

Coffee Shops in Libraries

The following information is a summary of the responses to an inquiry posted to libnet by Jackie Welch, Technical Services/Cataloging/Circulation Librarian of the Ruby M. Sisson Memorial Library in Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

Also included is a helpful document provided by Noreen Reese, Assistant Director of the Warren-Newport Public Library, regarding quick tips on what to include in a Request for Proposal (RFP).

The inquiry as posted:

We are a small, rural library located in Southwest Colorado. Our director is pursuing the idea of opening a coffee shop in our library and we are interested in hearing the pros and cons from other libraries that also have coffee shops.

We would like to know what you sell, who runs the coffee shop, who prepares the food, if you have any policies governing food and beverages in the rest of the library, and does the income generated offset the expenses and loss of library space?

A total of 18 responses were received including academic, public and school libraries.

<u>Response</u>	<u>Respondent</u>
We are also looking to have coffee in our library, but we are hoping to find a coffee vending machine supplier. I think your closest would be in Pueblo. I've called some places there without any luck. If I hear of anything I will let you know.	<i>Eric R Green - Library Director Lamar Community College 2401 S. Main - Bowman #137 Lamar Colo. 81052 719-336-1526 eric.green@lamarcc.edu</i>
I worked in a high school library and we sold coffee, hot chocolate & tea as a fundraiser. It worked very well with very few problems.	<i>Melissa Vantine Vantine_Melissa@stvrain.k12.co.us</i>
I realize that we are not a public library but, here at Pikes Peak Community College - Library we sell coffee and pastries at the far end of the circulation desk. The cafeteria	<i>Susan Dodson Pikes Peak Community College Library</i>

<p>(contracted out) provides the coffee and pastries. I really thought this was going to be a big problem since the circulation staff is responsible for going to get the coffee and taking the money in. Overall I am very pleased with the process. Even though we do not get any of the profits, it has brought students into the library that normally would not have ventured in. We have found that letting student's eat and drink in the library has caused less problems then when food/drink was not allowed in the library. So far for Pikes Peak Community College - Library it has been a good thing.</p>	<p><i>Susan.Dodson@ppcc.edu</i></p>
<p>This is Ed Scott talking, not the US Air Force. Base libraries have found them to be significant revenue generators and they work particularly well when they are located in an area that can be isolated from the books. A person you may want to contact is David Ince, the library director at Randolph AFB, TX. His address is David.Ince@Randolph.af.mil.</p>	<p><i>Edward A. Scott, Ph.D., AD-25, DAFC Director, McDermott Library United States Air Force Academy Fairchild Hall, Ste 3A10 USAF Academy, CO 80840-6214 (719) 333-2590 (commercial) Edward.Scott@usafa.af.mil</i></p>
<p>We thought about it with our new building as well as being asked by our patrons. It would have to be the friends group or another group. Staff has no time. Since we are a small community and we ask businesses in town for support with programs and fundraisers, we decided that we would not compete with a business in our community. The same was true with a colored copy machine. We have one now because the business that had one moved and people needed colored copies, so we got one. We had the first fax machine in town, so we were not competing with anyone when we purchased ours. This has been our philosophy. Hope this helps.</p>	<p><i>Carole Arnold, Director Dolores Public Library carole@fone.net</i></p>
<p>I don't know what other people think, but I think it is a fabulous idea. The coffee shop/bookstore combos have been popular for some time and are literally pulling patrons away from us. My son is almost 19 and you wouldn't catch him in the public library, but he adores a Barnes and Noble with a Starbucks. It's an idea that I'd like to encourage and explore further.</p>	<p><i>Lisa Rangel South Routt Library District southrouttlibrarydistrict@yahoo.com</i></p>

<p>Our district should be going for a bond issue in a couple of years and I would love to see a setup like this in our new library.</p> <p>One of the obvious challenges is "Hours of Operation". The local coffee shop in our town opens way before the library. Good luck and we would love to know what you find out.</p>	
<p>You might want to contact the Warren Newport Public Library in Gurnee, Illinois. Specifically, Noreen Reese, who is assistant director and wrote an article about coffee shops when that library was installing one. Their phone number is 847-244-5150. Noreen's ext. is 3026.</p>	<p><i>Barbara Brattin</i> <i>Library Director</i> <i>San Miguel Public Library</i> <i>District #1</i> <i>P.O. Box 2189</i> <i>100 West Pacific Ave.</i> <i>Telluride, CO 81435</i> <i>970-728-4519 x12 (ph)</i> <i>970-728-3340 (fax)</i> bbrattin@telluridelibrary.org</p>
<p>We have a coffee cart in the lobby area of one of our branches. It is operated by an independent man and his wife. They offer various fancy and plain coffees and teas, some cold drinks, baked goods from a local bakery, and some packaged candies and nutritional bars. From what I understand, he is making very little money (average \$40/day) in a branch that gets about 1,000 people a day through the door. We don't charge him anything, since patrons (and staff) love it, and it adds to the warm, welcoming atmosphere of the library. The owner seems to enjoy the social aspect of the service. We are now buying coffee from him for staff and board meetings, trying to throw business his way.</p> <p>We went out with a formal RFP to solicit his services. We allow food and drink in our libraries, and have done so for several years now. There are no problems with this to speak of.</p>	<p><i>Janine Reid, Executive Director</i> <i>Weld Library District</i> <i>1939 61st Ave.</i> <i>Greeley, CO 80634</i> <i>(970) 506-8563 (wk)</i> <i>(970) 506-8551 (fax)</i> jreid@weld.lib.co.us</p>
<p>We have a small coffee shop in the lobby of the library. It serves the usual coffees, lattes, etc and a variety of baked goods, soft drinks and so on.</p> <p>We have found it to be a good fit with the library, folks who never came to the library, have found out that we are a multi-purpose operation that supports the mission of the base, the academic programs on base and the 'quality of life' (public library) function. Also, it gives our patrons the opportunity to 'hang in there' during study times by giving them a place to buy a cup of coffee or a soda without having to leave the building.</p>	<p><i>David L. Ince, NF-IV</i> <i>Supervisory Librarian</i> <i>David.Ince@RANDOLPH.AF.MIL</i></p>

