365 Retail Markets + cantaloupe

MICROPAYMENT TRENDS REPORT

Micropayment Trends Report 2026.

A year-end read on self-service commerce — what changed in 2025, where consumer behavior is moving, and how the industry will spend in the year ahead.

$4.6B TOTAL SELF-SERVICE SPEND, 2025

621K CONNECTED DEVICES STUDIED

85% CASHLESS VENDING TAP-TO-PAY

CANTALOUPE DATA + MASTERCARD SPENDINGPULSE®

INSIDE THIS REPORT

Six chapters. One story: **self-service is maturing.**

AUTHORED BY

Cantaloupe, Inc.
A 365 Retail Markets company

DATA SOURCES

Cantaloupe transaction data
Mastercard SpendingPulse®

PERIOD COVERED

January – December 2025
US & Canada

CHAPTER ONE OVERVIEW

01 Growth didn't **stop**. It **evolved**.

Self-service retail is entering a **new phase** — one defined less by rapid expansion and more by smarter, more strategic growth.

AN INDUSTRY BEGINNING TO SPLIT

Self-service retail is growing — just not in the same places it used to. In 2025, traditional vending remained steady. Micro markets continued to expand, though at a slower pace than previous years. And Smart Stores saw explosive growth, increasing more than 700% in a single year.

At the same time, cashless adoption continued to rise, consumers became more value-conscious, and operators focused more heavily on performance and placement.

The result is an industry that's beginning to split.

Some formats are stabilizing. Others are accelerating rapidly. And operators are increasingly looking beyond traditional vending machines to drive growth.

In this report, we analyze Cantaloupe transaction data alongside consumer spending insights from Mastercard SpendingPulse® to understand how 2025 performed — and what it means for the future of self-service commerce.

CHAPTER TWO TRENDS & INSIGHTS

02 Five forces shaping **self-service in 2025.**

5 TRENDS
P. 04 – 07

01 Cashless is now **the standard**.

Cashless adoption continued to grow in 2025, reinforcing a shift that is now firmly established. At vending machines, cashless payments reached **78% of total sales**, up from 73% the year prior. Micro markets remained nearly 100% cashless, while Smart Stores operate completely cashless.

This isn't just about payment technology — it reflects how consumers want to shop. Spending is increasingly tied to quick, time-sensitive moments where speed and ease matter most. Cashless removes friction and makes it easier to complete a purchase without hesitation.

78%

Cashless share of vending sales — up from 73% in 2024

~100%

Micro markets & Smart Stores — effectively cashless

02 Tap to pay is becoming **the default**.

Faster payments are driving faster decisions. In 2025, contactless payments made up **85% of all cashless vending sales**, up from 78% the year before. Mobile usage is also growing — by year-end, mobile payments accounted for nearly 38% of total cashless sales.

After a major surge in mobile adoption in 2024, 2025 showed more incremental gains — suggesting the behavior is becoming established. Whether it's a physical card or a mobile wallet, the expectation is the same: quick, simple, and contactless.

85%

Contactless share of cashless vending sales

38%

Mobile wallets — share of cashless by year-end

02 TRENDS & INSIGHTS · CONTINUED

More **selective** consumers, more **targeted** growth.

03 Growth is **targeted**.

Self-service retail continued to grow in 2025, but at a more measured pace than in previous years. Food and beverage vending sales increased **5% year over year**, reaching $3.3 billion. Micro market locations grew 19.7% — a step down from 28% in 2024 and 36% in 2023.

Consumer spending patterns are becoming more dependent on location, timing, and use case — rather than rising uniformly. Some locations continue to perform exceptionally well, while others plateau. Growth hasn't disappeared. It's just becoming more targeted.

+5%

Vending sales YoY — $3.3B total

19.7%

Micro market location growth — vs. 28% in 2024

04 Consumers are spending **more carefully**.

But they're still spending. Economic pressure continued to shape consumer behavior in 2025 — but instead of pulling back entirely, consumers are becoming more selective. Micro market ticket sizes rose from $2.84 to **$3.02 (+6.3%)**. Vending ticket sizes saw more modest growth, from $1.99 to $2.01.

Categories like grocery are holding steady in share of wallet rather than expanding — a sign consumers are reallocating spending instead of increasing it. They're just making more deliberate choices about where and how they spend.

