

GUIDE TO OPENING

A Café or Coffee Shop In Brisbane



By Jerry - The University of Queensland

Abstract

Opening a café or coffee shop in Brisbane can be an exciting venture, given the city's thriving coffee culture. Start by researching prime locations, securing permits, and developing a solid business plan. Invest in high-quality coffee beans, equipment, and skilled baristas to stand out in a competitive market. Focus on creating a welcoming ambiance and a unique menu to attract customers. Marketing through social media and local events can boost visibility. Additionally, consider sustainability practices, such as eco-friendly packaging and sourcing local ingredients. With the right strategy, your café can become a popular spot in Brisbane's vibrant coffee scene.

1. Introduction

Brisbane's thriving coffee culture makes it an ideal city to open a café or coffee shop. Whether you're a coffee enthusiast or an aspiring entrepreneur, starting a café requires careful planning and strategy. From choosing the perfect location to obtaining necessary permits, every step plays a crucial role in success. A well-crafted business plan, quality coffee, and a welcoming ambiance can set you apart in a competitive market. Additionally, marketing, sustainability practices, and excellent customer service contribute to long-term growth. This guide will walk you through the essential steps to opening a successful café in Brisbane.

Brisbane LocalStats Australia

In the 2011 census the population of Brisbane was 1,977,315 and is comprised of approximately 50.7% females and 49.3% males.

The median/average age of the population of Brisbane is 35 years of age.

69.8% of people living in the region of Brisbane were born in Australia. The other top responses for country of birth were 5.3% United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man, 4.9% New Zealand, 1.1% India, 1.1% China, 1.0% South Africa, 0.8% Philippines, 0.7% Vietnam, 0.5% Malaysia, 0.5% Germany.

81.6% of people living in Brisbane speak English only. The other top languages spoken are 4.7% Language spoken at home not stated, 2.2% Other, 1.6% Mandarin, 1.0% Vietnamese, 0.9% Cantonese, 0.6% Samoan, 0.6% Spanish, 0.5% Hindi, 0.5% Italian.

The religious makeup of Brisbane is 24.3% Catholic, 22.9% No religion, 16.9% Anglican, 8.3% Religious affiliation not stated, 5.9% Uniting Church, 3.2% Presbyterian and Reformed, 2.8% Christian, nfd, 2.3% Baptist, 2.1% Buddhism, 1.6% Pentecostal.

47.1% of people are married, 36.6% have never married and 8.5% are divorced and 3.1% are separated. There are 73834 widowed people living in Brisbane.

61.1% of the people living in Brisbane over the age of 15 and who identify as being in the labour force are employed full time, 27.6% are working on a part time basis. Brisbane has an unemployment rate of 5.8%.

The main occupations of people living in Brisbane are 22.7% Professionals, 16.3% Clerical & administrative workers, 13.4% Technicians & trades workers, 11.5% Managers, 9.6% Community & personal service workers, 9.5% Sales workers, 9.0% Labourers, 6.2% Machinery operators & drivers, 1.8% Occupation inadequately described/ Not stated.



The main industries people from Brisbane work in are 12.5% Health care and social assistance, 10.1% Retail trade, 9.2% Manufacturing, 8.5% Professional, scientific and technical services, 8.2% Construction, 8.1% Education and training, 7.5% Public administration and safety, 6.0% Accommodation and food services, 5.7% Transport, postal and warehousing.

27.1% of homes are fully owned, and 36.6% are in the process of being purchased by home loan mortgage. 33.4% of homes are rented.

The median individual income is \$640 per week and the median household income is \$1404 per week.

The median rent in Brisbane is \$325 per week and the median mortgage repayment is \$1993 per month.

Source: <https://localstats.com.au/demographics/qld/brisbane>

2. Opening a Restaurant or Café

If you would like to set up your own restaurant or cafe business in Brisbane, use this page to find out if your business needs planning approval.

Definition

A restaurant or cafe is referred to in Brisbane City Plan 2014 (City Plan) as a food and drink outlet. City Plan defines a 'food and drink outlet' as the 'use of a premises for preparation and sale of food and drink to the public for consumption on or off site'. The use may include the ancillary sale of liquor for consumption on site. Examples include:

- bistro
- cafe
- coffee shop
- drive-through facility
- kiosk

- milk bar
- restaurant
- snack bar
- takeaway
- tea room.

The definition does not include bar, club, entertainment facility, hotel, shop, theatre or nightclub.

