



The Lawn Care Business

The most recurring of all recurring revenue: grass grows every week, on schedule, whether the economy cares or not. Win the route and you have won the year.

\$825-2,200

START LEAN

3-7 days

FIRST DOLLAR

55-70%

TYPICAL MARGIN

Is this your business?

Lawn care is the densest recurring revenue in the service world: grass grows back every seven days, customers buy a season at a time, and a tight route turns a \$50 cut into a \$1,500-a-year relationship right across the fence from the last one. The model rewards consistency over genius. Show up the same day every week, leave straight lines and crisp edges, and the route compounds underneath you.

\$825-2,200

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$5,000-12,000

STANDARD BUILD

3-7 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

55-70%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, fully

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes (mobile)

HOME-BASED

BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE OPERATOR

THE CRAFTSMAN

2/5 difficulty

THE HONEST FIT TEST

You will sweat, smell like gas and grass, and live by the weather radar. Margins come from route density and pace, which means discipline, not artistry: the same standard at lawn forty that you held at lawn four. If repetitive outdoor work with visible, weekly-renewing results sounds like rhythm instead of monotony, this trade will quietly out-earn jobs that look much fancier.

Who pays, and why now.

Grass is the most reliable customer in America: it grows back every seven days from April to October across most of the country, and somebody has to deal with it. The people who pay are not lazy. They are busy, traveling, aging, or simply done spending Saturday behind a mower. What they buy is not a cut: it is the same truck, the same day, every week, and a lawn that never becomes the street's embarrassment.

Demand stacks in layers. Homeowners anchor the route with weekly cuts. Landlords and out-of-state owners pay to avoid city code letters. Property managers and HOAs sign monthly contracts covering common areas in one invoice. And the calendar hands you upsells on a schedule: spring cleanups, summer hedge work, fall aeration and leaf removal, all bought by the same customers from whoever already has the gate code.

The competition is an army of lowballers who fold by July and a few professionals who are full. The lowballer charges \$25, skips the edging, mows wet, scalps the turf, and vanishes when the trimmer breaks. You win with boring excellence: same-day-each-week service, sharp blades, crisp edges, a text when you finish, and an invoice that never requires a phone call. Route density does the rest: ten lawns on one street out-earn thirty scattered across town.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Homeowners	\$45-65 per weekly cut	One less chore, even lines, same day every week
Landlords and rental owners	\$50-70 per cut across properties	No code violation letters, no tenant excuses
Property managers / HOAs	\$1,000-5,000+ monthly contracts	Common areas handled, one invoice, zero complaints
Real estate agents	\$75-150 listing cleanups	Photo-ready lawns on 48-hour notice

CUTS PER SEASON, ONE YARD

28-34

In most of the country a weekly lawn is roughly thirty invoices a year, sold once. A 60-lawn route is an 1,800-cut season that books itself every Monday morning, which is why route operators sleep better than almost anyone else in the trades.

Every dollar, before you spend it.

Used commercial equipment beats new big-box every time: a ten-year-old commercial mower outlasts a new residential one and holds resale value. Match the machine to the route you actually have, not the one you imagine.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
Commercial-grade 21 in mower (used)	Look for commercial decks at landscaper auctions and Marketplace; avoid big-box homeowner units	\$250-600
String trimmer (straight shaft)	The detail tool. Commercial line, extra spools in the truck	\$130-250
Blower (handheld to start)	The last 90 seconds of every job is what the customer actually sees	\$120-220
Gas cans, spare blades, trimmer line, PPE	Ear and eye protection are non-negotiable around thrown debris	\$80-150
Ramps or hitch hauler for your vehicle	A trailer can wait; getting the mower there cannot	\$150-400
General liability insurance (first month)	Mowers throw rocks through windows and worse. \$1M policy	\$45-90/mo
LLC + city license (varies by state)	Your liability wall. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks it	\$50-500
Lean total		\$825-2,210 all-in

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
36-48 in commercial walk-behind or zero-turn (used)	Halves mow time on bigger lawns; only buy once the route justifies it	\$2,500-6,000
5x10 utility trailer	Roll-on, roll-off; saves 10 minutes per stop versus ramps	\$1,200-2,500
Backpack blower	Triples cleanup speed on leaf-heavy properties	\$300-550
Dedicated stick edger	The crisp concrete edge that makes a \$50 lawn look like an \$80 one	\$200-400

THE RULE

Do not buy a zero-turn for postage-stamp suburban lawns: it will not fit the gates and it will not pay for itself. Equipment follows the route. Sign the lawns first, time your stops, and buy the machine that fixes your actual bottleneck.

Clean from day one.

Mowing is nearly unregulated. Spraying is heavily regulated, and the line between the two is where new lawn businesses get fined out of existence. Set up clean, and know exactly where that line sits in your state.

