

FREE PLAYBOOK

10,000+ Machine Placement Criteria

The minimum location standards behind 10,000+ vending placements. Know which sites to take, which to skip, and what to expect.



SNACK



DRINK



COMBO



SMART COOLER

New To Vending? Read This First

You do not need any vending experience to use this guide. Here is the short version of how a vending business works, so everything that follows makes sense.

What a vending business is

You place snack and drink machines, such as combo machines or smart coolers, in businesses like workplaces, gyms and warehouses. You stock them and you keep the sales. The business hosting the machine usually pays nothing, which is why many say yes.

How it makes money

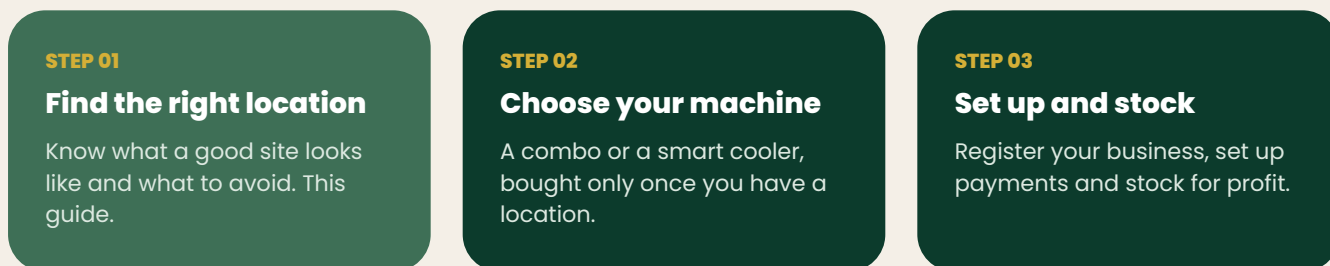


An illustration, not a promise. Qualified locations typically earn \$500–\$4,000+ a month, and a poor location can earn far less. Results vary.

What it takes

Cost to start	About \$2,000–\$5,000+ with a used machine, and about \$5,000–\$7,500+ with a new one (machine, stock and delivery).
Time to a first machine	As little as 30 days for fast starters, and about 60 days for most people. A first location usually takes 2–4 weeks to win.
Time once running	About 20–30 minutes to restock a machine. It is semi-passive once running, not from day one.

Where this guide fits



How to use this guide if you are new

- Start with the **Executive Summary** and the **Minimum Location Requirements**.
- Use the **Quick Location Checklist** when you look at a real site.

THIS GUIDE IS 1 OF 24

It is part of the PVOS Vending Blueprint: the operating manual, materials and resources to start a vending business the right way.

[See The Blueprint](#)

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1. Executive Summary

The performance of any vending machine ultimately comes down to one factor: choosing the right location. After qualifying and managing more than 10,000 snack, drink, combo and smart cooler vending machines across multiple industries and regions, clear patterns emerge. Some environments reliably perform; others consistently fall short.

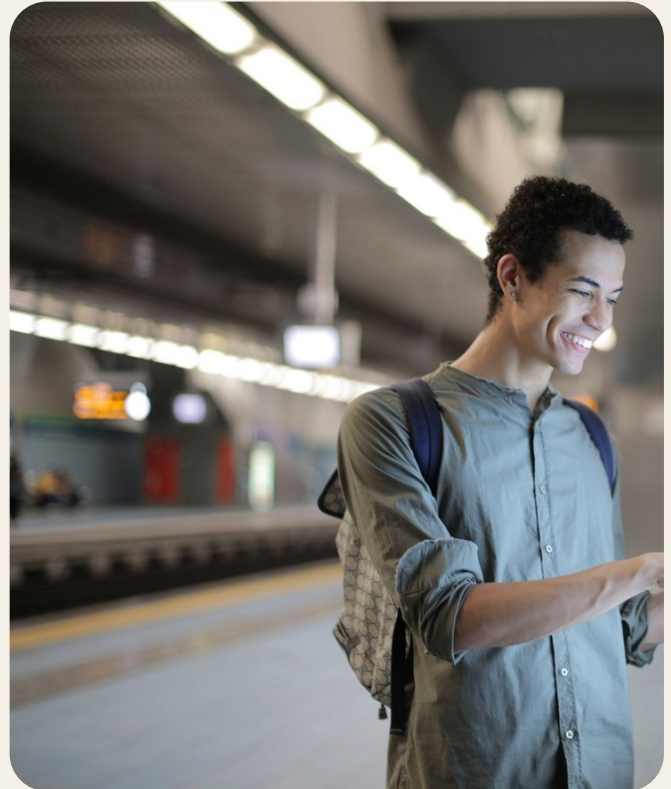
This guide distills those patterns into a practical, repeatable system you can rely on. Our base sales target for any location is **\$500+ per month**, and qualified snack, drink, combo and smart cooler locations typically earn between **\$500–\$4,000+ per month** per location. Most of the machines we use are combination (drinks and snacks) vending machines, as these are the most versatile, practical and in-demand, and the same criteria apply to snack, drink and smart cooler machines.