Preferred locations

Centre zones

Centre zones include:

- Principal centre zone
- Major centre zone
- District centre zone
- Neighbourhood centre zone.

In the Centre zones, a food and drink outlet is included in the Centre activities group. Centre activities are accepted development where they do not include an increase to the gross floor area (GFA) and they comply with all of the acceptable outcomes (Section A) in the Centre or mixed use code.

You can use the online self-assessable checklist to see if your proposal meets the accepted development criteria in the Centre or mixed use Code.

Commercial character building

On properties identified on the Commercial character building overlay map, a food and drink outlet is accepted development, subject to compliance with identified requirements, where:

- work is limited only to internal alteration and fit out of an existing Commercial character building
- the proposal does not include a new use for a food and drink outlet in the Low density residential zone or the Character residential zone - character zone precinct
- the development meets all of the acceptable outcomes (Section A) of the Commercial character building (activities) overlay code.

Planning approval

To find out if your proposal requires Council approval, you can phone Council on 07 3403 8888 to speak to a Town Planner.

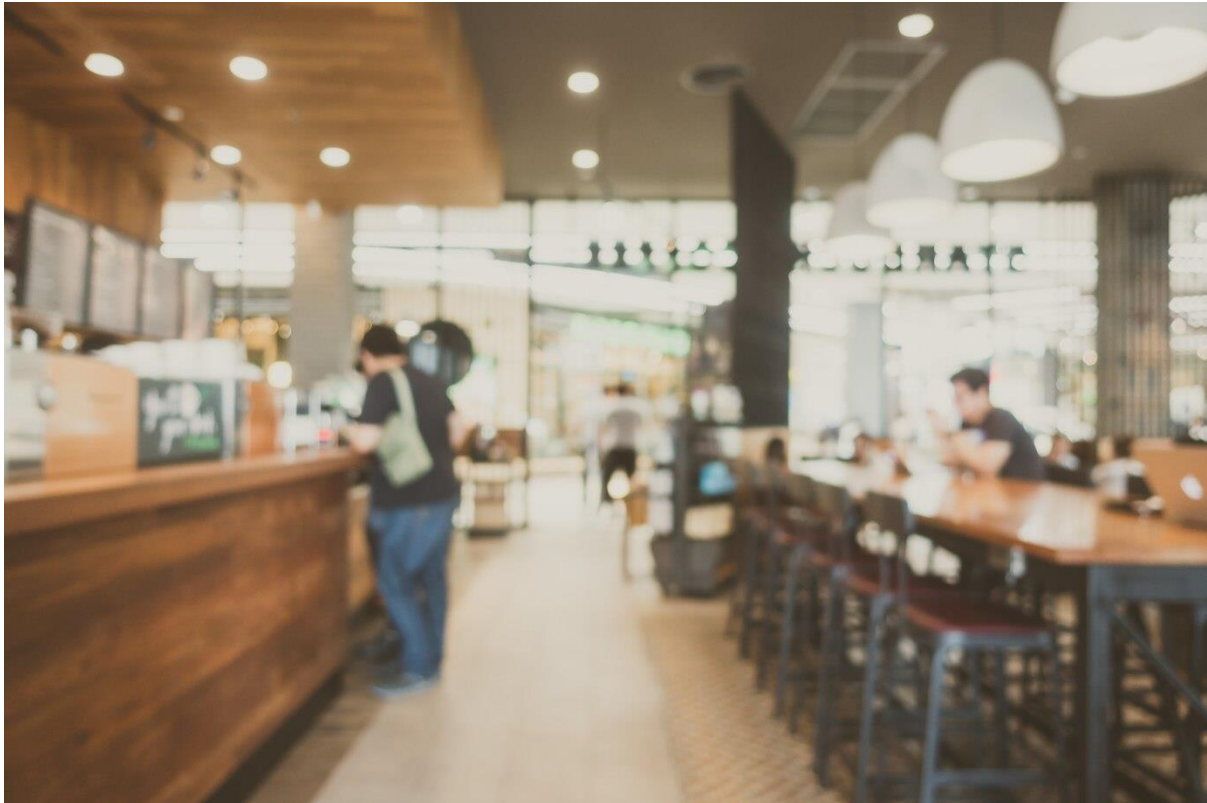
If the nature of your business changes over time (e.g. you change the way you operate), you may need to reconfirm whether a development approval is required as a result of these changes.

Building approval

Building approval is separate from planning approval. Licensed private building certifiers or building consultants can provide advice regarding:

- building work for an existing food and drink outlet or a new food and drink outlet
- if any building approval is required.

