



The Handyman Business

Every home has a list of small broken things and nobody to call. Charge for the visit, not the hour, and become the number saved in fifty phones.

\$770-2,000

START LEAN

3-7 days

FIRST DOLLAR

75-90%

TYPICAL MARGIN

Is this your business?

Every home is a slow-motion collection of small broken things: the dragging gate, the cracked caulk, the fan that wobbles. General contractors will not answer for jobs this small, which leaves a permanent gap that a reliable handyman with a calendar and an invoice fills at \$300-700 a day. The product is not carpentry. It is the magic words 'I can be there Thursday at nine.'

\$770-2,000

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$4,000-9,000

STANDARD BUILD

3-7 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

75-90%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, fully

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes (mobile)

HOME-BASED

BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE CRAFTSMAN

THE OPERATOR

3/5 difficulty

THE HONEST FIT TEST

You need real hands: confident with a drill, a level, basic plumbing fixtures, drywall patches, and the judgment to know which jobs to refuse. The legal lines around unlicensed work are sharp and state-specific, and crossing them can end the business. If you fix things well and can say 'that one needs a licensed plumber' without ego, you are the right person.

Who pays, and why now.

The median American home is over forty years old, and every year of age adds items to a list nobody finishes: the toilet that runs, the screen that tore, the closet door off its track. General contractors will not return calls for jobs under a few thousand dollars, which strands an entire economy of \$150-700 problems with no one to solve them. The handyman who answers the phone owns that economy in his zip code.

The buyers are layered and they repeat. Homeowners hire you for the list, then call back three to five times a year, forever. Realtors need inspection punch lists cleared on closing deadlines and do not blink at day rates. Landlords and property managers need units turned fast and invoiced cleanly. Seniors aging in place need grab bars, railings, and someone patient their kids can trust. Any one of these segments could fill a calendar alone.

Your real competitor is not another business: it is the unanswered phone. The trade is full of skilled people who quote slowly, show up late, and vanish mid-list. Insurance, a written scope, a real invoice, and the words 'I can be there Thursday at nine' beat twenty years of superior carpentry that never calls back. The bar is reliability, and it has never been lower or worth more.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Homeowners with a list	\$150-400 per visit	One trustworthy person for everything small, finally
Real estate agents	\$300-900 inspection punch lists	Repair items cleared before the closing date, documented
Landlords / property managers	\$150-500 per unit turn	Tenant-ready fast, one clean invoice, photos as proof
Seniors aging in place	\$100-300 safety jobs	Grab bars, railings, patience, and someone their kids vetted
Small businesses	\$150-450 per call	Doors, fixtures, and shelving handled without a GC's minimum

CALLBACKS A YEAR, PER HOUSEHOLD

3-5

Once a household trusts you, you become the saved number. The first \$200 job is an audition for a decade of list-clearing visits, which is why answering fast beats advertising in this trade by a mile.

Every dollar, before you spend it.

Most founders here already own half the lean list, which is why this start can be nearly free or close to two grand depending on your garage. The real startup costs are the insurance and the discipline to organize the vehicle you already have.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
Cordless kit (drill, impact, circular saw, multi-tool)	One battery platform; buy bare tools after the first kit	\$250-500
Hand tools, levels, stud finder, fastener stock	A sorted fastener bin saves a hardware-store trip per job: that is an hour, every job	\$150-300
Ladders (6 ft step + extension)	Half of all small jobs involve the top third of a wall	\$180-350
General liability insurance (first month)	Handyman class codes price higher than most trades; never work bare	\$60-120/mo
LLC + city license (varies by state)	Your liability wall. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks it	\$50-500
Vehicle organization (bins, shelving for what you drive now)	A sorted trunk is a mobile shop; a loose pile is a daily 20-minute tax	\$80-200
Job app + card reader	Quote, invoice, and take payment at the door before you leave	\$0-50/mo
Lean total	\$770-2,020 all-in (less if your garage already holds the tools)	