By using the criteria in this guide, you can assess whether a location has a strong likelihood of meeting or exceeding that baseline **before** committing time, stock or capital.

Many new operators struggle not because the business model is flawed, but because they start without a repeatable process for finding and qualifying locations. They rely on trial and error: reaching out to sites, securing a placement, delivering a machine, stocking it and monitoring results for weeks, only to discover that the location was never viable. Over time this leads to burnout, frustration and, in many cases, operators leaving the industry early.

This guide is designed to break that cycle.

It shows you the environment types that consistently perform, the benchmarks we use internally, and the key factors that decide whether a location is worth a machine. Its purpose is to save you time, reduce risk and increase profitability by eliminating unsuitable locations before you invest in them.



THE FRAMEWORK WILL HELP YOU:

- Understand minimum daily staff and visitor requirements
- Evaluate locations using a structured approach
- Choose profitable locations with higher success rates
- Identify environmental factors that influence sales
- Make confident, fact-based decisions
- Improve long-term ROI, stability and enjoyment of the business

2. Purpose & Intended Audience

This guide is built for anyone looking to make confident, well-informed decisions about where to place a snack, drink, combo or smart cooler vending machine. Whether you are expanding an existing operation or installing your first machine, the principles in this guide give you a clear, repeatable method for evaluating location quality.

THE GOAL IS SIMPLE:

To ensure every vending machine is installed in an environment where it has the highest chance to succeed.

WHO THIS GUIDE SERVES

New and experienced vending operators
Location scouts and placement teams
Students, parents and retirees entering the industry
Career changers building a secondary income stream
Business owners adding vending as a passive asset

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE IS TO:

- Provide a reliable framework for assessing location potential
- Help operators avoid low-performing sites
- Establish clear standards for minimum viability



3. Definitions & Key Terms

A few terms are used throughout this guide.

DAILY STAFF / VISITORS / USERS

The number of people physically present at the location each day.

VISIBILITY & POSITIONING

How easily the machine is seen during normal movement.

COMPETITION

Any food or beverage service that overlaps with vending product types.

CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR

The likelihood that people in the environment will naturally buy snacks or drinks.

PAST MACHINE HISTORY

Any previous vending operations at the location and their performance.

VIABILITY AGREEMENT (VA)

An agreement where the host covers a portion of revenue if the location underperforms.

MACHINE TYPES COVERED

SNACK

Chips, confectionery and other snack products.

DRINK

Bottles and cans, usually cold.

COMBO

Snacks and drinks in one machine.

SMART COOLER

A glass-door refrigerated unit with cashless payment.

4. Methodology Behind This Guide

The criteria in this guide are based on:

- Data from 10,000+ installed machines
- Performance patterns across industrial, commercial, fitness, retail and community environments
- Real operator experience, not theory
- Observed behaviours around visibility, staff movement, break habits and competition
- The actual income range produced by locations with different characteristics

This guide is not academic.

It is a field-tested blueprint that reflects what consistently leads to strong vending performance.



5. What This Guide Doesn't Cover

To keep this guide practical, it does not cover:

- **SPECIALTY VENDING CATEGORIES**
- **SEASONAL OR TEMPORARY EVENTS**
- **SHORT-TERM CONTRACTOR SITES**
- **DETAILED DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS**
- **REMOTE OR UNUSUAL ENVIRONMENTS**

THIS IS A DECISION TOOL FOR SNACK, DRINK, COMBO AND SMART COOLER VENDING.

The most reliable and highest-volume categories in the industry.



6. Industry Benchmarks

ACROSS THOUSANDS OF PLACEMENTS, THE FOLLOWING HOLDS TRUE:

- Most viable locations produce \$500–\$4,000+ per month
- Physical workplaces outperform office environments
- White-collar environments require a higher daily population to perform
- Visibility and positioning can increase sales by 40–70%
- Full-service cafés reduce sales unless hours or product types differ
- Past vending performance is one of the strongest predictors of future success
- These insights shape the minimum criteria in this guide.



