

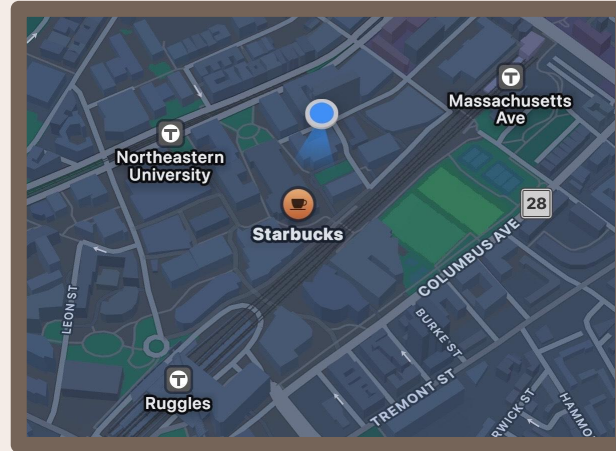
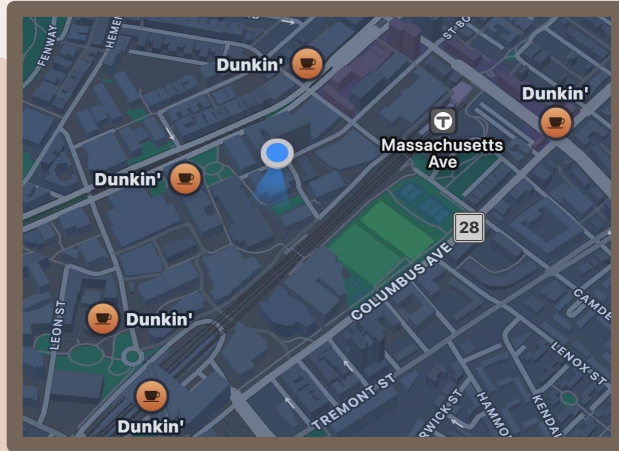
HfW.2

Lokesh Addagiri

Dunkin' vs Starbucks on Northeastern's Campus

# Dunkin' targets time-constrained Northeastern students through convenience and value

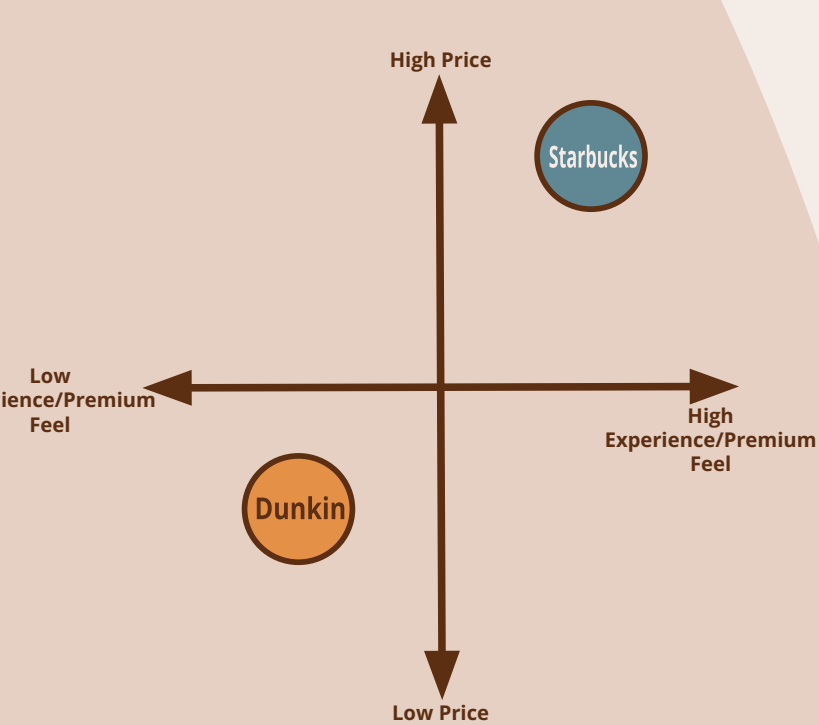
- **Business:** Dunkin' locations serving Northeastern students (on-campus and near campus)
- **How Dunkin' segments:**
  - **Behavioral:** daily caffeine routine, speed/convenience seekers, deal/coupon users
  - **Occasion/time-of-day:** morning rush, between-class quick stop, late-afternoon pickup
  - **Value sensitivity:** students using Dining Dollars or looking for low price per drink
- **Target segment:**
  - *"Time-constrained college students who prioritize convenience and value"*



## Note:

*Maps does not show all on campus locations.*

*Apple Maps, location search for Dunkin' and Starbucks near Northeastern University, Boston, MA (accessed 2026).*



*Relative to Starbucks, Dunkin' is positioned as a lower-price, lower-experience option that prioritizes speed and everyday convenience for students.*

## Dunkin' is positioned as a lower-price, lower-experience alternative to Starbucks for everyday routines

**Competitor:** Starbucks on/near campus

**Dunkin' positioning:**

"Fast, familiar, value-oriented coffee and food for everyday routines"

**Value proposition:**

"Reliable coffee + quick food at a student-friendly price, with fast service"