- 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:** A mower-thrown rock through a bay window or a parked windshield is the classic claim. Bound before the first cut; \$45-90 a month solo.
- The pesticide line: do not cross it unlicensed:** In nearly every state, applying any herbicide, fertilizer, or insecticide for pay, even store-bought Roundup on a customer's weeds, requires a state applicator license. Mow-and-go is exempt. Spraying without the license draws four-figure fines per violation, and competitors report it.
- Trailer registration and towing rules:** Most states require separate trailer plates, working lights, and safety chains. Your personal auto policy may exclude business towing: ask, in writing.
- Noise ordinances:** Blower restrictions and equipment-hour rules are spreading city by city. Know your start-time limits before the 7 a.m. complaint finds you.

INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

General liability is the floor. Add inland marine for equipment once the trailer rig passes ~\$5,000, commercial auto for the tow vehicle (personal policies routinely exclude business towing), and workers' comp from employee one. HOA and commercial contracts will require certificates before you start: same-day delivery of one wins bids.

WATCH FOR

The spray creep. A customer asks you to 'just hit those weeds while you're here,' and the bottle is right there in their garage. Decline kindly, every time, until you hold the applicator license. Unlicensed application is the most-enforced violation in this industry, and the fine usually exceeds a month of route revenue. Either get licensed in the off-season or partner with a licensed applicator and take a referral fee: both paths keep the customer and the business.

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 per stop, not per hour, and protect the stop math: drive time, unload, cut, trim, edge, blow, load. Walk the property before confirming any number; corner lots, fence lines, and gates change everything.

	RECOMMEND	
<p>DOOR ONE</p> <p>The Weekly Cut</p> <p>\$45-60 per visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Mow, string trim, edge, blow clean ◆ Same day every week, weather permitting ◆ Clippings mulched (bagging quoted separately) ◆ Gate closed, photo texted on completion 	<p>DOOR TWO</p> <p>The Cut + Keep</p> <p>\$240-320 per month, most-booked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Everything in the Weekly Cut ◆ Monthly shrub and hedge touch-up ◆ Hand weeding of front beds ◆ Priority rescheduling after rain ◆ 12-month even billing available 	<p>DOOR THREE</p> <p>The Property Plan</p> <p>\$450-700 per month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Everything in Cut + Keep ◆ Spring and fall cleanups included ◆ Annual mulch refresh (materials billed at cost) ◆ Fall aeration and overseed scheduled automatically ◆ First call for storm cleanup and extras

PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Floor: \$40 per stop, even for tiny lawns; the stop costs you the same windshield time either way.
- Biweekly customers pay 30% more per cut: double the growth, double the clumping, double your time. Price it or decline it.
- Measure the gate before quoting: a 36 inch gate decides which mower fits the backyard, which decides your minutes, which decides your margin.
- Quote from the curb, confirm after a walk: corner lots and long fence lines hide ten minutes of trimming the satellite view never shows.
- Raise prices 10% when the route is full, and cull your five worst lawns every spring. A full calendar is a pricing signal, not a finish line.

THE UPSSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

Fall aeration and overseed: \$150-350 per lawn at 70%+ margin, sold to your entire list with one September text. A 50-lawn route converting a third of customers adds \$3,000+ in a month you would otherwise spend watching the grass slow down. The list you built all summer is the asset; this is its harvest.

Names, not strategies.

Your first ten customers should share a street, not a zip code. Density is the entire economic engine of this trade, so sell proximity from day one: every lawn within sight of one you already cut.

1 Your own street first

Cut yours to a photograph-worthy standard, then offer the two neighbors a founding rate 'since I'm already here every Thursday.' That sentence is the most honest discount in business: it reflects your real route math.

2 The overgrown list

Drive your neighborhood and note ten shaggy lawns. Half belong to overwhelmed owners, half to out-of-town landlords: the county assessor site tells you which, and landlords sign fastest.

3 Local Facebook groups + Nextdoor

Post a striped, edged lawn with a simple line: taking ten weekly lawns in [neighborhood], same day every week, guaranteed. Answer every comment within the hour.

4 Realtors (three of them)

Every listing needs the lawn cut before photos and every closing leaves a vacant house growing. Offer 48-hour listing cleanups; one agent is worth a dozen jobs a season.

5 One property manager or small HOA

Pitch a monthly contract on a tired-looking common area. One contract anchors the month and upgrades your credibility with every homeowner who asks who mows it.

THE EXACT ASK

"Hi, I'm [name]. I cut the Garcias' lawn two doors down, the striped one. I'm building a weekly route on this street, which means I can take care of yours for [price] since I'm already here every Thursday. No contract, same day every week, and I close the gate every time. Want me to add you to this Thursday?"

THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

First ten route customers lock a founding rate for the whole season, in exchange for a Google review at week four and a yard-sign spot for a month. Retire it publicly at ten. The rate is honest: ten dense lawns genuinely cost you less to serve, and customers can feel when a discount is real.

Owned, earned, then paid.

