



# The Junk Removal Business

*Paid twice for the same truckload: once to haul it away, again when you resell, scrap, or donate it. Urgency-driven demand and same-day cash.*

\$1,900-4,200 (with a truck)

START LEAN

1-7 days

FIRST DOLLAR

50-65%

TYPICAL MARGIN

# Is this your business?

Junk removal is logistics with a tailgate: people pay you well to make things disappear today, and then the load pays you again when the 'junk' turns out to be scrap metal, resellable furniture, or a donation receipt. Demand is urgency-driven (moves, estates, evictions, deadlines), tickets are same-day cash, and the only inventory you carry is whatever fits on the trailer.

\$1,900-4,200 (with a truck)

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$8,000-20,000

STANDARD BUILD

1-7 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

50-65%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Mostly (helper for big items)

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes (mobile)

HOME-BASED

## BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE OPERATOR

THE CONNECTOR

2/5 difficulty

### THE HONEST FIT TEST

This is lifting. Couches down staircases, wet carpet, garages with history. You need a strong back, a sorting system, and zero squeamishness. If you also have an eye for what sells on Marketplace and what scraps for cash by the pound, you will out-earn haulers twice your size who drive everything straight to the dump.

# Who pays, and why now.

Junk removal customers are not buying hauling: they are buying a deadline met and a feeling of relief. The estate must close, the tenants left a disaster, the move is Saturday, the garage finally broke somebody's spirit. Urgency is the engine, which is why the operator who answers the phone and says 'I can be there at two' wins at nearly any price, and why same-day capacity is worth more than a prettier truck.

The demographics are a tailwind measured in decades: the largest generation in American history is downsizing, settling estates, and emptying forty-year households, while renovation debris and rental turnover add steady commercial flow. National franchises charge \$600-800 for a full truckload, which both validates the price ceiling and leaves comfortable room beneath it for an insured independent who shows up on time.

Then there is the part most haulers skip: the load itself pays twice. Appliances scrap by the pound, decent furniture resells inside 48 hours, and donations cut your dump weight while handing the customer a tax receipt in their own name. Operators who sort keep 15-25% more of every job than the ones who drive straight to the transfer station. Your sorting habit, more than your truck, decides your margin.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Homeowners and movers	\$150-450 per load	Gone today, no truck rental, no dump line, no lifting
Realtors and estate executors	\$400-1,500 cleanouts	Empty and broom-swept by a date that will not move
Landlords / property managers	\$200-800 per unit or set-out	Speed, photos, documentation, one invoice
Contractors	\$250-600 debris hauls	Jobsites cleared without a dumpster permit or a wait
Storage facilities and offices	\$300-1,000 per clear-out	Abandoned units and old furniture gone without drama

RECOVERED FROM EVERY LOAD

# 15-25%

Scrap metal pays by the pound, decent furniture resells in 48 hours, and donations cut dump weight while producing receipts customers love. Sorting is the difference between a hauling job and a margin business.

# Every dollar, before you spend it.

These numbers assume you already drive a pickup; if not, a used half-ton is the real first purchase. The trailer is the business: buy used, buy a gate ramp, and let the first month's hauls pay for the upgrades.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
<b>6x12 utility trailer (used, with ramp gate)</b>	High sides or side extensions double your billable volume	\$1,400-2,800
<b>Dollies (appliance + 4-wheel), straps, tarps, blankets</b>	The appliance dolly is the difference between a job and an injury	\$200-400
<b>PPE: gloves, boots, masks, sharps container</b>	You will eventually grab something that bites; dress for it	\$80-150
<b>General liability insurance (first month)</b>	You are carrying heavy objects through people's homes. \$1M policy	\$60-120/mo
<b>LLC + license + hauler permit check</b>	Some counties require a hauler number; see the legal page	\$50-550
<b>Transfer station account + first gate fees</b>	Know your per-ton rate before you quote a single job	\$100-200
<b>Lean total</b>	<b>\$1,890-4,220 with a truck you already own</b>	

