

Killer Location?



Is this a good,
profitable
location for
my hot dog
cart?

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Moore Better Performance

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First thing to do, obviously, is **find a site** to start analyzing.



You need to set aside enough time to do each of the steps thoroughly and accurately. Rushing the process only leads to problems later.



All the phone calls can be made in less than a couple of hours, depending on how long you are hold. Write down all the questions you wish to ask each person you contact. It is far better to ask too many questions at this point than be surprised later.



The computer research takes less than an hour. The onsite research takes the most time as you need to visit the site several different times but is the most revealing. Setting up in front of a business does not guarantee success. Prove the site can support your goals to yourself.



Finally, you must know your **operational, sales and profitability goals**. Be specific and be realistic. If your goal is to make \$100,000 a year then say so. Likewise, you must know your **actual** operational costs.



Remember, take your time, prepare questions, research and research some more. The better prepared you are today the less you have to worry about tomorrow. If you hurry the research or just plain guess, you have the age-old computer adage – GIGO! Garbage In – Garbage Out.

KILLER LOCATION?

Property/Business Information							
Property Owner Name				Number			
Concerns:							
Business Owner Name				Number			
Concerns:							
Business Manager Name				Number			
Concerns:							
Street Eats LTD or similar required?		App Cost		Rent		Deposit	
Notes:							
Signage restrictions?							
List Restrictions							

Gather landlord, business owner and manager names and numbers. Property tax records will reveal the owner, while a simple phone call during **slow business** hours will find the manager and business owners names and contact info.

When you reach the point of negotiation for rent and other operational details you may find the business requires you operate under Street Eats LTD or some other entity that provides the business a sense of professionalism for your cart. Street Eats, for instance, requires background checks for you and any employee, you must be open a certain number of days and hours, (generally the same days the business is open) and you must meet their standards for appearance, menu, etc. Rent is then paid to Street Eats rather than the business you wish to front. Lowes, Home Depot and some other big stores use Street Eats. Local store managers do have some leeway in using or not using Street Eats. Frankly the benefit is to the big store and not the cart owner. Street Eats requires background checks on you and your employee, as well as, requiring certain operational hours and days. [Here](#) are the details of their program and the application.

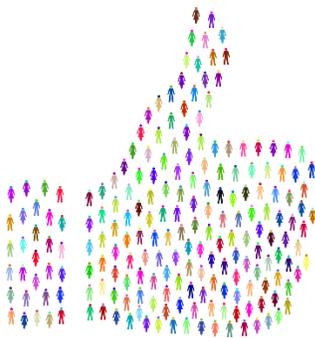
Sign laws may break your ability to reach the full sales potential at your desired site. Yard signs (like a politician uses) are often prohibited. Better to know before you open for business. Many times, destruction of the signs or fines are the penalties. Other limits include use of feather flags, dancing man blow ups, bright or distracting light up signs. If you are able to set up on in a location with a couple thousand passersby an hour, signs will not be nearly as important to your success. All you need at that point is an easy to read menu visible from several feet away from your cart.



Google the traffic count for the street. Some states have interactive maps with breakdowns of car and truck traffic for all streets in a town, otherwise, call a realtor that specializes in businesses. They will have access to traffic counts. This gives you an idea of how many people will see your cart and signage, **not** how many will eat with you.



Speed limit is important, again for allowing your signage to be noticed as well as giving the driver time to read and then react to your signs. 45MPH or more requires short, easy to read messages and they will need to be placed farther away from your location, giving the driver time to understand your signs and find your cart.



Time for a field trip to your potential site. Visit during times you plan on operating. Count the number of people walking by a minimum of 3 different times. These are going to be your guests until you establish a marketing plan to the surrounding businesses and residences. Count for at least 10 minutes per visit and multiple by 6 for an hourly count. The longer you count the more accurate your information. If you plan on opening only on Friday, Saturday and Sunday make sure you visit on each day, at different times. It is recommended you visit at least 2 different weeks for all days you wish to open. The more time spent now pays off in less stress later.