7. Minimum Location Requirements for Different Types of Workplaces

All requirements refer to daily population and access hours. These are the minimum thresholds a location should meet to be considered viable and have a strong likelihood of reaching a base target of **\$500+ per month**. They apply to snack, drink, combo and smart cooler machines.

7.1 Industrial & Trade Workplaces

Minimum Daily Staff: **35+**

Minimum Access Hours: **6+**

WHY THIS WORKS:

High movement, heat and physical workload increase beverage and snack consumption.

EXAMPLES:

- Warehouses & distribution centres
- Manufacturing & processing plants
- Mechanical workshops
- Automotive service centres
- Logistics depots
- Fabrication shops
- Plumbing / electrical trade depots
- Cold storage facilities
- Printing & signage warehouses

7.2 Fitness & Movement-Based Facilities

Minimum Daily Members: **100+**

Minimum Access Hours: **6+**

WHY THIS WORKS:

Hydration and quick energy demand spike before and after training.

EXAMPLES:

- Indoor sports stadiums
- Climbing gyms
- Dance studios
- Swim schools
- Indoor soccer & futsal facilities
- Fitness gyms & martial arts

7.3

Construction & Project Sites

Minimum Daily Workers: **35+**

Project Duration: **12+ months**

Minimum Access Hours: **6+**

WHY THIS WORKS:

Heat, physical labour and predictable breaks create strong, consistent demand.

EXAMPLES:

- Residential developments
- Civil & infrastructure projects
- Commercial construction
- Roadworks
- Industrial park developments

7.4

Retail & Service Environments

Minimum Staff: **35+**

OR Visitors: **75+**

Access Hours: **7+**

WHY THIS WORKS:

Steady customer flow and long hours create natural demand for drinks.

EXAMPLES:

- Hardware stores
- Auto parts shops
- Tyre & wheel centres
- Large-format retail
- Furniture stores
- Electronics retailers
- Pet stores
- Self-storage centres
- Car dealerships
- High-traffic salons & barbers

7.5

Hospitality & Accommodation

Minimum Staff: **75+**

OR Guests: **100+**

Access Hours: **7+**

WHY THIS WORKS:

High turnover and extended hours drive strong, consistent sales.

EXAMPLES:

- Hotels & motels
- Resorts
- RV parks
- Conference centres
- Hostels
- Budget lodging
- Serviced apartments

7.6 Health, Education & Community

Minimum Staff: **75+**

Access Hours: **7+**

WHY THIS WORKS:

Long shifts and consistent staff presence create stable sales.

EXAMPLES:

- Aged care & retirement centres
- Childcare (staff only)
- Vocational training campuses
- Medical clinics
- Physiotherapy centres
- Community hubs
- Schools (staff-only areas)

7.7 Offices & White-Collar Environments

Minimum Staff: **75+**

Access Hours: **7+**

WHY THIS WORKS:

Lower per-person consumption, but high population can offset this.

EXAMPLES:

- Corporate offices
- Call centres
- Shared office buildings
- Government service centres
- Insurance & finance
- IT hubs

Overview of workplaces

Workplace	Min. daily staff	Min. trading hours	Examples	Why this works
Industrial & Trade Workplaces	35	6	Mechanical workshops, automotive service, logistics depots	High movement, heat and workload increase consumption.
Fitness & Movement-Based Facilities	100 members	6	Sports stadiums, climbing gyms, dance studios	Hydration and energy demand spike around training.
Construction & Project Sites	35	6	Residential developments, commercial construction, roadworks	Heat, labour and set breaks create steady demand.
Retail & Service Environments	35	7	Hardware stores, auto parts, tyre centres, furniture stores	Steady customer flow and long hours create natural demand.
Hospitality & Accommodation	75 staff or 100+ guests	7	Hotels & motels, resorts, RV parks, conference centres	High turnover and extended hours drive consistent sales.
Health, Education & Community	75	7	Medical clinics, physio centres, community hubs	Long shifts and steady staff presence create stable sales.
Offices & White-Collar Environments	75	7	Corporate offices, call centres, shared office buildings	Lower per-person consumption, but high population can offset this.

8. Other Key Factors

These factors strongly influence performance when combined with the minimum staff and access requirements.

8.1 Visibility & Positioning

A machine people naturally walk past will always outsell a machine hidden from view.

