

THE HONEST COMPARISON

Still running a traditional vending machine? *Here's what you're missing.*

Both formats have a place, and plenty of good break rooms still run on traditional machines. But if it's been a few years since anyone benchmarked the two side by side, here's what's changed **on the seven things that actually affect your team and your facilities budget:** service issues, ease of use, payment options, shrinkage, maintenance, appearance, and how much employees actually notice it.

ISSUE	TRADITIONAL VENDING	AI SMART COOLER
Payment options	Cash and coin by default. Card readers are usually a bolted on retrofit that's the first thing to go down.	Tap to pay, Apple Pay, Google Pay, and app checkout built in from the start, not added after the fact.
Service issues	A single jammed spiral or misfeed can take the whole machine offline until a route driver gets there.	No spirals, coils, or drop mechanisms to jam. Fewer moving parts means fewer calls in the first place.
Theft & shrinkage	Coin mechs and cash boxes are a known target, and a stuck item often "walks" while it hangs in the coil.	Locked glass front with vision verified checkout, so what leaves the cooler is what gets charged.
Maintenance burden	Mechanical coils, bill validators, and coin hoppers all need hands on servicing to keep running.	Remote inventory monitoring flags low stock before shelves go empty, meaning fewer surprise site visits.
Ease of use	Punch in a code and hope the coil actually releases what you paid for.	Open the door, take what you want, walk away. Checkout happens automatically.
Appearance	A beige metal box with a mechanical hum. Functional, and it usually looks its age.	A glass front cooler that reads like a retail display, not a machine parked in the corner.
Amenity value	Expected, functional, and generally invisible. Nobody mentions the vending machine.	Cold drinks and fresh options employees actually notice, and bring up, as a real perk.

MetroWest Vending runs **both** traditional machines and AI smart coolers across Greater Boston. If you're not sure which fits your space, we'll tell you honestly, even if that means the vending machine you already have is the right call.

METROWEST VENDING

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