

## Hottest Vending Machine Home Based Businesses

A few years back, I worked retail at a paper store. Needless to say, there were many days on which hours would go by without anyone coming in under the extreme duress of needing to purchase a ream of paper. And right between the register and the door was a full-size soda machine and a small candy machine that had m&m's, Runts, and roasted almonds. I can't even tell you how many times I emptied that almond canister, popping in quarter after quarter after quarter in pursuit of that savory, salted goodness. And I wasn't alone; everyone and their business partner managed daily to scrounge up 25 cents in spare pocket change and push it into that coin slot.

Oh, almonds—now I want some again. But that wasn't my point in telling my silly story; my point is that candy vending is an amazingly profitable business, precisely because the average American can't avoid dropping a quarter into a machine for a tasty treat—after all, it's just a quarter. And though a quarter doesn't sound like much, when all the quarters are added up, some reports estimate that the average vending machine distributorship makes a little over \$70 an hour, which is no small wage at all. But before everyone goes racing out to start dropping off vending machines around town, it's important to choose your vending franchisor wisely. Here are what we would consider the big, trustworthy names in the industry.

Truth be told, most vending franchises are pretty similar, which doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out: machine, candy, and owner pretty much sum up what any vending outfit looks like. Still, there are some that carry an added punch that makes them worthy of a little extra attention. Utturn Vending is one such business, set apart from everyone else by their machines, which are some of the best in the industry. More interesting than the average vending machine, these "money machines"—as the company likes to call them—pivot around a central post, making 8 compartments available where a stationary machine would only have 4. And aside from the increased choices, the machines are some of the most sturdy available.

The machine, though, isn't the whole story to a successful vending home based business. Of as much importance is the actual stock; what kind of candy do you have? If what your equipment is sporting is a knock-off brand of gumball or—heaven help us—something healthy, no one in their right mind is going to give you their hard-earned quarters. That is why Vendstar also makes the list as one hot vending commodity, providing only brand-name, recognizable treats. Although, there is something to be said for selling a new product as well. All of us like trying something novel—as long as it's good—and few candies are more novel than the newest creation sold by American Vending Systems work at home franchisees: Buzz Bites. Though I will admit that it sounds like something you'd find at a bar, it's really much more benign than that. It's a tasty chocolate chew with a caffeine equivalence of a cup of coffee, and who doesn't want one of those?

Not all vending machines sell food products, though. In fact, there are three great business opportunities in the vending market that specialize in not selling food, but rather selling everything from DVDs to lobsters—yes, seriously. If what you want is something original in your machines, one of these is for you.

First, the DVDs. The concept has made a huge splash in Europe, but it is just starting out in the US, and that idea is the automated DVD vending kiosk. DVDNow is leading the way in this country, renting out movies without the use of employees or storefronts, which keeps prices drastically lower for both owner and customer. And on the way home from renting a video, the consumer in question could very well stop off at a local supermarket parking lot to visit someone else's Polar Ice Express franchise, which is perfect because the shopper doesn't even have to leave her vehicle to use the machine. The ease of use for her is only beaten by the ease of ownership for the franchisee, who merely has to run periodic clean-ups, refill the ice bags occasionally, and keep up relations with the owner of the establishment he is renting parking space from. And finally, if this particular lady is feeling especially culinary, she may want to stop and get some lobster from a Love Maine Lobster Claw vending machine inside the grocery store. I'm not sure how many people actually manage to snag a lobster from the tank, but this machine makes money like no other, off of sheer oddity, because there is nowhere else that a person can actually work to grab their lobster of choice from the tank with the use of a small crane. They all may seem a little out of the ordinary in terms of the classic concept of vending, but DVDNow, Polar Ice Express, and The Love Maine Lobster Claw are all completely legit and well worth the investment of your investigational time.

All in all, there is a lot to be said for vending business opportunities. Kids always manage to get their parents to drop that quarter into the machine, hungry employees will always sacrifice a quarter to tide themselves over until lunch, and the rest of us appreciate the ease of getting a DVD without the trouble of human contact; as a culture, we cannot stay away from either candy machines or other kinds of vending machines. Anyone smart enough to get in on the business can certainly make a pretty penny. All they have to do is choose the right company to go with.

### About the Author

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