



The Pressure Washing Business

Low buy-in, instant before-and-afters, and margins that embarrass most franchises. The classic first service business, done right.

\$600-1,200

START LEAN

7-14 days

FIRST DOLLAR

70-85%

TYPICAL MARGIN

Is this your business?

Pressure washing is the purest version of the service-business formula: visible results, repeat demand, equipment that pays for itself in a weekend, and customers who decide from one before-and-after photo. It rewards hustle in year one and systems in year two. If you want a business where effort converts to cash with almost no lag, this is the archetype.

\$600-1,200

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$2,500-5,000

STANDARD BUILD

7-14 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

70-85%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, fully

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes (mobile)

HOME-BASED

BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE CRAFTSMAN

THE OPERATOR

2/5 difficulty

THE HONEST FIT TEST

You will be outdoors in the heat, moving equipment, managing water and chemicals, and knocking on doors at the start. If you want a laptop business, this is not it. If a transformed driveway at 2 p.m. that was filthy at noon sounds like satisfaction, and quoting confidently to strangers does not scare you, you will do well here.

Who pays, and why now.

Every driveway, roof, fence, deck, and storefront in America gets dirty on a schedule, and the owner can see it from the street. That is the quiet genius of this business: the problem advertises itself, the result photographs beautifully, and the work recurs. Homeowners buy curb appeal and pre-sale cleanups. Businesses buy storefronts that look open and respectable. Property managers buy compliance and complaint-prevention across dozens of units at once.

Demand has three reliable drivers. First, real estate: every listing wants a washed exterior, and agents are repeat referrers once you do one good job. Second, seasons: spring brings pollen and winter grime, fall brings pre-holiday cleanups, and in most of the country the season runs eight to ten months. Third, neglect cycles: concrete and siding need cleaning every twelve to twenty-four months, which means every completed job is a future job with a date on it.

Competition is real but shallow. Most operators are one truck, no website, no follow-up system, and no answer when a customer calls twice. The bar for looking professional is on the floor: a clean uniform, a real quote process, photos of your work, and answering the phone puts you in the top ten percent of your market immediately. You are not competing with the best. You are competing with whoever answers.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Homeowners	\$200-450 per house wash; \$150-300 driveways	Curb appeal, pre-sale prep, HOA compliance letters gone
Real estate agents	\$250-500 per listing turn	A reliable vendor who makes listings photograph well, fast
Property managers	\$500-3,000+ per building or complex	One invoice, scheduled maintenance, zero tenant complaints
Storefronts & restaurants	\$100-300 monthly recurring	Clean entrances, gum and grease gone before customers arrive

THE REPEAT CYCLE

Every 12-24 months

Concrete, siding, and storefronts re-soil on a schedule. A 200-customer book is not 200 jobs: it is an annuity that re-orders itself every one to two years, if you keep the list and send the reminder.

Every dollar, before you spend it.

You can start lean with a capable consumer-grade setup and upgrade with revenue, or start standard if you have the capital. What you cannot do is skip the insurance line. Numbers below are typical street prices; buy the washer used and save another thirty percent.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
Pressure washer (3,000+ PSI, 2.5+ GPM, gas)	The workhorse. Belt-drive lasts longer; direct-drive is fine to start	\$350-600
Surface cleaner attachment (15-20 in)	Triples your speed on driveways: the highest-ROI accessory in the trade	\$120-250
Hoses, wands, tips, ladder	100 ft of pressure hose minimum; a tip set changes everything	\$120-200
Chemicals (house wash mix, degreaser)	Sodium hypochlorite + surfactant covers most residential work	\$60-120
Safety gear (gloves, glasses, boots)	Non-negotiable around chemicals and slick concrete	\$60-100
General liability insurance (first month)	You are spraying water at people's largest asset. \$1M policy	\$45-90/mo
LLC + city license (varies by state)	Your liability wall. See the legal page	\$50-500
Lean total		\$805-1,860 all-in