Private building certifiers and building consultants can be found using the Queensland Building and Construction Commission's website.



Other considerations

Undercover parking in commercial buildings

City Plan's definition of gross floor area (GFA) does not include areas for building services, plant and equipment, access between levels and the parking, loading or manoeuvring of motor vehicles. Where undercover parking areas are proposed as part of a new commercial building, undercover parking is not included in GFA.

New food and drink outlets in service stations

When a fast food store is added to an existing service station, an approval is necessary as the proposal involves a material change of use (a new use or a material increase in the intensity or scale of the use of the premises).

Other approvals to consider

- food business licences
- liquor licensing via the Queensland Government
- advertising signs for small business.

More information

If your proposed business requires a planning approval, or your premises are located within a neighbourhood plan area or overlay area, contact Council's Business Hotline on 133 BNE (133 263) for advice specific to your situation.

3. Things to Avoid When Raising Startup Funding

Use this guide to ensure you don't make the most common mistakes.

Raising money for your startup isn't easy for everyone. In fact, early-stage funding is harder to do now than it ever has been, with seed deals dropping by nearly 50 percent, by some estimates, since 2014, with VCs focusing more on pushing capital to later-stage deals.

This change in tides makes it even more important that founders avoid the most common pitfalls when raising funding — even the smallest mistake can send investors out the door — but if founders can carefully manage to avoid making these mistakes, they will increase their chances of securing that early round.

1. Underestimating the time commitment.

Starting a business is incredibly stressful and challenging, and often sucks every minute of a founder's time on a daily basis. Keeping the lights on is a challenge in and of itself, so founders often fail to prioritize the appropriate time to prepare for fundraising. Entrepreneurs who raise capital successfully, do so meticulously. A startup seeking financing should budget between 500 to 1000 work-hours to the process, which typically takes six to nine months.

Founders should look at the fundraising process in four distinct stages: perfecting the pitch deck, identifying a targeted list of prospective investors, outreach to those investors, and then negotiation.

2. Failing to research investors.

When it comes to investors, research is the name of the game. Identifying the correct investors is the first step. Make sure you are targeting investors that fund other businesses of your size, stage and business model. Once you've narrowed your search and you begin conversations, leave no stone unturned. Founders who understand how their companies fit into an investors larger portfolio, and use that information to bolster their case, will ultimately be more successful than those who focus only on their own company's potential returns.

Founders should also think through all possible questions and requests from investors before they meet. If you aren't familiar with what kinds of questions, documents or data investors typically request, find a mentor that can share that knowledge. If founders are overly prepared with this kind of information, requests from investors will be answered quickly and demonstrate that your company is ready to take the next step.

At Techstars, we look for the following when we are making investment decisions: team, team and team, followed by market, progress and idea. Make sure you can explain why your team is solid, why you're experts in the space, and why investors should put their trust and checkbook behind you.

3. Turning down professional help.

Fundraising can be all consuming, especially if you're a first-timer. Seeking out professional help from a mentor, your attorney or from an organization like Techstars can provide tremendous support and help save founders from fundraising failures. With each fundraising effort, founders build more knowledge and experience; however, these professionals deal with raising capital for a living — take advantage of their relationships and their background. At Techstars, we spend several weeks coaching

founders in our accelerator programs on how to pitch, we role play with them investors and help founders find the best investors to talk to.



Some of these professionals (like attorneys) come with an associated price, but if their advice helps to ensure your fundraising round is successful, it will pay for itself and more.

4. Making the pitch overly complicated.

As a founder, you are the penultimate expert on your business, but too many founders forget that most investors are not as educated or familiar. When you develop your pitch deck focus on the problem you are solving and how you solve it (with a little bit on traction or credibility thrown in). Presentations that focus too much on the technical components of a solution often leave audiences asking, "So what?"

On average, pitch decks should have less than 20 slides and should include the problem, solution, market, product, traction, team, financials and amount being raised. Founders should consider developing two versions of the pitch deck, one that will be used for real-time presentation that features less text and allows presenters to elaborate in-person, then a secondary version with additional text that can be used in follow up or for others that may not have been in the presentation.

5. Ignoring the need for a contingency plan.

When investors review funding pitches, they tend to review everything through the lens of how they can maximize their returns most efficiently. While you may think you're in prime position to raise capital, investors may not agree right away. Having a Plan B or C, or even D will help establish leverage when negotiating. Examples of options you may want to pursue include: alternative funding options, a no-funding operating plan, or even an M&A option. Having these other pathways in your back pocket will help you to negotiate terms and better dictate timing.