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
Used cargo van or enclosed trailer	The rolling shop: every tool on every job ends the 'I'll come back' trip	\$2,500-7,000
Specialty tools (tile saw, finish nailer, texture gun)	Bought per booked job, priced into that job, kept forever	\$400-900
EPA RRP lead-safe certification	Required before disturbing painted surfaces in pre-1978 homes; see legal	\$250-400
Vehicle branding (magnet or partial wrap)	Your truck in a driveway is the neighborhood's most trusted ad	\$100-600

THE RULE

Tools follow jobs, never the reverse. Buy the specialty tool when the job that needs it is booked and priced to cover it, and the tool arrives free. The garage full of someday-tools is where handyman profit traditionally goes to die.

Clean from day one.

This is the most legally booby-trapped business on this list, and the traps are invisible until enforcement finds you. The two lines that matter: the dollar cap on unlicensed work in your state, and the trades you may never touch without a license. Learn both before quoting anything.

- 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.
- Know your state's handyman exemption cap, exactly:** Most states allow unlicensed handyman work only below a per-job ceiling, commonly \$500-3,000 including labor AND materials (California's is \$1,000; a few states set none). Look yours up at the state contractor board, print it, and never split one job into two invoices to duck it: that is the violation boards actually prosecute.
- The licensed-trade lines:** No gas lines, no new electrical circuits or panel work, no refrigerant (that is EPA 608 territory), no structural framing, and in many states no roofing. Like-for-like fixture swaps (faucet, light, fan on existing wiring) are generally fine: know your state's exact wording, not the forum consensus.
- General liability insurance, \$1M:** Handyman GL costs more than other trades for a reason: water from a 'simple' supply line can total a kitchen. Bound before job one.
- City or county business license:** Usually \$50-150 a year. Some cities also keep a handyman registration: one call answers both.
- EPA RRP rule for pre-1978 homes:** Sanding, cutting, or demolishing painted surfaces in homes built before 1978 requires lead-safe certification. Fines run five figures per violation, and the certification course costs a few hundred dollars. Cheap insurance for anyone touching old housing stock.
- Written scope on every job:** Two lines and a price in a text message count. Nearly every dispute in this trade is a scope dispute, and the text thread settles it before it starts.

INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

General liability is the floor and priced higher for handyman class codes: budget \$60-120 a month solo. Add tool coverage (inland marine) once your kit passes \$5,000, commercial auto when the vehicle is dedicated, and workers' comp at the first hire. Property managers often require \$2M aggregate: ask what they need before the first job, not after.

WATCH FOR

The job that grew. Small repairs uncover big problems: the wobbly toilet is a rotten subfloor, the cracked caulk hides water damage, the dead outlet is aluminum wiring. The exemption cap and your skill ceiling both live one discovery away. Build the habit now: stop, photograph, explain, and either re-quote within your legal limit or refer to a licensed trade. The referral costs you one job and buys you a customer for life.

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

Three doors. Real numbers.

Sell blocks of solved problems, never hours. Hourly pricing punishes you for being fast and caps your ceiling at your stamina. The visit price is the product: a quick fix, a half day, or a full day, each with a clear scope.

DOOR ONE

The Quick Fix

\$149-199 minimum visit

- ◆ Up to 90 minutes on site
- ◆ One to three small repairs from your list
- ◆ Materials billed at cost plus, receipts shown
- ◆ Same-week scheduling

RECOMMEND

DOOR TWO

The Half-Day List

\$329-399 most-booked

- ◆ Up to 4 hours working your list in priority order
- ◆ Text the list ahead; I bring the right materials
- ◆ Photo report of every completed item
- ◆ The 'while I'm here' add-ons welcomed
- ◆ Leftover time never wasted: ask for the bonus item

DOOR THREE

The Full-Day Rescue

\$599-749 premium

- ◆ 8 hours for bigger projects or whole-house lists
- ◆ Realtor punch lists and rental turns, documented
- ◆ Materials run included once if needed
- ◆ Priority scheduling within the week
- ◆ Itemized completion report for closings

PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Never quote firm prices over the phone for problems you have not seen: quote the visit, then confirm scope in the first ten minutes on site.
- Materials: client buys, or you supply at cost plus 20-30%. Either is fine; pick one, say it up front, show receipts.
- Stay under your state's exemption cap on every quote, labor plus materials, with no invoice-splitting. The cap is a legal ceiling, not a suggestion.
- Decline below-floor jobs kindly and keep the contact: today's too-small caller is next month's full-day list.