KILLER LOCATION?

Research Findings									
Daily car count			Posted speed limit			Near corner/traffic lights			
Two way traffic			Correct direction			Median break			
Foot traffic	Day	Count	Avg	Count	Avg	# Guests (within 5 minutes)			
	Mon		0.0		0.0	Residential		Business	
	Tue		0.0		0.0			5	
	Wed		0.0		0.0				
	Thu		0.0		0.0	# Competition within sight of cart			
	Fri		0.0		0.0	Restaurants		Vendors	
	Sat		0.0		0.0				
	Sun		0.0		0.0				
Sq. feet for set up		# parking spots			Final Approval Checklist				
Closest office complex <i>Visit & Invite</i>					Property Owner				
					Business Owner				
Closest residential <i>Door hangers</i>					Business Manager				
					City Officials				
Closest shopping <i>Flyers</i>					County Officials				
					Marketing Plan Developed?				

This section analyzes vehicle and pedestrian traffic patterns. As you establish yourself as a delicious meal choice more and more of your guest will travel to you. (Unless, of course, your foot traffic

provides all the guests you need) Ease of getting to your cart and then returning to work or home make traffic patterns important. Busy streets make left hand turns dangerous or illegal. Positioning your cart and signs on the correct side of the street is important. A nearby traffic light makes it easier for cars to notice you, as well as, enter and exit your location. Traffic lights also regulate foot traffic and being close to one allows the amazing aromas from your food to market your cart to pedestrians.

Research Findings									
Daily car count			Posted speed limit			Near corner/traffic lights			
Two way traffic			Correct direction			Median break			
Foot traffic	Day	Count	Avg	Count	Avg	# Guests (within 5 minutes)			
	Mon		0.0		0.0	Residential		Business	
	Tue		0.0		0.0			5	
	Wed		0.0		0.0				
	Thu		0.0		0.0	# Competition within sight of cart			
	Fri		0.0		0.0	Restaurants		Vendors	
	Sat		0.0		0.0				
	Sun		0.0		0.0				
Sq. feet for set up		# parking spots			Final Approval Checklist				
Closest office complex <i>Visit & Invite</i>					Property Owner				
					Business Owner				
Closest residential <i>Door hangers</i>					Business Manager				
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Closest shopping <i>Flyers</i>					County Officials				
					Marketing Plan Developed?				

This area you will find from the USPS site Every Door Direct Mail. You can get a total of residences and business per postal route. Using the US census data, you can figure out how many potential guests live in the area around your cart.

The number of employees in nearby businesses can be found at the Chamber of Commerce or from realtors that specialize in business listings. There have to be enough people nearby for your cart to be successful. Social media will help you develop a following if you live in small town with little foot traffic. Social media basically increases your marketing reach and will help you be successful, but if your location does not have sufficient businesses and residences to support you and any competition you will have many lean days. The sites you will need for information are:

- <https://eddm.usps.com/eddm/customer/routeSearch.action>
- <http://datamapper.geo.census.gov/map.html>



overlooked things until they present as a problem:



Think about how much space your set up and guests will need. You will need enough space to work and move freely. Your guests will need space to form a line, dress hot dogs, get out of the way after receiving food all without feeling cramped.



If there are other street vendors nearby that can be both blessing and curse. Blessing in that the area already supports a vendor and the guests are used to street food. Curse in that the area may only be able to support one. If the vendor is a direct competitor you will basically split guests until you either demonstrate superior food and service or they do. If the competitor only sells complimentary foods (like only deserts and you sell only sandwiches) you may actually help each other by creating a more rounded meal for your guests. Bottom line is how are you going to beat them? (No Clubs 😊)



Consider this your guest list for a party. How are you going to let people know you are open for business, what you are selling and how much it costs. Think about the people that can't actually see you. They deserve the chance to "be in the know" about your delicious food and awesome service. Flyers, door hangers, posters in breakrooms, Direct Mail (surprisingly inexpensive), yard signs, feather flags and targeted social media are just a few ways to let

people know you are open for business.