$3.02

Micro market ticket — +6.3% YoY (from $2.84)

$2.01

Vending ticket — modest +1% growth

02 TRENDS & INSIGHTS · CONTINUED

Smart formats are **raising the basket**.

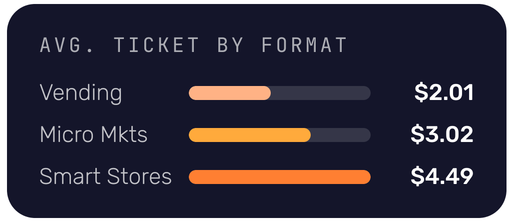
05 Smart retail drives **higher ticket sizes**.

As operators expand into more flexible formats, the impact on revenue is clear. In 2025, the average vending transaction was $2.01. Micro markets averaged $3.02 — while **Smart Stores reached $4.49**, the highest of any self-service format.

These differences reflect how each format is used. Micro markets and Smart Stores allow for broader product selection, including fresh food and everyday essentials. They also create a more open, retail-like experience — which, combined with a primarily cashless environment, encourages larger purchases.

$4.49

Smart Store avg. ticket — highest across formats



SECTION TAKEAWAY

A **faster**, **smarter**, more **selective** industry.

Across all five trends, one pattern repeats: industry expansion is selective. Self-service growth in 2025 came from doing more with fewer, better-placed assets — and from formats that let operators meet consumers where they actually are.

The next four pages put external consumer-spend data alongside our own to explain **why**.

CHAPTER THREE THE CONSUMER CONTEXT

03 The consumer context behind the **data**.

EXTERNAL LENS
3 INSIGHTS

Cantaloupe's transaction data shows **what's happening** in self-service retail. Broader market intelligence on consumer spending helps explain **why**.

By looking at broader consumer spending trends across categories like grocery, restaurants, and fuel & convenience, we can better understand the behavior driving the numbers in this report.

INSIGHT 01

Spending isn't growing — **it's shifting**.

Consumer spending remained steady in 2025, but didn't expand evenly across categories. Restaurants, grocery, and fuel & convenience account for roughly 60% combined of total consumer spend. Within that, the mix is changing — grocery has held relatively steady, while food and convenience spending is being redistributed based on price, access, and need.

WHAT IT MEANS

Growth in self-service retail comes from capturing share — not waiting for overall spending to increase.

INSIGHT 02

Routine spending is **the most reliable**.

Some of the most stable categories in retail are tied to everyday behavior. Mastercard data shows grocery spending grew **+2.3% YoY in 2025**, driven largely by routine purchases connected to work, school, and home life. These patterns are consistent throughout the year and less dependent on external factors like travel or seasonal events.

WHAT IT MEANS

The most dependable demand comes from repeat, everyday behavior.

INSIGHT 03

Consumers are **trading down** — not opting out.

Spending on food away from home remained strong in 2025, but behavior shifted. Mastercard reports that Quick Service Restaurants grew approximately **+5% YoY**, outperforming other dining segments as consumers looked for more affordable options. They still value convenience and speed, but they're more focused on price.

WHAT IT MEANS

Vending and micro markets benefit from the same demand — offering convenience at a lower price point.

SHARE OF TOTAL CONSUMER SPEND · 2025

Three categories. ~60% of all spend.

Restaurants, grocery, and fuel & convenience continue to drive the bulk of where consumers put their money — a stable foundation for any self-service play that intersects them.

BRINGING IT TOGETHER

Consumers aren't changing **what** they want — they're changing **how** they get it.

01 Spending is **stable**, but more selective.

02 Routine demand is **the most reliable**.

03 Value & convenience are **driving decisions**.

04 Location plays a **bigger role** than ever.

CHAPTER FOUR PAYMENT DATA · BY FORMAT

04 The numbers, by **format**.

4 CATEGORIES
P. 09 – 12

01 · FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDING

$3.3B in vending sales, up 5% YoY.

Consumers spent over $3.3 billion at vending machines in 2025, a 5% increase year over year. Growth remains steady, though more modest than in previous years. Cashless continues to drive higher spend per transaction — averaging $2.45 versus $1.57 in cash (+59%).

