



# The Holiday Light Installation Business

*Average residential installs of \$1,500-3,500 with half of it margin, packed into a ten-week season. The trick: you keep the lights, and next year books itself.*

\$2,200-4,600

START LEAN

7-21 days (in season)

FIRST DOLLAR

50-65% year one, 70%+ on rebooks

TYPICAL MARGIN

# Is this your business?

Holiday lighting compresses a year of service revenue into ten weeks. Residential installs average \$1,500-3,500 with margins above fifty percent, the January takedown is part of the package, and the lights themselves, which you own, label, and store, mean next season is mostly sold before it starts. It pairs perfectly with any outdoor service business or stands alone as the most lucrative seasonal play in this catalog.

\$2,200-4,600

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$8,000-15,000

STANDARD BUILD

7-21 days (in season)

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

50-65% year one, 70%+  
on rebooks

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, helper  
recommended

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes (mobile)

HOME-BASED

## BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE OPERATOR

THE CRAFTSMAN

■■■■■ 3/5 difficulty

### THE HONEST FIT TEST

You will be on ladders and rooflines in November cold, against a deadline that does not move: everything must be lit by early December, period. Heights, weather, deposits, and a brutal calendar are the job. If that reads like misery, skip it. If a ten-week sprint that can out-earn someone's whole quarter sounds like a fair trade, almost nothing pays better per week actually worked.

# Who pays, and why now.

The customer is not buying lights; they are buying a December without ladders, tangles, or a Saturday lost to the gutter clips. Affluent homeowners, busy families, and anyone over fifty with a two-story roofline will happily pay \$1,500-3,500 for a custom-fit display that appears in November and vanishes in January. The price is anchored to labor, liability, and design, not materials, which is why professional installs cost ten times the box-store box and sell anyway.

The season is short and that is a feature: selling runs September and October, installs run mid-October through the first week of December, and takedowns fill January. Three revenue moments, one customer. Commercial work stretches the calendar further: storefronts, restaurants, HOA entrance monuments, and shopping centers install earlier, pay more, and sign multi-year agreements because nobody on staff wants the job back.

The moat is the install-remove-store model. You sell a service, not a product: the customer pays for design, install, mid-season service, takedown, and storage, while you own the custom-cut commercial-grade lines, labeled by house, stacked in your garage. Next September the call writes itself: their display is in your possession, fitted to their roofline, and rebooking is the path of least resistance. Operators running this model report rebook rates above seventy percent, and year-two margins jump because the materials are already paid for.

Competition is a patchwork of landscapers and pressure washers bolting on a season, plus a few franchises in larger metros. The bar that wins: insured work at height, commercial-grade product, dusk photos that look like real estate listings, and a takedown you actually show up for. Most of the market fails at least two of those.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
<b>Affluent homeowners</b>	\$1,500-3,500 per season	The magazine house with zero ladders and zero storage
<b>Busy family neighborhoods</b>	\$1,200-2,500 per season	Keeping up with the lit street; one house sells its four neighbors
<b>Storefronts and restaurants</b>	\$800-3,000 per season	Festive foot traffic without staff on ladders
<b>HOAs and property managers</b>	\$2,000-10,000 per property	Entrance monuments and commons done, one invoice, certificates on file

OF CLIENTS REBOOK THE NEXT SEASON

70%+

Install, remove, store: because you keep the custom-cut lights labeled by house, rebooking is the default rather than a sale. By year three a good book is mostly renewals at near-pure margin, locked in each January at takedown, before competitors even wake up.

# Every dollar, before you spend it.

The lean build assumes wholesale: C9 socket wire by the spool and LED bulbs by the case, cut to fit each roofline. Never retail boxes. The inventory line looks scary until you remember it converts into next year's near-pure margin.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
<b>Commercial-grade C9 spools + LED bulbs (first 4-6 jobs)</b>	Wholesale socket wire, custom-cut per house: brighter, repairable, and yours	\$1,200-2,400
<b>Clips, extension cords, timers, splitters</b>	All-in-one roofline clips speed installs dramatically	\$250-450
<b>Ladders: 28 ft extension + 6 ft step, plus standoff</b>	The standoff stabilizer keeps you off the gutters and alive	\$350-600
<b>Roof safety kit: harness, anchor, rated rope</b>	For anything steep; the gear is cheaper than one ER visit	\$150-300
<b>GL insurance covering work at height (first month)</b>	Confirm roof work in writing; cheap policies exclude it (see legal)	\$90-180
<b>Storage totes + labels</b>	The 'store' half of install-remove-store lives in these totes	\$80-150
<b>LLC + city license</b>	Your liability wall. See the legal page	\$50-500
<b>Lean total</b>		<b>\$2,170-4,580 all-in</b>