KILLER LOCATION?

Location Analysis

My Vending Goals	Variable Selection	Results From Research & Goals
I will serve food _____ hours a day	Impulse Buying Guests _____ to _____	Guests in Market Area 0
I expect to work _____ days a year	Potential Vehicle Guests _____ to _____	Drive By Marketing 0
I expect my guests to spend \$ _____ each	Vendor Competitive Impact _____ to _____	Total Marketing Potential 0
I expect to make \$ _____ in taxable income	Restaurant Comp Impact _____ to _____	Daily Expected Guest Range #DIV/0!
My variable cost goal is _____ %	Marketing Redemption _____ to _____	Daily Guests to Hit Goals #DIV/0!
My Annual Fixed Cost Dollars are \$ _____	Business Door Location _____ to _____	Annual Projected Net Sales Range #DIV/0!
I will have _____ monthly marketing		Net \$ for Income Goal #DIV/0!
The number of guests I can handle per hour is _____		Annual P&L Range based on Goals and Projections #DIV/0!
		Income Goal \$6.00
		Break Even \$6.00

Decision											
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Expenses</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Listed concerns from above:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Permit/License \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Application Fee \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Rent \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total First Month Cost \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Expenses	Listed concerns from above:	Permit/License \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?		Application Fee \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?		Total Rent \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?		Total First Month Cost \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?		
Expenses	Listed concerns from above:										
Permit/License \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?											
Application Fee \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?											
Total Rent \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?											
Total First Month Cost \$0.00 Is this cost acceptable?											
Traffic											
Speed Limit 0 Will be a #N/A impact											
Traffic light 0											
Two Way 0											
Set up Correct 0											
Median 0											
Competition											
Restaurant 0 Too much competition?											
Vendor 0 Too much competition?											
Projected Income											
Low Projected Goal Income #DIV/0! \$0.00 #DIV/0!	Are the listed concerns acceptable?										

This location is: #DIV/0! #DIV/0! You have selected the first month cost as being a deal breaker. Investigate a new location.

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In the light gold boxes answer the questions with realistic numbers or actual numbers from your experience.

My Vending Goals	
I will serve food _____ hours a day	
I expect to work _____ days a year	
I expect my guests to spend \$ _____ each	
I expect to make \$ _____ in taxable income	
My variable cost goal is _____ %	
My Annual Fixed Cost Dollars are \$ _____	
I will have _____ monthly marketing	
The number of guests I can handle per hour is _____	

How many hours each day will you serve your guests?
How many days a year will you work accounting for weather?
This is the average amount you expect each guest to purchase.
This is your personal income after all business expenses are paid.
Variable cost % is ALL costs related to producing your product.
These are cost that do not change such as rent, loan payments, etc.
This is for major marketing events such as coupon drops, radio, etc.
This is the number of guests per hour you can realistically handle.

This next area allows you to select the ranges per category.

Variable Selection			
Impulse Buying Guests			Select the low and high percentages for people that purchase from you out of convenience. 1% -8%
	to		
Potential Vehicle Guests			Percentage of cars that will see your signs and stop by to eat. This will be a low number. 0% - 1%
	to		
Vendor Competitive Impact			Negative expected impact from another street food vendor. 10% - 50%
	to		
Restaurant Comp Impact			Negative expected impact brick and mortar restaurants. 1% - 15%
	to		
Marketing Redemption			Redemption of offers from defined marketing campaigns. 1% - 10% (3% is considered amazing)
	to		
Business Door Location			Is your site located directly in front a major business like Walmart, Lowes, etc.