Among cashless payments, contactless made up an average of **85% of all cashless sales**, up from 78% the previous year. By the end of 2025, mobile sales reached almost 38% of total cashless sales, growing more than 17% from January to December.

Compared to 2024's 300%+ jump in mobile vending sales, 2025's growth has started to mature — suggesting consumers are still using physical cards over mobile wallets at F&B vending.

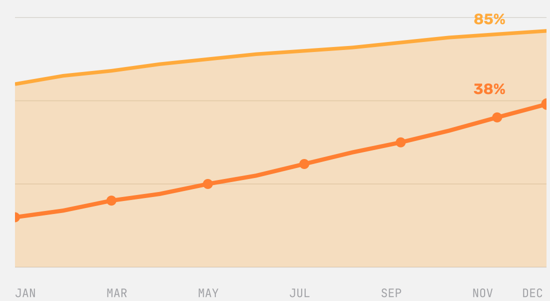
$3.3B
TOTAL VENDING SALES
↑ 5% YoY

78%
CASHLESS SHARE
↑ from 73%

$2.45
AVG. CASHLESS TICKET
↑ +59% vs. cash

$1.57
AVG. CASH TICKET
Reference

Mobile vending sales growth JAN – DEC 2025



04 PAYMENT DATA · CONTINUED

Micro Markets cross **$1B again** — now $1.13B.

02 · MICRO MARKETS

Past **$1B** again — now at **$1.13B**.

Micro markets expanded to **7,451 locations**, a 19.7% increase year over year. While this is lower than 28% in 2024 and 36% in 2023, it reflects a natural evolution as the format matures and operators increasingly explore Smart Stores and other emerging self-service options.

Micro markets crossed the $1 billion mark in sales for the second consecutive year — reaching **$1.13 billion in 2025**, an increase of 13% and firmly establishing the format as a pillar of self-service retail.

Average ticket size jumped **28% compared to 2024** — a much stronger gain than traditional vending — likely driven by the consumer shift toward grocery and convenience spending, as micro markets can carry traditional grocery and home-goods items.

$1.13B
TOTAL SALES
↑ 13% YoY

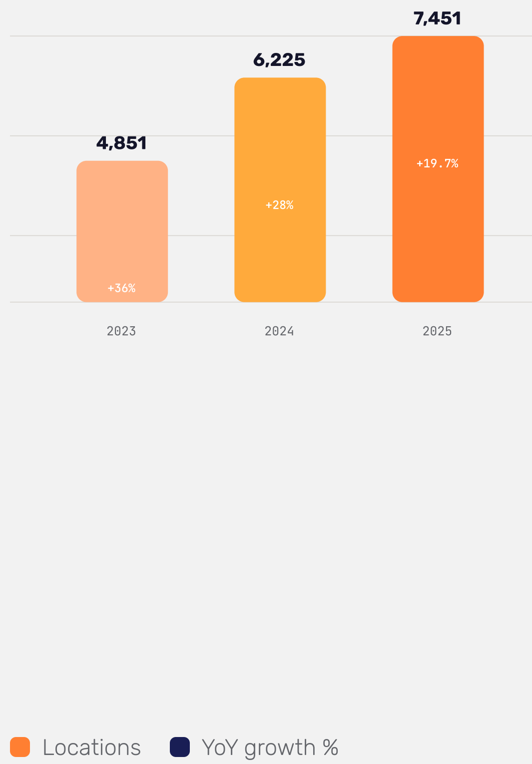
7,451
LOCATIONS
↑ +19.7%

387M
TRANSACTIONS
↑ from 377M

$3.42
AVG. TICKET
+28% YoY

* Inclusive of entire micro market data set.

Micro market location growth 2023 – 2025



04 PAYMENT DATA · CONTINUED

Smart Stores grow **+705%** in a single year.

03 · SMART STORES

+705% location growth — from 71 to 572.

Smart Stores saw **explosive growth in 2025**, quickly moving from early adoption to meaningful scale. In a single year, Smart Stores expanded more than eightfold — a pace far beyond what we're seeing in vending or micro markets.

While total sales are still smaller than more established formats, the rate of adoption points to strong operator interest and growing consumer acceptance. At the same time, Smart Stores generate **the highest spend per transaction** at $4.49.