THE UPSSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

The 'while I'm here' line, planted at booking: 'Most folks find two or three extra items once I'm there: keep a list going!' It adds 20-30% to the average ticket at zero acquisition cost, and clients love it because the marginal item costs them less than a separate visit ever would. The list mindset is also what converts a one-time caller into a household that books you quarterly.

Names, not strategies.

Everyone you know has a broken thing they have been ignoring for months. Your first ten jobs are one announcement and three professional relationships away, and every completed list multiplies through the neighborhood by word of mouth.

1 **Your own network, announced once and well**

One post: what you do, the founding half-day offer, three photos of real fixes. Every friend group contains five households with a list and no number saved.

2 **Realtors (three of them)**

Inspection repair lists are urgent, recurring, and deadline-priced. An agent who watches you clear a punch list in one documented day will never use anyone else.

3 **Property managers**

Unit turns and tenant tickets are a standing stream. One PM with forty doors can underwrite your whole first quarter.

4 **Nextdoor**

'Anyone know a good handyman?' is among the most-asked questions on the entire platform. Be the fast, insured, reviewed answer in your zip code.

5 **Senior networks**

Grab bars, railings, smoke detector batteries, the porch step: small safety jobs, deeply appreciated, referred endlessly through community centers and adult children.

THE EXACT ASK

"Hi [name], I'm [name]: I run a small handyman service here in [neighborhood]. I'm booking founding customers this month: a half-day visit where I just work down your fix-it list, \$40 off while I build my local book. Most homes have ten little things waiting. Want me to swing by, look at the list, and give you a straight price?"

THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

First ten half-days at \$40 off, in exchange for a Google review if they are happy and a before-and-after photo of the best fix. Retire it publicly at ten. The founding frame matters: you are not cheap, you are early, and the price says which.

Owned, earned, then paid.

The buyer is anxious: they have been burned by no-shows and quoted nonsense. Everything you publish should answer the real questions: will he show up, is he insured, what does it cost, can I see his work. Speed of response is the channel that beats all others.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
Google Business Profile	'Handyman near me' is a high-intent search made by someone staring at the broken thing	Claim it day one; post fix photos weekly; respond to every review
Nextdoor	The natural habitat of the handyman question; recommendations stack visibly	Answer threads fast; ask happy clients to recommend you on-platform
Realtor + PM partnerships	Deadline work at day rates, recurring forever	Quarterly office visits with cards, COI, and a punch-list case study
Before-and-after fix content	Small transformations read as competence; competence reads as safety	Every job: one photo pair + one line on what it cost
Seasonal checklist emails	Gutters, caulk, weatherstripping: seasons hand you reasons to reappear	Quarterly checklist to the client list with a one-tap booking link

FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- Ten fixes under \$200 that prevent four-figure repairs
- What a handyman can legally do in [your state], and when you genuinely need a licensed trade
- One house, one day, fourteen items: a punch-list time-lapse
- The pre-listing fix list realtors wish every seller followed
- How to stop the door from doing that: a 60-second hinge fix

THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask while walking the finished list together, pointing at each completed item: 'If this was what you hoped, a review really helps a one-man shop: I'll text you the link.' The walk-through is the peak moment, and reviews that list specific fixed items are search-engine gold for the next anxious homeowner.

One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what the most-booked visit actually nets, and what a well-booked solo month looks like. These use the Half-Day List at \$349 with materials passed through at cost plus.