Results From Research & Goals	
Guests in Market Area	0
Drive By Marketing	0
Total Marketing Potential	0
Daily Expected Guest Range	
	#DIV/0!
	#DIV/0!
Daily Guests to Hit Goals	#DIV/0!
Annual Projected Net Sales Range	
	#DIV/0!
	#DIV/0!
Net \$ for Income Goal	#DIV/0!
Annual P&L Range based on Goals and Projections	
	#DIV/0!
	#DIV/0!
Income Goal	\$0.00
Break Even	\$0.00

This area on the spreadsheet uses built in formulas to predict potential sales. The formulas use the ranges selected in the above section. This allows you to play around with different scenarios. The question section helps determine if the location fits in with your personal goals.

These areas automatically compute as you fill in the sheet. Giving you potential ranges for each category. The math formulas are set to be very conservative.

KILLER LOCATION?

Decision				
Expenses			Listed concerns from above:	
Permit/License Cost	\$0.00	Is this cost acceptable?		
Application Fee	\$0.00	Is this cost acceptable?		
Total Rent	\$0.00	Is this cost acceptable?		
Total First Month Cost	\$0.00	Is this cost acceptable?		
Traffic				
Speed Limit	0	Will be a	#N/A	impact
Traffic light/corner	0			
Two Way Traffic	0			
Set up Correct Direction	0			
Median Break	0			
Competition				
Restaurants	0	Too much competition?		
Vendors	0	Too much competition?		
Projected Income				
Low Projected \$	#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!	Are the listed concerns acceptable?
Goal Income	\$0.00			
This location is:		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	You have selected the first month cost as being a deal breaker. Investigate a new location.

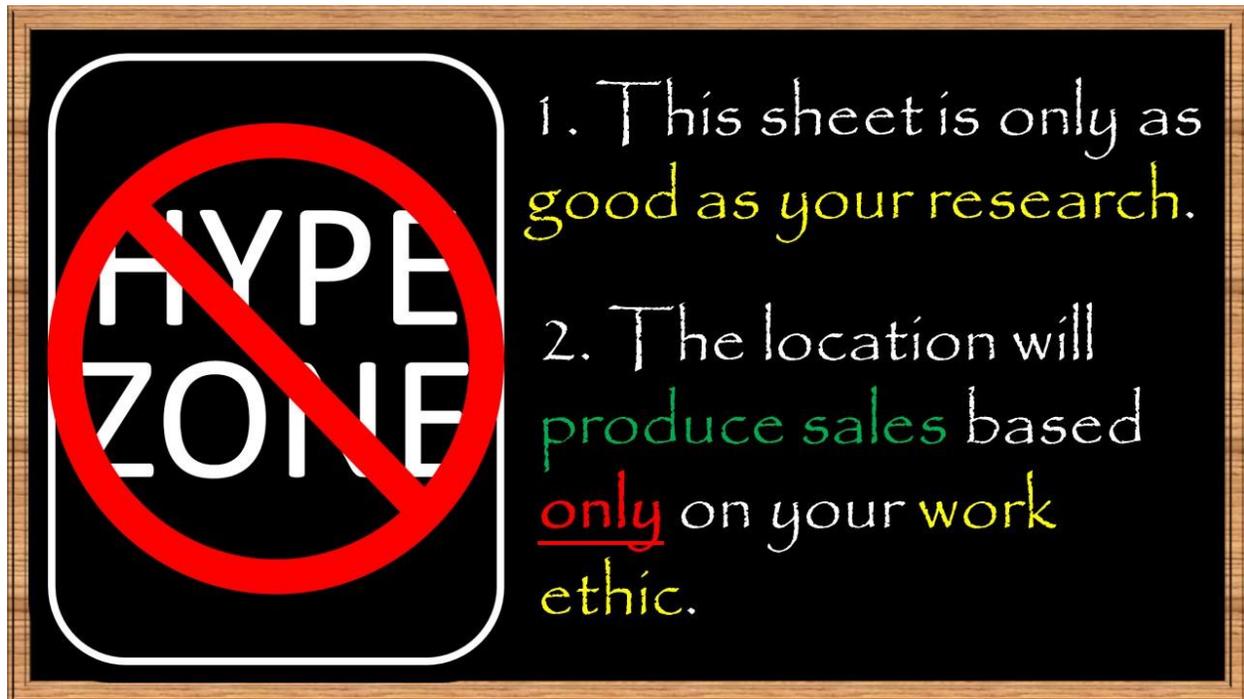
Answer each question in the light gold box, selecting from the drop-down choices. These answers are evaluated and final decision-making advice offered. The advice will be highlighted either green for good site potential, yellow for possibly a good site and red for find another location.