This is a proximity business: the best ad you own is a freshly striped lawn with your sign at the curb, and the best targeting available is the houses that can see it. Build proof, then put it in front of neighbors, then harvest the season with your list.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
Google Business Profile	'Lawn service near me' searches spike every spring weekend	Claim it day one; post striped-lawn photos weekly; one review per week
Door hangers on route streets	Five neighbors can see every lawn you finish	'We cut #14 every Thursday: this street's route rate' on the five nearest doors
Nextdoor + local Facebook	Every spring these fill with 'anyone mow lawns?' threads	One stripe-porn post weekly; answer every thread inside an hour
Email/SMS seasonal blasts	Aeration, cleanups, and mulch sell to the list in one send	Every customer on the list; September aeration blast, March cleanup blast
Realtor + PM partnerships	Vacant homes and listings are recurring, urgent, and price-insensitive	Visit three offices with a 48-hour cleanup card and a certificate of insurance

FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- A perfectly striped lawn time-lapse (the satisfying staple of the niche)
- Why your grass tips turn brown after mowing (dull blades, and what pros do differently)
- What weekly lawn care actually costs in [your city], by lawn size
- Weekly vs biweekly mowing: the real math on price and lawn health
- The fall checklist: aeration, overseed, and the last-cut height that matters in spring

THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask at week four, not week one: 'You've seen four straight Thursdays now: would you put that in a review? I'll text the link.' A review that mentions reliability is worth three that mention price, because reliability is what the next customer is terrified about.

One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what one weekly customer is actually worth per month, and what a dense solo route produces in peak season. These use a \$45 weekly cut and real fuel, blade, and overhead costs.

ONE UNIT: ONE WEEKLY CUSTOMER (ONE MONTH, \$180)	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: SOLO, 55-LAWN ROUTE (MAY)	AMOUNT
Revenue (4 cuts at \$45)	\$180	Revenue (cuts + cleanups)	\$9,600
Fuel, oil, blade wear	-\$14	Fuel, oil, blades, line	-\$760
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$5	Equipment repair fund (10%)	-\$960
Insurance + overhead share	-\$16	Insurance, phone, software	-\$250
Gross profit (~2.5 hrs total)	\$145	Marketing (hangers, boosts)	-\$140
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$39	Pre-tax profit	\$7,490
Yours, per customer-month	\$106	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$2,020
		Owner take-home	\$5,470

BREAK-EVEN

30-40 cuts

A lean rig is recovered inside the first month of a modest route: thirty-odd cuts at street rates. After that, every machine you own is bought by grass that was going to grow anyway, which is as close to a sure thing as small business offers.

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 bought used and tested on YOUR lawn
- Google Business Profile claimed; striped photos up
- Stop-math pricing sheet finalized with \$40 floor

WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- First 3 founding lawns signed on your own street
- Photo of every finished lawn, same angle, sign in frame
- Door hangers on the five nearest houses per job
- First Nextdoor/Facebook striped-lawn post
- Overgrown-lawn list built; landlords looked up

WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- Founding offer running; track asks vs books
- Route map reviewed: decline anything 15+ min off-route
- Visit 3 realtor offices with the 48-hour cleanup card
- One HOA or property manager pitched
- Customer list started: every yard, every contact

WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- Week-four review asks texted to first customers
- Raise from founding to posted rates publicly
- Rain-day protocol written and tested
- Month-one P&L completed; one lever chosen
- September aeration upsell drafted and scheduled

DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 12+ weekly lawns inside a 10-minute loop, 3+ reviews, route holding without you chasing. Yellow: customers but scattered: stop selling and densify, the drive time is eating you alive. Red: under 6 lawns despite 30+ real asks: your street-level proof is weak; rerun week two with better photos and the honest route-rate pitch.

How this business fails, and how it grows.

THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **The scattered route**
Thirty lawns across town earn less than fifteen on three streets. Windshield time is unpaid time; decline off-route work politely and keep the contact for when you expand.

- ✗ **Underpricing biweekly**
Two weeks of growth takes nearly double the time and clogs the deck. Biweekly at weekly prices is the quiet margin leak that sinks first-year operators.

- ✗ **Dull blades and wet turf**
Dull blades tear grass brown; mowing wet rut-scars lawns and spreads fungus. Sharpen every 8-12 mowing hours and reschedule rain days: protecting the lawn is protecting the contract.

- ✗ **Spraying without the license**
One 'helpful' squirt of herbicide for pay is an enforcement action waiting on a neighbor's phone call. Mow freely; spray only licensed.

- ✗ **Booking 100% of capacity**
A full calendar with zero weather slack collapses the first rainy week. Hold a buffer day; reliability is your brand and rain is guaranteed.

THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The treatment ladder**
Get the applicator license in your first off-season. Fertilization and weed-control programs run 70%+ margins on customers you already serve, and they turn a mowing route into a lawn-care company.

- 2 **The second crew**
A two-person crew with a written route sheet covers 60+ lawns a week. Your job becomes quoting, quality spot-checks, and keeping the route tight: the machine only works if density stays sacred.

- 3 **The acquisition play**
Routes change hands every winter when operators retire or burn out, typically for one to two months of billing. Buying 30 accounts in one closing beats winning them one Thursday at a time.

YOUR FIRST HIRE

A trimmer person: you mow, they trim, edge, and blow. Stops drop from 30 minutes to under 20, which adds a third more lawns to every day at a part-timer's wage. They are also your systems test: if your route sheet and per-stop checklist are not written clearly enough for a new hire to follow on day two, fix the paper before you add the payroll.

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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