4. Ten Expensive Mistakes To Avoid When Opening A Coffee Shop Or Café

Opening a new business in the food and beverage industry involves a lot of moving parts and, far too often, a lot of unexpected expenses. My company, an international retail coffee company, operates hundreds of stores in seven countries, many launched in collaboration with franchisee partners. Over the years, I've witnessed an array of new business launches, ranging from remarkable successes to challenging but valuable learning experiences. These are the 10 most common and costly mistakes I see entrepreneurs making when opening a new coffee shop or café.

1. Underestimating Initial Operating Expenses

The costs of opening a coffee shop can be divided into two parts:

- CapEx (capital expenditures) are large investments in long-term assets, such as equipment, construction, licenses and interior design.
- OpEx (operating expenditures) are day-to-day expenses, including raw materials, payroll, inventory, maintenance, taxes and utilities.

Business owners usually calculate CapEx into their business plans but often ignore or underestimate OpEx as part of their initial investment. In reality, OpEx before opening day can be considerable because you need consumables and other key items in advance.

2. Overloading The Menu

It's tempting to offer a wide variety of menu items to give customers more choices. However, an overloaded menu can actually be a detriment to your business by:

- Overwhelming and confusing customers, possibly giving the impression that your offerings are mediocre.
- Increasing the workload for your kitchen staff, leading to potential errors and stress.
- Complicating inventory management and increasing the likelihood of food waste.

Instead, focus on a shorter menu of popular, high-quality items. Look at competitors' menus to identify commonalities and gather insights about what sells well. Start small, and leave space for a limited number of seasonal or special products.

3. Failing To Understand Your Space's Technical Requirements

The technical requirements for a coffee shop or café are more complex than other retail spaces. You need to store and prepare perishable food items and serve customers in the same space. Issues with electrical capacity, water availability, sewerage and HVAC systems are common and can add up quickly.

It's critical to record all technical specifications in your contract, such as electrical capacity load and high-quality ventilation requirements, in addition to verbal assurances from the landlord. Make sure your contract also includes an exit clause or a mechanism by which any expenses will be transferred to the landlord if the conditions aren't met.



4. Choosing Locations Above Or Below Ground Level

It's an accepted truth in the F&B sector that as you move farther away from the ground floor in a shopping center, customer foot traffic drops dramatically. Accessibility and convenience play a huge role in enclosed retail spaces. Many customers simply don't visit the uppermost floors of a mall and therefore won't have the opportunity to discover your café. Strive to find a location on one of the lower levels, especially near an entrance, where you can take advantage of spontaneous or impulse visits. This rule also applies to floors below ground level.

5. Misunderstanding Traffic Intention

High foot traffic doesn't always translate to high sales. You need to understand the intention of the people passing by your coffee shop. For example, a spot near a metro entrance might seem ideal, but if most people are rushing to work, they're less likely to stop for coffee. Similarly, a pre-security location at an airport will see high traffic, but passengers are focused on getting through security before buying food or drink.

6. Selecting The Wrong Season For Opening

Timing is everything. Carefully consider the seasonality of your opening date based on your location, since weather, holidays, tourist fluctuations and cultural norms can greatly affect customer demand and profitability.

In many markets, January and February are typically the worst months to open, while spring and summer tend to be more favorable. However, these trends vary, and it's important to research your specific location. For instance, if your café is near a university, you might want to open in the fall when students return.

7. Buying Poor-Quality Equipment

When minimizing startup costs, many entrepreneurs see store equipment as low-hanging fruit. Coffee machines, grinders, ovens and other systems are expensive, and cheaper alternatives can be appealing. But you should weigh the high long-term costs of downtime and equipment replacement.

Commercial-grade equipment is built with durable materials to withstand heavy daily use and offer an extended service life. If a piece of equipment is critical to your operations, it's worth investing in lasting quality. Consider buying remanufactured or refurbished goods to save on upfront costs without compromising reliability.

8. Not Leaving A Financial Cushion

Many owners underestimate how long the ramp-up period will take between opening and reaching their initial revenue target. Even if you have a franchise with immediate brand awareness, it still takes time for customers to discover your store and make it part of their routine.

Reserve enough cash to cover at least three to months of operations and marketing expenses. If you're introducing a new brand to the market, you might want to add a few more months to this cushion.