ONE UNIT: ONE HALF-DAY LIST (\$349)	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: SOLO, 20 BOOKED DAYS	AMOUNT
Revenue (labor)	\$349	Revenue (mixed visits + materials markup)	\$9,200
Consumables + fasteners	-\$22	Consumables, blades, fasteners	-\$420
Fuel	-\$10	Fuel	-\$280
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$10	Insurance, phone, software	-\$310
Insurance + overhead share	-\$25	Marketing (cards, boosts)	-\$140
Gross profit (4 hrs on site)	\$282	Tool fund (10%)	-\$920
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$76	Pre-tax profit	\$7,130
Yours, per visit	\$206	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$1,930
		Owner take-home	\$5,200

BREAK-EVEN

3-7 visits

If your garage already holds the tools, breakeven is the insurance bill: roughly one Quick Fix. Even buying everything new, the first week of booked half-days returns the capital. The barrier here was never money; it is knowing the legal lines and answering the phone.

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
- State exemption cap and licensed-trade lines researched and printed
- GL insurance bound; certificate saved to phone
- Vehicle organized: bins, fastener stock, ladder loaded
- Visit pricing finalized: Quick Fix, Half-Day, Full-Day

WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- Founding announcement posted to your network
- First 2-3 founding half-days completed
- Before-and-after photo of the best fix, every job
- Written scope texted before every visit, no exceptions
- Google Business Profile claimed; first photos up

WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- Visit 3 realtor offices with punch-list pitch and COI
- One property manager pitched on unit turns
- Nextdoor threads answered daily
- First reviews requested at the walk-through
- 'While I'm here' line planted at every booking

WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- Raise from founding to posted rates publicly
- Response-time system set: every inquiry under 2 hours
- Materials policy settled and printed on quotes
- Month-one P&L completed; one lever chosen
- Seasonal checklist email drafted for the client list

DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 12+ booked days, 5+ reviews, at least one realtor or PM relationship producing repeat work. Yellow: jobs flowing but all one-off small fixes: push the half-day framing harder, the list is where the money lives. Red: under 5 booked days despite 25+ real asks: check your response speed first, your proof second, your pricing third, in that order.

How this business fails, and how it grows.

THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **Working over the exemption cap**
One \$4,000 'small bathroom refresh' in a \$1,000-cap state is unlicensed contracting, and splitting the invoice makes it worse. The board fines first and asks questions later; know your number and stay under it.

- ✗ **Hourly pricing**
Charging by the hour punishes your speed and invites clock-watching. Sell the visit and the outcome; your efficiency becomes margin instead of a discount.

- ✗ **Firm quotes for unseen problems**
The 'simple drywall patch' over the phone is mold by Thursday. Quote the visit, inspect, then commit to numbers you have actually seen.

- ✗ **Taking jobs you should refer**
Gas, panels, refrigerant, and structure are licensed trades because the failure modes are catastrophic. The referral costs one ticket and protects the whole business.

- ✗ **No written scope**
The \$300 job that becomes a \$900 argument never had its two-line text. Scope plus price, in writing, before the tools come out: every time, even for your aunt.

THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The PM contract base**
Three or four property managers with standing work fill a calendar without marketing. Documented turns at flat rates become the bankable floor under everything else you book.

- 2 **The second tech**
A skilled hire running your scoped, photographed, written process doubles output while you quote, schedule, and quality-check. The constraint is your paperwork, not the labor market.

- 3 **The license graduation**
Take the contractor exam in year two and the handyman book becomes lead flow for bathrooms, decks, and remodels at ten times the ticket. Nobody is better positioned for big jobs than the person already trusted with small ones.

YOUR FIRST HIRE

A part-time helper for the heavy halves of jobs (demo, hauling, holding the other end of things) once you are booked two weeks out. They make ladders safer, big items possible, and days 30% denser. The deeper test: write your job process clearly enough that a helper executes it without questions. If you cannot, you have a well-paid job with your name on the truck, not yet a company.

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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