On the next page you can see this section filled out from an actual site we investigated. This site is located in front of a Lowes and has some sign restrictions. Located in a town with a population of around 22,000, this site was a good income producer. The biggest negatives were having to operate everyday Lowes was open and the restrictions on signs to help increase business beyond Lowes customers.

Location Analysis

My Vending Goals		Variable Selection		Results From Research & Goals			
I will serve food _____ hours a day	5	Impulse Buying Guests	1% to 4%	Guests in Market Area	7632		
I expect to work _____ days a year	363	Potential Vehicle Guests	0.05% to 1.00%	Drive By Marketing	8438		
I expect my guests to spend \$_____ each	\$4.77	Vendor Competitive Impact		Total Marketing Potential	16069		
I expect to make \$_____ in taxable income	\$40,000.00	Restaurant Comp Impact	2% to 8%	Daily Expected Guest Range	45 to 119		
My variable cost goal is _____ %	32%	Marketing Redemption	3% to 7%	Daily Guests to Hit Goals	40		
My Annual Fixed Cost Dollars are \$_____	\$6,100.00	Business Door Location	yes	Annual Projected Net Sales Range	\$77,917.95 to \$206,049.69		
I will have _____ monthly marketing	0			Net \$ for Income Goal	\$67,794.12		
The number of guests I can handle per hour is _____	40			Annual P&L Range based on Goals and Projections	\$46,884.21 to \$134,013.79		
				Income Goal	\$40,000.00		
				Break Even	\$8,970.59		
Decision							
Expenses			Listed concerns from above:				
Permit/License Cost	\$70.00	Is this cost acceptable?	yes	Nothing on Beal Pkwy right of way Uses EAT STREET for permission requires 7 day a week operation No flags or signs on Lowe's property Must set up everyday Lowe's is open and operate at least 10am to 3pm No signs on Lowe's property			
Application Fee	\$100.00	Is this cost acceptable?	yes				
Total Rent	\$1,000.00	Is this cost acceptable?	yes				
Total First Month Cost	\$1,170.00	Is this cost acceptable?	yes				
Traffic			Are the listed concerns acceptable? yes				
Speed Limit	45	Will be a				neutral	impact
Traffic light/corner	yes						
Two Way Traffic	yes						
Set up Correct Direction	yes						
Median Break	yes						
Competition							
Restaurants	2	Too much competition?	no				
Vendors	0	Too much competition?	no				
Projected Income							
Low Projected \$ Goal Income	\$46,884.21	This spot will meet \$ goals with good food and service					
	\$40,000.00						
This location is:	17.21%	over your goal income!!!	This location has a few flaws but still has a good chance for success when paired with delicious food and great service.				

Understand...



1. This sheet is only as good as your research.

2. The location will produce sales based only on your work ethic.

Likewise...



A great operator will succeed in a poor site, likewise a poor operator will fail in a good site.

Check out my [blog](#) and my [YouTube channel](#) for additional insight, information and training. Give me a call for your free 30-minute Q&A session anything food service related. I offer several affordable training and support packages to help you achieve your food business goals.

INCREASE Sales & Profit\$

Practical Training and Systems for You



Business coaching and training from a 40 year food service professional

Training YOU to make your business as great as your food.

What I have to offer you:

-  1 on 1 training for your specific food & service
-  Step by step business & bookkeeping training
-  Food service forms, checklists & contracts
-  Sales building & profit increasing strategies
-  Clear growth plan from cart to restaurant



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For your FREE 30 minute consultation
Schedule your appointment today by calling
850-888-3121
and speak directly to me!