine and equipment insurance coverage in place

Checklist: Compliance Readiness

- Machine installed at ADA reach height with Braille keys and voice guidance
- On-screen surcharge disclosure with a chance to cancel is working
- EMV chip acceptance and current encryption confirmed
- Checked whether registration as a money services business with FinCEN applies
- Verified state and local business licensing or permits for ATM operation
- Cash-in-machine and equipment insurance secured

Exercise: Build the Route Operating Rhythm

Plan the recurring routine that keeps machines full, balanced, and compliant as you add locations.

- What loading schedule (days and frequency) keeps each machine from running dry?
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- What monthly reconciliation routine will you use to catch shortages and skimming early?
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- As you grow past a few machines, what triggers the move to armored cash service or a vault-cash provider?
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Your Action Plan

1. Choose your business model: owner-operator, merchant-owned processing, or placement partner
2. Build a unit-economics model and set a minimum transaction-volume bar a location must clear
3. Qualify five to ten high-cash-demand locations by visiting them at peak hours
4. Pitch owners with the customer-spending benefit and a surcharge split, and sign a protective agreement
5. Buy an EMV-compliant machine from a reputable distributor, sized to the location's volume
6. Set up a processor (such as Columbus Data Services or Switch Commerce) and confirm settlement timing
7. Install with cellular connectivity, anchor the machine, and enable remote monitoring and alerts
8. Fund the vault cash and float, accounting for the one-to-two-day settlement delay
9. Meet compliance up front: ADA height, surcharge disclosure, EMV, FinCEN registration if applicable, and insurance
10. Run a disciplined loading and monthly reconciliation rhythm, and scale to vault cash or armored service as you grow