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
4 GPM belt-drive machine	Cuts job time 30-40%; pays for itself in 10-15 jobs	\$1,200-2,200
Water tank (100-200 gal) + trailer or rack	Frees you from the customer's spigot; commercial jobs unlock	\$700-1,800
Soft-wash setup (12V pump system)	Roofs, siding, and stucco safely: the highest-margin work	\$400-900
Vehicle branding (magnet or partial wrap)	Your truck parks in front of every job like a billboard	\$100-600

THE RULE

Buy the lean build, book ten jobs, and let job revenue buy every upgrade after that. The trade is full of \$15,000 trailer rigs financed before the first customer existed. Equipment does not win customers. Answered phones and finished driveways do.

Clean from day one.

Pressure washing is lightly regulated in most states, but the water itself is the trap most new operators never see coming: runoff rules are federal. Here is the clean-from-day-one checklist.

- Form your LLC:** File in your home state, get the EIN free at irs.gov, open the business bank account. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks every step.
- City or county business license:** Usually \$50-150 a year. One call to the city clerk answers it.
- General liability insurance, \$1M:** Before the first job, not after. Expect \$45-90 a month for a solo operator. Many commercial clients will ask for a certificate naming them additionally insured.
- Understand runoff rules (EPA / local stormwater):** Wash water carrying chemicals or grime cannot enter storm drains in most municipalities. Use berms, capture mats, or lawn discharge where required. Commercial flatwork jobs increasingly ask how you handle this: knowing the answer wins bids.
- Chemical handling basics:** Sodium hypochlorite is bleach: label tanks, carry SDS sheets, pre-wet and rinse landscaping, and never mix chemicals in closed spaces.
- Contractor license check:** A handful of states and cities require a specialty or home-improvement license above certain job values. Verify with your state contractor board before quoting large jobs.

INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

General liability is the floor. Add inland marine coverage for your equipment once the rig passes ~\$5,000 in value, and commercial auto if the truck or trailer is dedicated to the business. If you ever hire, workers' comp is mandatory in nearly every state from employee one.

WATCH FOR

Oxidized siding and 'chalking' paint: high pressure strips them and the homeowner blames you. Walk every surface with the customer before you spray, photograph pre-existing damage, and put soft-wash-only surfaces in writing on the quote. The thirty-second walkaround prevents the only lawsuit this business commonly produces.

Requirements vary by state and city. Verify with your state, city clerk, and a licensed professional. Education, not legal advice.

Three doors. Real numbers.

Price by the job, never by the hour: customers compare hourly rates but cannot compare driveways. Quote from square footage and surface type, anchor with the middle door, and keep a hard floor under every quote.

DOOR ONE

The Refresh

\$149-199 typical driveway

- ◆ Driveway or patio, up to ~600 sq ft
- ◆ Pre-treatment + surface clean
- ◆ Edges and walkway rinse
- ◆ Before-and-after photos delivered

RECOMMEND

DOOR TWO

The Curb Appeal

\$329-449 most-booked

- ◆ Full house soft wash (siding, soffits, gutters' exterior)
- ◆ Driveway and front walkway included
- ◆ Window exterior rinse
- ◆ 12-month re-soil reminder on file
- ◆ HOA-letter guarantee: if they write, we re-treat free

DOOR THREE

The Estate

\$649-999 premium

- ◆ Everything in Curb Appeal
- ◆ Deck or fence restoration wash
- ◆ Roof soft wash (moss and streak treatment)
- ◆ Driveway sealing add-on priced on site
- ◆ Priority scheduling for repeat service

PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Floor: never roll the truck for less than \$125; a 'small job' still costs you drive time, setup, and chemicals.
- Charge 20-30% more for roofs and anything requiring soft-wash chemistry or ladders: risk and skill deserve margin.
- Commercial flatwork prices by the 1,000 sq ft (typically \$80-180 per) with night/weekend premiums.
- Raise prices 10% once you are booked two weeks out. You are not a discount operator; you are the one who answers.

THE UPSSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

The maintenance plan. At job's end, offer the same service on a 12-month schedule at 10% off, card on file. A solo operator with 60 plan customers has pre-sold next year before January. This single habit is the difference between re-starting every spring and compounding.