STRONG VISIBILITY

- ✓ Reception areas
- ✓ Entrances & walk paths
- ✓ Waiting areas
- ✓ Break rooms with high foot traffic
- ✓ Gym front-of-house

WEAK VISIBILITY

- ✗ Back rooms
- ✗ Around corners
- ✗ Behind counters
- ✗ Low-traffic staff rooms

WHY IT MATTERS:

Visibility can be the difference between \$300/month and \$500+/month, even in identical environments.

8.2 Competition

Competition only matters if there is overlap in product types and operating hours.

NO REAL COMPETITION

- ✓ No drink/snack suppliers
- ✓ Limited or no alternatives
- ✓ Higher convenience with vending

MODERATE COMPETITION

- Cafés serving mainly hot meals
- Kitchens with limited hours
- Small tuckshops

STRONG COMPETITION

- ✗ Full-service cafés
- ✗ Canteens
- ✗ Convenience stores

WHY IT MATTERS:

Less competition = more predictable and stronger sales.

8.3 Consumption Behaviour

Environments buy differently based on physical demand, heat and habits.

HIGH CONSUMPTION

- ✓ Physical work
- ✓ Fitness environments
- ✓ Long shifts
- ✓ Staff who remain on site
- ✓ Hot or high-movement workplaces

MODERATE CONSUMPTION

- Retail
- Health workers
- Schools (staff)
- Aged care

LOW CONSUMPTION

- ✗ Sedentary office roles
- ✗ Consulting
- ✗ Creative studios

WHY IT MATTERS:

People who work physically, stay on site and take regular breaks buy more. Sedentary roles buy less, so they need a higher population to perform.

8.4 Past Machine History

One of the strongest performance indicators when interpreted correctly.

POSITIVE

- ✓ Past strong performance
- ✓ Staff requesting another machine
- ✓ Complaints about the last operator not restocking
- ✓ Requests for larger or additional machines

NEUTRAL

- Renovations
- Ownership changes
- Old machine, no cashless, poor servicing
- Unknown history

NEGATIVE

- ✗ Multiple past failures
- ✗ Low sales with no environmental changes
- ✗ Operators abandoning the site

WHY IT MATTERS:

Past performance is one of the strongest predictors of future performance. Always find out what happened to the last machine, and why.

9. Viability Agreement (VA)

A Viability Agreement protects operators when a site is below minimum standards but the location still requests a machine.

WHAT THE VA DOES:

- Ensures the operator is compensated if the site earns below the base target (example: \$500/month)
- Allows testing of borderline locations with reduced risk
- Creates shared responsibility
- Ensures minimum profitability

EXAMPLES:

- If a site earns \$300 and the minimum is \$500, the host pays the \$200 difference (this can be exchanged for products).
- If the site exceeds the minimum, no VA payment is required.

The VA transforms borderline sites into predictable, manageable placements.



10. No-Go Factors

UNLESS THERE IS A VIABILITY AGREEMENT, DO NOT PLACE A MACHINE IF:

- Daily population is below 25
- Only hidden placement options exist
- A full-service café overlaps vending and other metrics are weak
- Access hours are insufficient
- Multiple past vending failures with no changes
- The installation environment is unsafe



11. How To Predict & Estimate Income

For a detailed estimate of any site, use the PVOS Location Sales Calculator (next page) and the Location Scoring System. However, for operators moving at volume, our field teams use a simplified estimation formula based on proven operational data.

BASELINE PERFORMANCE METRICS

A location meeting minimum requirements (35+ daily staff in manufacturing environments with all qualifying factors present) has a **strong likelihood** of exceeding \$500 monthly revenue.

SCALING PROJECTIONS

Revenue scales proportionally with traffic density when environmental factors remain constant. A comparable location with 75+ daily staff typically generates approximately **\$1,000 monthly revenue**, with actual performance rarely deviating significantly from this benchmark.

APPLICATION IN FIELD OPERATIONS

This formula enables rapid assessment during high-volume placement cycles without requiring full scoring system calculations for every location. Our ground operations teams use this methodology to maintain placement velocity while preserving forecast accuracy.

RELIABILITY PARAMETERS

Based on operational data across 10,000+ placements, this estimation method typically produces results within predicted ranges, accounting for standard variance in location-specific performance factors.

This streamlined approach balances speed with accuracy, which is essential for professional operators scaling placement volume systematically.

11.2 The PVOS Location Sales Calculator

The quick formula gives you a fast read. For a more detailed estimate of any site, use the **PVOS Location Sales Calculator**. It turns the criteria in this guide into an estimated monthly revenue range in 7 steps, using the same data points behind 10,000+ placements.

