

Coffee shop the new office?

By Jennifer Kahnweiler, Friday, October 20, 2006, 08:40 AM
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

My office or yours? Ten years ago, the most convenient places to do business weren't all that convenient. Usually, sales meetings, networking interviews and project planning were all done within the confines of an office, a restaurant or a bar.

Fast forward to today. Starbucks, (or as it is sometimes called, "fourbucks") has changed all that.

Walk into any coffee place in Atlanta and above the din of life and cell phone conversations you hear the clicking of keys.

It is a welcome sound for many people who, paradoxically, seem to be more productive in the midst of activity than in the solitude of their home offices.

These consultants and business owners have been joined by home based employees, whose companies have shed costly office overhead.

So what are the informal ground rules for working in Atlanta coffee houses?

Here are a few to start:

- Don't just take up space - Buy a drink every few hours or so.
- Put something in the tip jar
- Take it outside if you are going to have a lengthy conversation with your girlfriend or co-worker.
- Let other people power up their laptops if you are sitting in front of a coveted outlet.
- Respect privacy - Take a hint if the person doesn't want to engage in conversation.

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- Be open to making connections(I saw a sales meeting set up between two table mates the other day).

Any other coffee shop etiquette tips you can offer us?