Names, not strategies.

Your first ten jobs live within a half mile of where you stand. This business converts proximity into proof faster than any other trade: one finished driveway sells the four houses that can see it.

1 Your own street first

Wash your driveway, then your neighbor's free or at founding rate. Photograph everything. Ten doors with a printed before-and-after and a founding offer beats any ad you could buy.

2 The visibly dirty doors

Drive your zip code at golden hour and list ten green-streaked houses and black driveways. Knock or leave a card with THEIR house's problem named: 'north-facing driveways here grow algae every spring.'

3 Real estate agents (three of them)

Every agent has a listing that photographs dirty. Offer a fast listing-turn rate and 48-hour scheduling. One agent who trusts you is worth 15 jobs a year.

4 Local Facebook groups + Nextdoor

Post one jaw-dropping before-and-after with a founding-customer line. Neighborhood groups exist to share exactly this. Answer every comment within the hour.

5 One property manager

Find the manager of a tired-looking complex and offer one building section free as a demo, quoted price on the rest. Property managers hold 20-job contracts and answer to owners who notice grime.

THE EXACT ASK

"Hi, I'm [name]: I run a pressure washing company here in [neighborhood]. I did the Hendersons' driveway on Maple last week: here's the before and after. I'm taking five founding customers this month at \$50 off while I build my local book. Would you want a free two-minute quote while I'm here?"

THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

First ten customers: \$50 off any package, in exchange for a Google review if they are happy and permission to photograph the work. Retire the deal publicly after ten: 'founding rates ended, neighborhood rates posted.' Scarcity that is real converts better than discounts that never die.

Owned, earned, then paid.

This is a visual, local, seasonal trade. Your marketing engine is before-and-after proof, owned follow-up, and a Google profile that outranks the silent majority. Paid ads come last, and only in spring.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
Google Business Profile	'Pressure washing near me' is the whole funnel for homeowners in buying mode	Claim it day one; post photos weekly; collect a review per week minimum
Before-and-after content	The transformation IS the ad; nothing in this trade outperforms it	Shoot every job, same angle, phone tripod; post the split everywhere
Nextdoor + local Facebook	Neighborhood proof travels; one post can book a week	One transformation post per week + answer every 'anyone know a...' thread
Email/SMS reminder list	The 12-24 month re-soil cycle is your annuity: reminders harvest it	Every customer on the list at job's end; automate the 11-month nudge
Door hangers on visible jobs	Five houses can see every driveway you finish	'We just washed #14: founding rate for this street this week' on the five nearest doors

FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- The oddly satisfying half-clean driveway shot (the single best performer in the niche)
- What does pressure washing cost in [your city]? (the page every buyer searches, almost nobody writes)
- Soft wash vs pressure wash: which one your siding needs (positions you as the careful expert)
- Time-lapse of a full house wash in 60 seconds
- Spring checklist: the 5 surfaces your home needs cleaned before Memorial Day

THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask at the walkthrough, while they are staring at the transformation: 'It would mean a lot if you shared that in a review: I'll text you the link right now.' Texted link, peak moment, every job. Forty reviews in year one makes you the obvious choice in most suburbs, and reviews compound exactly like the re-soil annuity: written once, selling forever.

One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what one standard job actually earns, and what a steady solo month looks like once the calendar fills. These use the middle door at \$379 and typical solo costs.

ONE UNIT: ONE CURB APPEAL PACKAGE (\$379)	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: SOLO, 26 JOBS (MAY)	AMOUNT
Revenue	\$379	Revenue (mixed packages)	\$7,850
Chemicals + fuel	-\$28	Chemicals, fuel, supplies	-\$640
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$11	Insurance, phone, software	-\$240
Insurance + overhead share	-\$25	Marketing (cards, boosts)	-\$150
Gross profit (3.5 hrs on site)	\$315	Equipment fund (10%)	-\$785
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$85	Pre-tax profit	\$6,035
Yours, per job	\$230	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$1,630
		Owner take-home	\$4,405

BREAK-EVEN

4-6 jobs

A lean rig plus a month of insurance and license costs is recovered inside the first four to six driveways. Almost no legitimate business returns its startup capital faster, which is exactly why follow-through, not capital, is the real barrier to entry.