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
<b>Used box truck (12-16 ft) or second trailer</b>	Doubles load size and halves trips on cleanouts; the franchise look	\$8,000-18,000
<b>Hydraulic dump trailer</b>	Unloads in five minutes instead of forty-five; pays for itself in labor	\$6,000-9,000
<b>Vehicle branding or wrap</b>	The truck is the billboard at every job and every red light	\$300-1,500
<b>Booking + quote software</b>	Photo quotes, deposits, and route planning in one place	\$30-100/mo

## THE RULE

Your truck does not need to be pretty; it needs to be legal, insured, and at the curb when promised. Skip the wrap and the new box truck until the calendar forces the upgrade: in this trade, answered phones and kept appointments out-earn chrome every single week.

# Clean from day one.

The legal side of junk removal is really the disposal side: what you may haul, where it may legally land, and the paper trail proving it got there. The operators who get this right also discover it doubles as a sales pitch.

- 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.
- Business license + waste hauler permit check:** Some counties and cities require a registered hauler number to transport waste commercially. One call to the county solid waste department settles it before a competitor reports you.
- Commercial auto insurance:** A personal auto policy will deny the claim the moment your truck was working. In a driving business this is the non-negotiable policy, alongside \$1M general liability.
- Know your transfer station:** Gate rates run \$50-120 per ton in most metros, with minimums and accepted-materials lists. Set up an account, learn the scale house routine, and build the fee into every quote.
- The hazardous and special items list:** Paint, chemicals, oil, tires, batteries, and anything containing refrigerant cannot go in the general pit. Fridges and AC units need certified freon evacuation (typically a \$15-50 fee), and several states add mattress recycling fees. Quote these as line items, never surprises.
- No dumping, ever:** Illegal dumping is a crime that traces straight back to you through the customer's paperwork, and it has ended real companies. Keep a disposal receipt for every load, filed by date.
- Donation receipts in the customer's name:** Drop usable goods at nonprofits and collect the receipt for your customer: it lowers your dump weight, hands them a tax deduction, and almost nobody else in your market offers it. Compliance that doubles as marketing.

## INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

General liability plus commercial auto is the floor, and both before the first paid haul. Add cargo coverage as loads get valuable, an umbrella when property managers require \$2M, and workers' comp the day you hire: lifting injuries are this trade's signature claim, and a helper hurt on your job without coverage is a company-ending event.

## WATCH FOR

Weight, not volume. Quoting a 'half trailer' of dirt, concrete, shingles, or soaked carpet at furniture prices erases the margin at the scale house: dense material can triple your gate fee. Learn what a cubic yard of each material weighs, quote dense debris by the bedload with disposal passed through, and your axles, like your margins, will last considerably longer.

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 fraction of the truck the load fills, quote from photos or in person, and keep dense materials on a separate price card entirely. Volume pricing is simple for customers to grasp and fast for you to quote at the curb.

## DOOR ONE

### The Single Item

**\$99-149** one piece, gone

- One appliance, couch, or mattress hauled
- Curbside or carried from inside the home
- Freon and mattress fees quoted up front
- Same-day pickup when the route allows

## RECOMMEND

## DOOR TWO

### The Half Load

**\$279-349** most-booked

- Up to half the trailer, loading included
- Garage corners, basement piles, moving leftovers
- Donation and recycle sorting built in
- Swept clean behind every pile
- Photo confirmation when complete

## DOOR THREE

### The Full Cleanout

**\$479-649** full trailer

- Whole garages, estates, and unit turnovers
- Broom-swept, photo-documented finish
- Donation receipts delivered in your name
- Disposal receipts on file for executors
- Multi-load jobs quoted per day, not per trip

## PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Floor: \$99 to roll the truck; a 'quick single item' still costs the drive, the dump minimum, and an hour of your day.
- Quote from photos or in person only: 'a garage of boxes' over the phone means nothing and burns you weekly.
- Dense materials (dirt, concrete, shingles, tile) are priced by weight with disposal passed through, never by trailer fraction.
- Stairs, long carries, and hoarding-level density are labor line items: name them while quoting, not at the curb.
- Estate and hoard cleanouts are priced per truck-day with a walk-through first: scope creep on these jobs is measured in days, not hours.