1

Environment type

Office, gym, factory, hospitality, retail and more, each with its own baseline range and minimum population.

2

Staff & visitor population

Weighted with a 1:3.33 staff-to-visitor ratio. Staff buy roughly 3× more than passing foot traffic.

3

Daily access hours

Single shift, extended day or 24-hour access. Every extra hour changes the range.

4

Competition

Other vending, a café on site, kitchen access and nearby shops can move the estimate up or down.

5

Visibility & position

Where the machine sits matters as much as where the site is.

6

Past machine history

Has a machine been there before, and what happened?

7

Climate

Hot, cold or temperate. Climate affects product mix and seasonal swings.

\$

Estimated revenue range

All 7 inputs combine into one monthly range, before you commit.

WHAT THE CALCULATOR TELLS YOU

Estimated revenue range

A realistic monthly earning band, not a single number.

Performance band

Below minimum, borderline, standard, above average or top tier.

Recommended next step

Pursue, negotiate protective terms, or pass.

HOW THEY WORK TOGETHER

Use this guide as your first filter: the minimum thresholds and the no-go factors. Then run promising sites through the Calculator for an estimated revenue range. It is included with the Complete Blueprint, with lifetime access and unlimited locations.

See the Complete Blueprint: pvosacademy.com/toolkit

Estimates are based on operational benchmarks and work best when all 7 inputs are filled honestly. They are not guarantees of income.

12. Conclusion

Choosing the right location is the single most important factor in building a profitable, low-stress vending operation. When you understand the environments that reliably perform, the population thresholds that matter and the behavioural patterns that drive daily consumption, your results become predictable rather than uncertain.

By applying these criteria, you avoid the trial-and-error cycle that causes many new operators to burn out or exit the industry early.

Strong locations share one thing in common: they meet the minimum requirements and support consistent, natural demand for drinks and snacks.

USING THESE STANDARDS DRAMATICALLY INCREASES YOUR CHANCES OF:

- Hitting a \$500+ monthly baseline, up to \$4,000+
- Securing long-term profitable placements
- Reducing risk and wasted labour
- Building a stable, enjoyable vending business

Use this guide as your first filter.

If a location meets the criteria outlined here, our experience shows it has a **strong chance** of doing above \$500 per month in sales. If it does not, walk away confidently, knowing you avoided a low-performer.

Your business becomes easier, more profitable and far more predictable when your locations are chosen intentionally rather than emotionally.

Quick Location Checklist

Run every location through this list before you commit. It summarises the criteria in this guide.

1

Population & hours

- ☐ Meets the minimum daily staff or visitors for its workplace type (see the overview table)
- ☐ Meets the minimum access hours
- ☐ Daily population is at least 25 (the absolute floor)

2

Visibility

- ☐ A visible position is available: reception, entrances, waiting areas, busy break rooms

3

Competition

- ☐ No strong overlap from full-service cafés, canteens or convenience stores, or hours and products clearly differ

4

Consumption behaviour

- ☐ High or moderate consumption environment (physical work, long shifts, staff on site)

5

Past machine history

- ☐ No repeated past failures with no changes
- ☐ Positive signals, such as staff asking for a machine

6

No-go check

- ☐ None of the no-go factors apply, or a Viability Agreement is in place

All boxes ticked: a strong candidate. Not all ticked: negotiate a Viability Agreement, or walk away. Then run promising sites through the Location Sales Calculator for an estimated revenue range.

This checklist is one of 24 resources in the **PVOS Vending Blueprint**. **See the Complete Blueprint at pvosacademy.com/toolkit**

Next Steps

You now have the standards to qualify a location. Choose the path that fits where you are.

STARTING OUT

Start your vending business the right way

This guide shows you which locations to pick. The Complete PVOS Blueprint is the full path from zero to your first machine, in as little as 30 days for fast starters and about 60 for most: 24 guides, ready-to-use templates, the Location Sales Calculator and PVOS Location Scout.

Get The Complete Blueprint

pvosacademy.com/toolkit

ALREADY RUNNING MACHINES

Get more locations coming in

Tell us your goal, whether that is more locations, a professional brand and website, or Google Ads and Maps, and we will recommend the right package for you.

Book A Free Strategy Call

[Straight to our calendar](#)

EARNINGS DISCLAIMER

Revenue figures in this guide illustrate operational experience and are not guarantees of income. Individual results will vary based on location quality, market conditions and operational execution. Vending machine businesses carry real financial risk. Nothing in this guide constitutes financial or investment advice.