

Vending Machine Business — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into an action plan for launching your vending business. You will run the acquisition math on your first machine, build and score a pipeline of real locations, design a product mix and pricing model that protects margin, and set up the route and per-machine tracking that make the business scalable. Work through one section per module, complete the action plan, and fill the included templates with your own numbers.

The Vending Business Model and Your First Machine

Set accurate expectations and choose and price your first machine acquisition.

Exercise: Pressure-Test the Passive Income Story

Be honest about the time and money this business requires before you buy anything. Answer each prompt in writing so your expectations are grounded.

- How many hours per month can you realistically dedicate to scouting, restocking, and service?

- How much capital can you put toward your first machine without using funds you may need elsewhere?

- What monthly net profit per machine would make this worthwhile to you, given your time cost?

- Are you comfortable doing the physical work (loading machines, hauling product, basic repairs) and the sales work (pitching strangers)?

Worksheet: First-Machine Acquisition Decision

Compare specific machines you can actually buy right now. Fill one row per candidate machine, then compute an estimated payback period for your top choice.

Machine type (snack, drink, combo, bulk)

Brand and model (e.g. AMS Combo, Crane 168, Vendo glassfront)

Source (refurbisher, marketplace, operator exit)

All-in cost including cashless reader

Has working MDB port for cashless? (yes/no)

Estimated monthly net profit at your target location

Payback period in months (all-in cost divided by monthly net)

Checklist: Used-Machine Inspection Pre-Buy

- MDB port present so a cashless reader can be added
- Bill validator and coin mechanism are a known brand (MEI/CPI or Coinco) and accept current currency
- Refrigeration deck cools properly on any cold machine (compressor tested)
- All spiral motors and trays cycle correctly
- Glass, lighting, and door seals are intact
- Model and serial number researched for known issues and parts availability
- Seller confirmed whether any locations are attached to the machine

Finding and Winning Profitable Locations

Build, score, and close a pipeline of high-traffic locations.

Worksheet: Location Lead-Scoring Sheet

List at least 15 candidate locations in your target radius. Score each from 1 to 5 on the four dimensions, total them out of 20, and sort by score before you pitch.

Business name and address

People on site (employees or residents)

Captivity score 1 to 5 (how hard to buy snacks elsewhere)

Current vending situation (none, broken, weak incumbent, strong incumbent)

Route accessibility score 1 to 5 (how close to your other stops)

Total score out of 20

Decision-maker name and role (office/facilities manager, owner, HR)

Exercise: Write Your Location Pitch

Draft the pitch you will deliver to a decision-maker. Lead with the amenity and reliability, not the commission. Keep it to under 60 seconds spoken.

- What is your one-sentence value proposition (free amenity, zero hassle, modern tap-to-pay machine)?

- How will you describe your restocking and service reliability so they trust you?

- What commission range will you offer, and what is your walk-away point if they demand more?

- What single objection are you most likely to hear, and how will you answer it?

Checklist: Placement Agreement Essentials

- Parties, location address, and specific machines listed
- Commission rate, calculation method (gross sales), and payment frequency stated
- You retain ownership of the machines at all times
- Exclusivity clause naming you as sole vending provider for the term
- Term length, renewal, and termination notice period defined
- Restock and service access plus responsibility for electricity and space
- Machine removal and vandalism or loss responsibility specified for end of term

Product Selection, Pricing, and Payment Technology

Build a profitable product mix, price it for margin, and add cashless and telemetry.

Worksheet: Planogram and Margin Builder

Plan every slot in your machine. For each product, record your unit cost, your selling price, the markup, and the par level. Confirm your blended cost of goods sits around 35 to 50 percent of sales.

Slot number

Product name and brand

Unit cost

Selling price

Markup percentage

Par level (full slot quantity)

Demographic fit note (office, warehouse, gym)

Exercise: Choose Your Cashless and Telemetry Provider

Decide which payment and monitoring platform you will standardize on across all machines. Compare two candidates against what matters to you.

- Which two providers will you compare (e.g. Nayax, Cantaloupe/Seed, VendSys)?
- What is the total cost per machine: processing percentage plus monthly reader fee?
- Which telemetry alerts matter most to you: low-stock, machine fault, or cash-level?
- How will adding tap-to-pay and mobile wallets change your expected sales in this location?

Checklist: Pricing and Product Discipline

- Every slot priced for at least a 100 percent markup over cost
- Blended cost of goods sold confirmed at roughly 35 to 50 percent of sales
- Prices benchmarked against the nearest convenience store
- Heat-sensitive chocolate avoided in any non-air-conditioned machine
- Stock rotated so older product sells first and near-date items pulled
- Slowest sellers flagged for replacement next cycle
- A price-review reminder set for at least twice per year

Route Operations, Cash Flow, and Scaling

Run an efficient route, track each machine's profit, and scale deliberately.

Worksheet: Per-Machine Monthly P&L

Track each machine as its own profit center. Fill one row per machine each month and compute net profit.

Flag any machine below your minimum profit floor for relocation.

Machine ID and location

Gross sales

Cost of goods sold

Location commission

Card-processing fees

Service and supplies allocation

Net profit (gross minus all costs)

Action (keep, reprice, relocate, remove)

Exercise: Design Your Restock Route

Plan an efficient, dense route using par levels and telemetry. Sketch the stop sequence and pre-kitting plan for one service day.

- Which machines are close enough to cluster into one efficient route day?
 - How will you use par levels or telemetry to pre-kit each machine before leaving?
 - What spare parts and tools will you carry to handle jams and basic repairs on site?
 - What is your standard at-stop routine, in order, from cleaning to test-vend?
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Checklist: Scaling Readiness

- Each machine has a documented per-machine P&L
- A minimum net-profit floor set, below which a machine is relocated or renegotiated
- Machines, planograms, and cashless/telemetry platform standardized for repeatability
- Restock and service routine written as a simple SOP
- New locations prioritized for route density near existing stops
- Local sales tax and vending or business license requirements confirmed
- Clean books kept from machine one to support future route sale

Your Action Plan

1. Set your time budget and target net profit per machine, and confirm you are willing to do the physical and sales work
2. Buy one refurbished machine for a location you have already targeted, verifying it has an MDB port for cashless
3. Build a pipeline of at least 15 to 30 candidate locations and score each one out of 20
4. Pitch the highest-scoring locations first, leading with the amenity and closing with a fair commission
5. Sign a written placement agreement with exclusivity before installing any machine
6. Add a cashless reader and standardize on one telemetry platform across your machines
7. Build a planogram of proven sellers priced for at least 100 percent markup, with par levels per slot
8. Run a per-machine P&L every month and relocate any machine below your profit floor
9. Design dense restock routes and pre-kit each machine from telemetry or par levels
10. Reinvest profits into the next machine for a proven location, prioritizing route density as you grow