That's driven by flexibility. These environments can support a wider range of products — from fresh meals to everyday essentials — and create a more open, retail-like experience. Combined with a fully cashless, frictionless checkout, this encourages larger purchases.

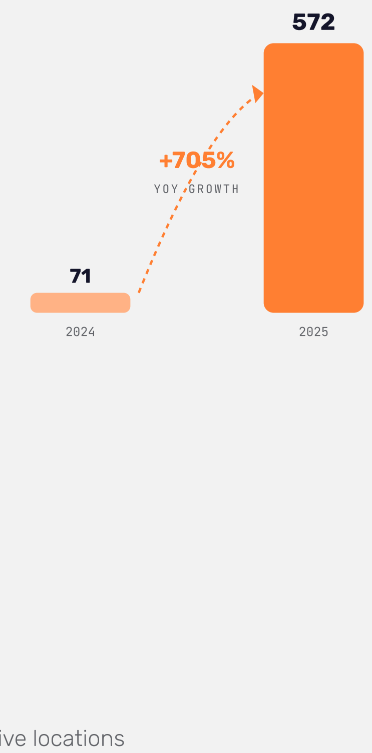
+705%
LOCATION GROWTH
↑ 71 → 572

$4.49
AVG. TICKET
↑ highest format

$6.3M
TOTAL SALES
↑ early scale

100%
CASHLESS
Frictionless

Smart Store locations • 71 → 572 YOY 2024 → 2025



04 PAYMENT DATA · CONTINUED

Cashless transactions grew **+26%** YoY.

04 · AMUSEMENT & GAMING

Cashless drives **79%** of revenue.

The amusement and gaming segment continued to grow in 2025, with steady gains driven by increased adoption of cashless payments. Total spend reached **$178 million (+16.9% YoY)** across 31,938 devices in the data set.

Cashless still represents a smaller share of total transactions — averaging 37% — but it dominates revenue at **79% of total sales volume**. Consumers who pay cashless also spend significantly more per session: $6.01 cashless vs. $0.94 cash, a +539% gap.

Unlike cash, card and mobile payments are less disruptive. Players can continue engaging without stopping to insert bills or coins, which leads to longer sessions and higher total spend.

$178M
TOTAL SPEND
↑ 16.9% YoY

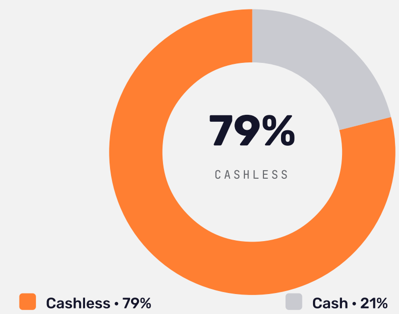
31,938
DEVICES STUDIED
In data set

$6.01
AVG. CASHLESS TICKET
↑ +539% vs cash

$0.94
AVG. CASH TICKET
Reference

Cashless dominates revenue

2025 · A&G



$6.01 vs $0.94 +539% cashless per-session gap

CHAPTER FIVE INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

05 Predictions for **2026**.

4 FORECASTS
P. 13 – 14

Self-service retail is continuing to **evolve**.

STEADY. STRATEGIC. SMART.

Growth remains strong across the industry, but it's becoming more measured and more strategic. Operators are expanding beyond traditional vending, while focusing on higher-performing locations and formats.

At the same time, consumer behavior is shifting toward value, convenience, and speed — all of which support continued demand for self-service solutions.

Looking ahead, we predict steady growth across all segments — with the biggest opportunities in smart retail formats.

Steady at the base. Accelerating at the edge.

VENDING	MICRO MARKETS	SMART STORES	AMUSEMENT
5%	**10.9%**	**167%**	**19.5%**
Sales growth	Sales volume growth	Cashless transaction growth	Sales growth

05 PREDICTIONS FOR 2026 · BY FORMAT

Four forecasts. One **direction**.

VENDING

Steady, **incremental growth**.

Vending will continue to deliver steady, incremental growth. After a 5% increase in 2025, we expect vending sales to maintain pace and grow 5% in 2026. Supported by continued cashless adoption and stable demand in routine environments — vending remains the foundation of self-service retail.

5%

PROJECTED SALES GROWTH · 2026

MICRO MARKETS

A key **growth driver**.