9. Neglecting Marketing Expenses

Simply opening your doors will not necessarily bring in customers. Most franchisors collect a marketing fee from franchisees, but those funds are typically deployed on a national basis and not to support a single store. And if you are opening an independent store, all of the responsibility for marketing is on you. In either case, plan to budget for local, store-specific marketing efforts through online advertising, social media campaigns, promos, grand opening events or community partnerships.

10. Assuming You Know What Customers Want

Research, not assumptions, should dictate your actions. Unless you are certain that you represent the average person within your target demographic and target market, don't assume you know what customers want.

Just because you can't find a certain type of coffee shop in an area doesn't necessarily mean there's an untapped market. There might be cultural or practical reasons why that concept doesn't exist locally. For instance, some places have a strong to-go coffee culture, while others don't. Do thorough on-the-ground research, and talk to local business owners and potential customers before pursuing a business idea.

The big takeaway from all of these mistakes is that you need to invest in comprehensive analysis and planning for your business to succeed. Don't rely solely on your gut or your personal preferences to make decisions. Do your homework, and ask the right questions to save yourself money and stress.

5. How to Start A Coffee Shop

Jacob Jaber is the co-founder of Philz and a consumer investor and would be thrilled to help you get started. Book a 1-on-1 consulting call with Jacob today!

Jacob Jaber started Philz Coffee with his dad, Phil Jaber, out of their bodega in the heart of San Francisco's Mission District. Now, it is a coffee empire, with stores in 52 communities and over 1,000 employees. They're famous for their ridiculously crave-able classics like the silky Mission Cold Brew or the addictive Iced Mint Mojito coffee.



We sat down with Jacob for a true coffee chat and learned his "how-to" process when launching a local shop.

1. Do you love coffee?

"Don't start a coffee shop if you don't want to spend time in it," Jacob Jaber told us

It's incredibly challenging to succeed in the food business without passion. You need to start this business from a place of love. The owner sets the standard for coffee shop culture. At Philz, you feel like you are in grandma's house: the employees are always attentive to your needs treating you with niceness and respect.

This is not a good side hustle — you have to live it.

2. Solidify a unique concept

"To have a successful coffee shop," Jacob says, "you need 5 things people love."

Although coffee is one product with seemingly endless demand, it's crucial to stand out with a handful of spectacular menu items. What makes Philz so special is the heart and soul in each craft coffee drink. Jacob originally defined himself through crafted creations like the Tesora, a coffee blend with cream and honey, which was perfect for latte drinkers (check out their menu for inspo).

Be passionate that the cup of coffee (or food) you have to offer is different than anybody else's. As Jacob says, "Finding something that you don't think is already available and boldly offer it? This takes courage."

Don't stress too much about your company name or branding, but obsess over the quality of your product offering.

No matter what kind of mood you're in, we've got the perfect cup for you ?

Happy #Wednesday! pic.twitter.com/PwTTVubmWK

— Philz Coffee (@PhilzCoffee) December 7, 2022

3. Get your business docs sorted

Jacob let us in on his secret – "I don't know if I've ever even written a business plan. When you start something with passion and love, it's going to give you the fuel. Don't overly sweat the business plan. Make it one page max."

Take care of your legal documentation (ie. entity formation) with the help of a lawyer. You can ask around for a good local lawyer, but some good online options are Legal Zoom or Zen Business.

4. Hire a real estate agent and pick a location

"Great marketing cannot fix a bad location," says Jacob.

Jacob breaks this down into three things to consider: density, visibility, and accessibility. You want to be in a space that people will walk or drive by frequently. Things need to be convenient to the customer (eg. need a parking lot for heavily trafficked areas and busy roads).

Don't rush this part of the process. If you find a neighborhood you like, spend time studying the area. If there is a competitor in your area, which there probably is, it's an opportunity to learn. Get a sense from the baristas and customers. Ask competitors how they are doing.

Think about customer habits on weekdays versus on the weekends. You need to determine the culture of your shop. A business park isn't bad, but you'll service office workers and it'll be dead on the weekend. Near hospitals can be great.

Location is EVERYTHING. It's easily the most important step to get right. If your location requires a retrofit, it can get costly. You sign a lease, get a general contractor, and the costs start racking up

Before you dive in, try these budget-friendly tactics to test your product and market

Think of your coffee company as a product, not a store.

Research all the events in the next 6 months that you can pop up a kiosk

Open a popup and show up at events, farmer's markets, etc.

Use this revenue and profit as proof for banks, angel investors, friends and family, etc.

This scrappy mentality can go a long way. Blue Bottle started through popups and is a great success story.