<p>We open at 6:30 in the morning and have found that by selling a superior product we have captured a portion of the traffic that at one time went to our major competitor. Folks are now coming on base to get their fix instead of stopping by Starbucks on their way to work!</p> <p>Let me know if you need further, more detailed info and I will be happy to fill you in!</p>	
<p>I got your voice mail and thought I'd just send some info ahead. I've included the 1998 article that was in Public Libraries magazine, the mini profiles and updated information that I used at a PLA presentation in 2000, a request for proposal sample and information, and anything else I thought might help. Please keep in mind that the info is dated.</p> <p>We currently are on our second vendor and the emphasis has changed to meet our audience---we are just down the street from a high school and a middle school and kids want kid food after school. So our current vendor is more deli than Starbucks.</p>	<p><i>Noreen Reese Assistant Director Warren-Newport Public Library 224 N. O'Plaine Rd. Gurnee, IL 60031 847-244-5150 Ext. 3026 847-244-3499 Fax nreese@wnpl.info</i></p>
<p>At our large facility the coffee shop works very well. It's 76,000 sq. ft. and is shared by Front Range Community College and Westminster PL. Antonio sells coffee, chips, fruit, sodas, pastries, candy bars and ice cream. I believe his contract states that he pays 10 or 15% of his gross receipts to the college - it's an FRCC building and they're essentially leasing space to him. I would say the income generated definitely offsets the space set aside for the cart, because library patrons love the service and clearly are bummed when the cart is closed. Library policy does not prohibit food in the building, but states that people need to clean up after themselves, for example, if kids are in a study room I've insisted that they pick up wrappers off the floor.</p> <p>In our new branch, which is 15,000 sq. ft., the coffee cart failed. They opened when the building did in April '04 and lasted about 5 months (?). They averaged only \$42 per day and part of the problem there is that there's a Safeway about a ½ block away. In that same plaza is a Starbucks. Also, there's a popular drive-thru coffee shop less than ¼ mi. away. In this situation, the space given up wasn't really worth the coffee cart because they didn't even get to the point to sign the contract for 10 or 15% of the gross income to give to the library. We also had a vending</p>	<p><i>Chuck Huey Westminster PL Irving Street Branch 303 430-2400 x2309 CHuey@ci.westminster.co.us</i></p>

<p>machine with candy bars, chips, gum, candy, etc. and that lasted about 6mos before the vendor took it out of the building - due to lack of income, I'm fairly certain.</p>	
<p>We have a coffee cart at the Farr Branch Library. We contract with an outside vendor who is not employed by the District. It's not a very good money-maker, but the current person seems to be doing OK. He does better in the cooler months, when more people think of hot beverages. We do not charge him for the space. The cart sits in the front lobby and does not take up prime real estate that may have been used by something else. The cart must meet City / County (I'm not sure which) Health Department standards. We do not have any sort of industrial kitchen set-up, so he can't make any food on the premises. He sells snacks such as cookies and muffins to supplement the coffees and teas he offers.</p> <p>Is the coffee service worth it? The patrons love having it, but perhaps not quite enough to make it worth his while in the long run. The Overdue Espresso opened in June 2005, and I know it's been a slow start for him. As long as he's willing to continue, we're happy to have him here.</p> <p>At another branch, I had experimented with offering coffee in a quasi-vending machine way—staff would brew a pot of coffee to put out for the patrons, and they would pay a quarter a cup on the honor system. We made enough money off of this to pay for the coffee supplies we used. Patrons just appreciated having something available. You may look into vending machines that prepare coffee, rather than a staffed cart.</p> <p>We do allow food and drinks throughout the library and don't seem to have many problems or extra messes. Please let me know if you have any further questions if I may be of help.</p>	<p><i>Kari Baumann</i> <i>Farr Branch Manager</i> <i>Weld Library District</i> <i>1939 61st Ave.</i> <i>Greeley, CO 80634</i> <i>(970) 506-8528</i> kbaumann@weld.lib.co.us</p>

A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) SHOULD INCLUDE:

- a description of the property or premises
- terms of the lease along with extension options
- rent figures
- a description of service and utility responsibilities
- insurance responsibilities
- accepted hours of operation
- tax responsibilities
- hiring and employment practices
- a description of the vendor selection process
- grounds for rejection of a proposal
- requirements of bidders to attend meetings or tours
- deadlines for submission of the RFP
- the requirements of the RFP response (clarifies exactly what the bidder needs to submit in order to qualify as a candidate)
- a time schedule for vendor selection