Illustrative figures at typical market rates; your market, prices, and costs will differ. Run YOUR numbers in the One-Page P&L from THE LAUNCHPAD, Module Six. Remember the 25-30% tax reserve on every dollar of profit.

Pre-decided, so motivation is never consulted.

WEEK ONE: FOUNDATIONS

- LLC filed, EIN issued, business bank account open
- Insurance bound; certificate saved to phone
- Lean rig purchased and tested on YOUR driveway
- Google Business Profile claimed; first photos up
- Pricing menu finalized with floor written down

WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- Wash 2-3 founding jobs (neighbors, family rates)
- Shoot before-and-afters of every job, same angle
- Knock or card the 10 visibly dirty doors list
- First Nextdoor/Facebook transformation post
- Visit 3 real estate offices with a listing-turn offer

WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- Founding offer running; track asks vs books
- First Google reviews requested at the peak moment
- Door hangers on the 5 nearest houses of every job
- Property manager demo pitched (one building free)
- Re-soil reminder list started: every customer added

WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- Raise from founding to posted rates publicly
- Weekly cadence locked: content Mon, money hour Fri
- Quote response time under 2 hours, systematized
- Month-one P&L completed; one lever chosen
- Maintenance plan offered at every job's end

DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 8+ paid jobs, 5+ reviews, calendar holding a second month of work. Yellow: jobs but no reviews or repeat machinery: fix the systems, not the hustle. Red: under 4 jobs despite 25+ real asks: revisit pricing and proof, then run week two again before touching another dollar of equipment spend.

How this business fails, and how it grows.

THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **Underpricing to win everything**
The \$99 driveway guy stays busy and broke, then quits in August. Hold the floor; let the cheap jobs go to whoever wants to lose money on them.

- ✗ **No insurance 'just for now'**
One stripped window screen or flooded garage erases a season of profit. Bound before the first spray, no exceptions.

- ✗ **High pressure on soft surfaces**
Vinyl, stucco, roofs, and oxidized paint demand soft wash. The fastest reputation killer in the trade is a striped roof on Nextdoor.

- ✗ **Treating it as jobs, not a book**
Operators who never keep the list restart from zero every spring. The list plus the 11-month reminder is the actual business.

- ✗ **Buying the dream rig first**
A financed \$15,000 trailer with no customers is a boat anchor. Revenue buys equipment; equipment does not buy revenue.

THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 The route business**
Stack commercial and storefront monthlies until recurring covers your overhead. Recurring flatwork is less glamorous and far more bankable than chasing one-off houses.

- 2 The second crew**
A helper at 60% utilization pays for themselves; a second rig with a trained lead doubles capacity. Your job shifts to quotes, quality checks, and the calendar.

- 3 The add-on ladder**
Window cleaning, gutter clearing, christmas lights in the off-season, driveway sealing. Same customers, same truck, new invoices: lifetime value doubles without a new customer.

YOUR FIRST HIRE

A part-time helper for the back half of jobs (rinse, move hoses, reset) once you are booked 10+ days out. They buy you 30% more jobs per week immediately, and they are your test: if you cannot write down how a job is done well enough for a helper to follow it, you do not have a system yet.

THE STAIRCASE CONTINUES

The playbook is the map. The machine is waiting.

Everything this playbook describes, Epic Advisory Group can build with you: the brand, the cinematic website, the entity, the engine. Describe your idea to the Launch Engine and see your business real in about sixty seconds, free.

- The Launch Engine: your idea, built free, in about a minute
- THE ASCENT: Founder Edition: the eight-module course
- Launch-in-a-Box: entity, brand, site, and first campaign, one flat price
- Growth, capital readiness, and the path to the public markets

"There is no right age. There is only the decision."



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