5. Execution is key

You've got the perfect space in the up-and-coming part of town and maybe you've even found your favorite cold brew formula.

Now what?

If you're stressed about the furniture, pastries, machinery, or other logistical parts of making your shop stand out and sparkle, consider these tips first. "Iterate. Don't make all the design choices at once. Not only is it ineffective moneywise, but it is also a waste of your time," Jacob shared.

Instead, open up with the bare bones.



From there, you can build the shop around the customer experience to something they'd really love. If you notice people coming in with laptops, make it a comfy space to work. If there are families, put kid-friendly drinks on the menu. If there are students, consider a discount! Either way, when the shop first opens, you should plan on being there to ensure the execution and training are just how you like them.

All set? Get out there and get brewing!

If you're looking for a cafe and coffee shop business for sale in Brisbane, check out online platforms that make the search hassle-free. These platforms allow you to filter options by location, price range, industry type, and more. With intuitive interfaces and comprehensive listings, they offer a convenient way to discover and invest in the perfect business opportunity in Brisbane.

Below is a recent listing on Business2Sell that you can checkout-

Step Into Success: Unique Cafe Adventure Awaits!

Advert Id: 377090, Sellers Ref: (261686)

Location: Brisbane City, Brisbane, Queensland

Category: Cafe and Coffee Shop, Restaurant, Takeaway Food

Asking Price: \$130,000 + SAV

Sales revenue :Undisclosed

Net profit :Undisclosed

Furniture/Fixtures value :Undisclosed

Inventory/Stock value : Undisclosed

Business description

Unlock Your Dream Cafe Opportunity!

Are you ready to dive into the delightful world of coffee, community, and culinary creativity? Imagine stepping into a vibrant cafe that's already making waves in a bustling neighbourhood! This is your chance to take the reins of an established cafe that's freshly opened and perfectly poised for growth.

Why start from scratch when you can walk into a beautifully fitted-out space, ready to serve up delicious brews and mouth-watering meals? This cafe is not just a business; it's a lifestyle. With everything in impeccable condition, you won't have to worry about repairs or renovations—just grab your apron and start brewing!

Key Highlights:

- Turnkey Operation: Everything you need to begin serving your community is already in place. Just bring your passion and personality!
- Modern & Inviting Atmosphere: The cafe boasts a stunning fit-out that will charm customers from the moment they walk in.
- Diverse Menu Options: Cater to a variety of tastes with a menu that's designed to please everyone—from families and friends to solo coffee enthusiasts.
- Strategic Location: Nestled in a busy area with high foot traffic, this cafe is a local hotspot waiting for your unique touch.
- Strong Community Appeal: With events and activities, you'll create a loyal customer base that keeps coming back for more (and maybe a treat or two)!

Why You Should Jump In:

- No Need for a Crystal Ball: The potential for growth is not just a dream; it's right in front of you! Expand catering services or tap into online retail sales—there's room for your entrepreneurial flair.
- Training Available: The current owners are ready to ensure a smooth transition, sharing their secrets of success so you don't have to start from scratch (unless you really want to bake your own bread!).
- Supportive Owners: They're selling due to changing family priorities, but they're committed to helping you succeed because a happy cafe owner makes for a happier cafe!

****Don't Let This Opportunity Brew Away!****

Whether you're a seasoned cafe operator or a first-time entrepreneur, this is a golden opportunity to step into a thriving business. With the cafe's established reputation and strong community ties, you'll be set up for success from day one.

So, grab your coffee cup and get ready to make your mark in the cafe world. With a fantastic asking price and a business model that's already winning hearts, this is your chance to turn your coffee dreams into reality!

****Contact us today for more information and to schedule a visit. Your future cafe awaits!****

Source:

<https://www.business2sell.com.au/businesses-details/step-into-success-unique-cafe-adventure-awaits.php>

If you are looking for budget Cafe and coffee shop business for sale In Brisbane, you can visit:

<https://www.business2sell.com.au/businesses/qld/brisbane/cafe-and-coffee-shop>

6. Conclusion

Opening a café or coffee shop in Brisbane is a rewarding venture with the right planning and execution. Success lies in selecting a prime location, offering high-quality coffee, and creating a unique customer experience. Effective marketing, excellent service, and sustainable practices can help build a loyal customer base. While challenges may arise, staying adaptable and passionate about your business will ensure long-term growth. By following the right steps and continuously improving, your café can thrive in Brisbane's competitive coffee scene. With dedication and a strong strategy, you can turn your dream café into a bustling and profitable business.

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