## THE UPSSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

The second appointment. Garage customers have attics, sheds, and storage units, and the relief they feel staring at clean concrete is your best sales window: 'Want me to put the shed on the calendar at 10% off while I'm here?' A third of cleanout customers say yes on the spot, which means your route literally books itself out of its own jobs.

# Names, not strategies.

Junk removal demand is urgent and constant, so your first ten jobs come from showing up where the urgency already lives: moves, estates, evictions, and the spring-cleaning panic posts in every neighborhood group.

## 1 Facebook Marketplace and curb-alert culture

People already give things away there daily; many would rather pay to have everything taken at once. Post your service where the disposal mindset already lives.

## 2 Realtors and estate attorneys

Estate cleanouts run on probate deadlines and emotional exhaustion. An operator with donation receipts and disposal paperwork is exactly what an executor prays for.

## 3 Property managers

Eviction set-outs and unit turns are recurring, documented, deadline work. One PM relationship can anchor your entire month.

## 4 Storage facility managers

Every auctioned unit leaves dregs the facility needs gone yesterday. Introduce yourself to five facilities; the calls come monthly forever.

## 5 Nextdoor and local groups

Spring cleaning threads, moving sales, and 'how do I get rid of a couch' questions are standing invitations. Answer fast with a price range and a same-day slot.

## 6 Contractors

Small renovation crews without dumpster space need debris gone between phases. One reliable haul makes you their standing call.

### THE EXACT ASK

*"Hey [name], I'm [name], I run a junk removal service here in [city]. If you've got anything in the garage or yard you've been meaning to get rid of, I'm doing founding-customer pricing this month: I load it, haul it, sweep up after, and anything usable gets donated with a receipt in your name. Want me to take a look and give you a number on the spot? The price I say is the price you pay."*

### THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

First ten hauls: \$40 off, in exchange for a Google review and a before-and-after photo. Retire it publicly at ten. In a trade where customers fear surprise pricing, 'the number I say is the number you pay' is worth more than the discount itself: say both.

# Owned, earned, then paid.

The buyer is in a hurry and slightly overwhelmed, so every channel optimizes for two things: being findable in the urgent moment, and looking like the insured professional among the guys-with-trucks. Transformation content does the rest.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
<b>Google Business Profile</b>	'Junk removal near me' is searched by someone standing next to the pile	Claim it day one; post before-and-afters weekly; answer calls live
<b>Facebook Marketplace + local groups</b>	The disposal mindset already gathers there	Weekly service post + answer every 'how do I get rid of' thread
<b>Realtor, PM, and estate partnerships</b>	Deadline-driven cleanouts at the highest tickets in the trade	Quarterly visits with COI, donation-receipt pitch, and a cleanout case study
<b>Before-and-after transformations</b>	Packed-garage-to-empty is irresistible content with a built-in story	Film every cleanout; post the 30-second sweep-out reveal
<b>The branded truck + yard signs</b>	Every job is a half-day ad in exactly the right neighborhood	Magnet or wrap when revenue allows; sign at the curb during cleanouts

## FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- A packed-garage-to-bare-concrete time-lapse in 45 seconds
- What junk removal costs in [your city], by load size, with photos of each
- Where your stuff actually goes: donation, scrap, recycle, landfill, in that order
- The estate cleanout checklist for executors (what to keep, sign, and let go)
- Five things we legally cannot take, and what to do with them instead

## THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask at the swept-floor reveal, when the customer is staring at space they have not seen in years: 'If this feels as good as it looks, a review would mean a lot: I'll text you the link.' Relief is the emotion that writes five-star reviews, and this trade manufactures it on every job.

# One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what the most-booked job nets after the dump gets paid, and a strong solo month with day-labor help on the heavy stuff. Note the line most haulers never have: resale and scrap income.