**Differentiation (relative to Starbucks):**

Typically **lower price/value perception**

"Grab-and-go speed" culture

Promotions/rewards emphasis

# Students' coffee choice is driven by a small set of measurable decision factors

## Research question:

*"What factors most influence Northeastern students' choice between Dunkin and Starbucks when buying coffee on or near campus?"*

## Why it matters to Dunkin:

- Identifies which levers (price, speed, location, taste, atmosphere) drive choice
- Helps prioritize changes Dunkin can actually make near campus



*Smith, Peter Ashby. "How a Coffee Shop Line Taught Me Effective Decision-Making - Peter Ashby Smith." Peter Ashby Smith - Building Resilience and Clarity in a Changing, AI-Driven World, 26 Apr. 2025, [peterashbysmith.com/how-a-coffee-shop-line-taught-me-effective-decision-making/](https://peterashbysmith.com/how-a-coffee-shop-line-taught-me-effective-decision-making/). Accessed 4 Feb. 2026.*

# The study uses a simple, realistic survey of Northeastern students



- **Data type: Primary data** (quick student survey)
- **Optional:** light **observational counts** (line length, wait time) as supporting



- **Population of interest:**
- Northeastern undergrads who buy coffee on/near campus



- **Sampling plan:**
- **Convenience sample** recruited near Curry/Hayden/Shillman or via QR code in group chats
- Goal: small pilot sample for assignment demo (n = 10)



- **Research method:**
- **Descriptive survey research** using a short online questionnaire
- **Three multiple-choice questions** measuring brand choice, decision driver, and purchase frequency

# Survey insights translate directly into actionable recommendations

*Actions are illustrative recommendations based on pilot survey insights (n = 10).*

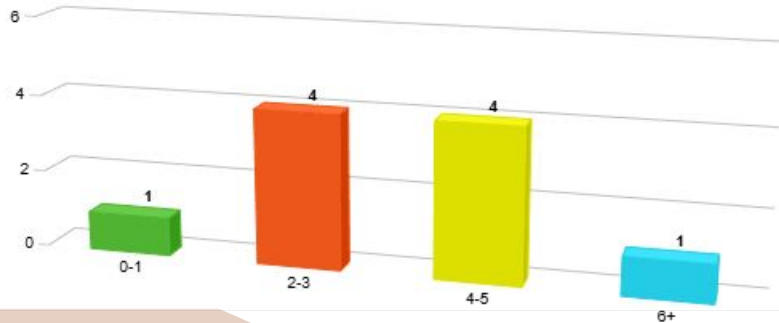
| <u>Key insight from survey</u>         | <u>Recommended action for Dunkin</u>                                 |
|--|--|
| Speed and line length drive choice     | Increase staffing during peak hours and streamline mobile pickup     |
| Price and value drive choice           | Promote Dining Dollar bundles and student-focused deals              |
| Taste and quality influence choice     | Highlight signature drinks and ensure product consistency            |
| Location convenience influences choice | Improve signage, campus wayfinding, and app-based location targeting |

# Example pilot data (n = 10 NU students) *see Exhibit A for full data*

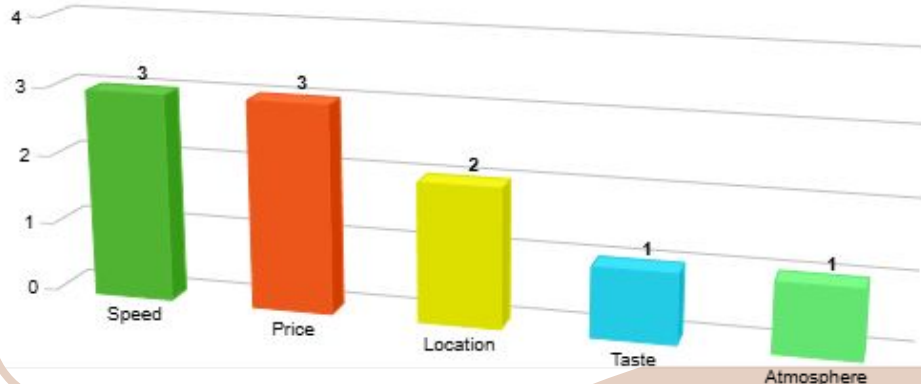
- Dunkin chosen more often by **8 of 10** respondents
- Top decision drivers: **Speed and price**
- Most students purchase coffee **2-5 times per week**

*These pilot results suggest that speed and price play a larger role than atmosphere or taste in students' coffee choices on campus, indicating areas where Dunkin' may have a competitive advantage relative to Starbucks.*

### Purchases per week (n=10)



### Primary driver of coffee choice (n=10)



# Exhibit A

| <u>Respondent</u> | <u>Brand chosen more often</u> | <u>Primary driver</u> | <u>Purchases/week</u> |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1                 | Dunkin                         | Speed                 | 4-5                   |
| 2                 | Dunkin                         | Price                 | 2-3                   |
| 3                 | Dunkin                         | Location              | 4-5                   |
| 4                 | Dunkin                         | Speed                 | 6+                    |
| 5                 | Dunkin                         | Price                 | 2-3                   |
| 6                 | Starbucks                      | Taste                 | 4-5                   |
| 7                 | Dunkin                         | Speed                 | 2-3                   |
| 8                 | Starbucks                      | Atmosphere            | 2-3                   |
| 9                 | Dunkin                         | Location              | 4-5                   |
| 10                | Dunkin                         | Price                 | 0-1                   |