Micro markets will remain a key growth driver. Following 13% growth in 2025, we expect continued sales volume in 2026 — though at a more moderate pace. Operators will focus more on optimizing existing locations while expanding into new environments where higher ticket sizes and product variety can drive revenue.

10.9%

PROJECTED SALES VOLUME GROWTH · 2026

SMART STORES

The **fastest-growing** segment.

Smart Stores will continue to scale rapidly, with strong adoption across new verticals like residential, hospitality, and fitness. While growth rates may normalize from early-stage levels, we expect Smart Store cashless transactions to continue their rapid climb.

167%

PROJECTED CASHLESS TRANSACTION GROWTH · 2026

AMUSEMENT & GAMING

Powered by **cashless**.

Amusement and gaming will benefit from continued cashless adoption. After a 16.9% increase in 2025, we expect sales to grow 19.5% in 2026, driven by increased use of card readers and higher engagement from cashless users. As more operators adopt cashless technology, the segment will continue to see gains in both spend and play time.

19.5%

PROJECTED SALES GROWTH · 2026

CHAPTER SIX METHODOLOGY

06 What's in, what's **defined**.

DATA SOURCES
+ DEFINITIONS

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY

This report is based on transaction data from Cantaloupe-connected devices across the United States and Canada, from January through December 2025.

We organized the data into four main categories: food & beverage vending, micro markets, Smart Stores, and amusement & gaming machines. Each category includes both cash and cashless transaction insights.

A NOTE ON THE DATA SET

Because of more accurate operator-verified machine usage (F&B vending vs. amusement), the amusement segment data set was much larger this year. Year-over-year comparison data has been adjusted to compare against this data set rather than previous years' findings. As a result, the YoY F&B vending comparison data has been adjusted similarly.

PAYMENT DEFINITIONS

Cash transactions	Payments made using bills and coins.
Cashless transactions	Non-cash payments made using credit or debit cards, mobile wallets, loyalty programs, or campus cards.
Contactless transactions	Cashless payments made by tapping a card or using a mobile wallet on a smart device.

DATA SET AT A GLANCE

581,202
F&B VENDING MACHINES

7,451
MICRO MARKET LOCATIONS

31,938
AMUSEMENT & GAMING DEVICES

572
SMART STORE LOCATIONS

PERIOD OF RECORD
Jan – Dec 2025
United States & Canada

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★ THE 2025 PICTURE IN ONE PAGE

Maturing at the base. **Accelerating** at the edge.

WHAT STAYED THE SAME

78%

Cashless is the standard.

Vending crossed 78% cashless. Micro markets and Smart Stores remain near-totally cashless. Tap-and-go is now the assumed baseline.

WHAT GOT MORE CAREFUL

+5%

Vending growth, measured.

Sales still grew, but more selectively. Consumers are trading down, not opting out — and operators are leaning into placement and ticket-size leverage.

WHAT BROKE OUT

+705%

Smart Stores went mainstream.

571 new locations in twelve months. Highest ticket of any format ($4.49). The fastest-growing self-service category we measure.

$3.3B	$1.13B	$178M	85%	621K
VENDING SALES	MICRO MARKET SALES	A&G TOTAL SPEND	TAP-TO-PAY SHARE	DEVICES STUDIED

LOOKING TO 2026 ·

Steady at the base (**+5%** vending) • momentum at the middle (**+10.9%** micro markets) • breakout at the edge (**+167%** Smart Store cashless).

ABOUT CANTALOUPE

Helping the world **buy it and go.**

Cantaloupe, a 365 Retail Markets company, is a global technology leader powering self-service commerce. With over a million active locations, processing more than a billion transactions every year, Cantaloupe is enabling businesses of all sizes to provide self-service experiences for consumers.

Operating under 365 Retail Markets, the company's solutions fuel growth by offering micropayments processing, enterprise cloud software, IoT technology, as well as kiosk and POS innovations. Cantaloupe's tools increase consumer engagement and sales revenue through digital payments, consumer promotions and loyalty programs.

Cantaloupe's solutions are used by a variety of consumer services in the U.S., Europe, and Australia — including vending machines, micro markets and smart retail, EV charging stations, laundromats, metered parking terminals, amusement and entertainment venues, IoT services and more.

1M+
Active locations worldwide

1B+
Transactions processed annually

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