ONE UNIT: ONE HALF LOAD (\$299)	AMOUNT
Revenue	\$299
Dump fee (by weight)	-\$45
Fuel	-\$15
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$9
Insurance + overhead share	-\$20
Gross profit (~2 hrs incl. dump run)	\$210
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$57
Yours, per job	\$153

A WORKING MONTH: SOLO + DAY LABOR, 44 HAULS	AMOUNT
Revenue (44 hauls, mixed sizes)	\$11,400
Resale + scrap income	+\$380
Dump and transfer fees	-\$1,520
Fuel	-\$540
Helper (day labor, heavy items)	-\$640
Insurance, phone, software, marketing	-\$480
Pre-tax profit	\$8,600
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$2,320
Owner take-home	\$6,280

BREAK-EVEN

## 10-18 hauls

The used trailer, insurance, and permits are recovered inside the first busy two to three weeks. After that the rig is paid for by other people's clutter, which regenerates itself with a reliability the stock market can only envy.

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
- GL + commercial auto bound; hauler permit checked
- Used trailer bought; dolly, straps, PPE loaded
- Transfer station account opened; rates memorized
- Volume price card finalized with \$99 floor

## WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- First 2-3 founding hauls completed and photographed
- Donation drop-off relationships set with 2 nonprofits
- Scrap yard visited; per-pound rates noted
- First before-and-after posted to Marketplace + Nextdoor
- Photo-quote system tested: price from pictures in minutes

## WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- Realtor and estate attorney visits made (3 minimum)
- Five storage facilities introduced to your card
- One property manager pitched on set-outs and turns
- Reviews requested at every swept-floor reveal
- Disposal receipts filing system running

## WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- Raise from founding to posted rates publicly
- Second-appointment upsell pitched at every cleanout
- Dense-material price card separated and printed
- Month-one P&L completed; one lever chosen
- Resale corner organized; first items flipped

### DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 15+ paid hauls, 5+ reviews, at least one commercial relationship (PM, realtor, or storage facility) producing repeat calls. Yellow: hauls happening but margins thin: your quotes are ignoring weight, fix the dense-material card. Red: under 6 hauls despite 25+ real asks: your response speed or proof is the problem; this market does not lack demand, it lacks operators who answer.

# How this business fails, and how it grows.

## THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **Quoting dense debris at furniture prices**  
A half trailer of shingles weighs five times a half trailer of sofas, and the scale house knows it even if your quote did not. Weight-based pricing for dense loads, always.

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- ✗ **Running on personal auto insurance**  
The first claim filed from a working truck on a personal policy gets denied, and now the loss and the lawsuit are both yours. Commercial auto before the first paid mile.

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- ✗ **Driving everything to the dump**  
Every load you fail to sort donates your 15-25% recovery margin to the landfill and pays gate fees for the privilege. Sort at the customer's curb; it is the highest hourly wage in your week.

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- ✗ **Taking hazardous items to be nice**  
The paint cans and the old fridge feel like customer service until the fine arrives addressed to you. Quote the certified path or decline; the customer's problem is not worth becoming yours.

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- ✗ **Solo-lifting two-person items**  
One herniated disc ends a solo hauling company faster than any competitor could. Day-labor help on heavy jobs is not a cost; it is the insurance your back refuses to sell you.

## THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The second truck**  
A two-person crew in truck two doubles capacity and finally makes same-day service a guarantee instead of a hope. Your job becomes quoting, routing, and the relationships that feed both trucks.

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- 2 **The contract base**  
Standing agreements with property managers, contractors, and storage facilities smooth the urgency-driven calendar into something bankable. Ten commercial accounts is a floor that one-off residential can build on top of.

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- 3 **The resale arm**  
A storage unit, a Marketplace habit, and a weekend helper turn your best finds into a second P&L. Established haulers routinely pull a quarter of their profit from goods they were paid to take away: the picker's margin, systematized.

### YOUR FIRST HIRE

An on-call day laborer for two-person items, paid per job, long before any full-timer. It protects your back, halves your load times, and tests your systems: if you cannot explain your sort-load-dump routine clearly enough for a helper to execute by job two, write it down properly before hiring anyone permanent. The routine is the company; the truck is just where it happens.

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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