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
<b>Bulk wholesale inventory (20+ jobs)</b>	Per-foot costs drop hard at case quantities; buy in August, not November	\$4,000-8,000
<b>Enclosed trailer</b>	Rolling warehouse in season, storage unit off-season	\$2,500-5,000
<b>Towable lift budget (steep or tall homes)</b>	Rent per job and bill it through; never free-climb what scares you	\$250-450/day
<b>Seasonal helper budget (Nov-Dec)</b>	A ground person adds 60-80% throughput; comp required, see legal	\$18-25/hr

## THE RULE

Inventory follows deposits, not optimism. Sell with a lit show house and a renders-and-measurements quote, collect fifty percent down, then order spools against signed work. The operators who lose money in this trade bought lights in September for customers who never existed.

# Clean from day one.

This business has the sharpest legal edges in the catalog, and all of them are manageable if you respect two facts: you work at height, and in some places this counts as contracting. Settle both before the first deposit.

- Form your LLC:** File in your home state, get the EIN free at [irs.gov](https://irs.gov), open the business bank account. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks every step.
- Contractor license check, before you sell:** Several states and cities require a contractor or home-improvement license above modest job values: California, for example, draws the line near \$1,000 (recently raised from \$500). One call to your state contractor board and your city tells you exactly where you stand.
- GL insurance that covers work at height, in writing:** Many inexpensive policies quietly exclude roof work or anything above one story. Ask your broker to confirm height work in writing before binding: the cheapest quote usually excludes exactly what you do all day.
- Stay low-voltage and plug-in:** Everything you install plugs into existing exterior outlets. Hardwiring, panel work, or new circuits is electrician territory: never cross that line, and partner with a licensed electrician for clients who need more capacity.
- Workers' comp from helper one:** Nearly every state requires it from the first employee, and 'seasonal' does not exempt you. A helper falling without coverage is the end of the business and possibly much more.
- Roof safety practice:** Harness and anchor on steep pitches, two-person rule for ladder work, and a standing decision to decline wet shake and brittle tile or budget a lift. OSHA-grade habits are free; falls are not.
- Seasonal contract in writing:** Deposit terms, install window, outage-service promise, takedown window, storage terms, and who owns the lights (you do). The contract is also your January rebook instrument: renewal terms live right in it.

## INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

General liability with confirmed height coverage is the non-negotiable core, \$1M minimum, and commercial auto once the trailer enters the picture. Add inland marine for the inventory once you are storing fifty households' displays: a garage fire in March could otherwise erase the moat you spent two seasons building. Workers' comp from the first helper, every state, no shortcuts.

## WATCH FOR

Bidding from the curb. The expensive mistake in this trade is quoting a roofline you have not walked: steep pitches, brittle tile, rotten fascia, and dead exterior outlets all hide from the street. Walk it, photograph it, test the outlet, and find where the timer will live before you name a number. And write the outage promise into every contract: bulbs fail, squirrels exist, and a 48-hour service guarantee is the difference between a hero story and a December one-star review.

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 internally by the linear foot, sell externally by the package. Year-one residential math runs \$6-10 per installed foot of roofline including takedown and storage; trees, wreaths, and commercial work price above it. Quote from measurements, anchor on the middle door, and take half down.

	RECOMMEND	
<p><b>DOOR ONE</b></p> <p><b>The Roofline</b></p> <p><b>\$1,200–1,800</b> typical front elevation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Front rooflines and peaks in custom-cut C9 LED</li> <li>◆ Photocell timer: dusk on, midnight off</li> <li>◆ Mid-season bulb and outage service</li> <li>◆ January takedown and labeled storage included</li> </ul>	<p><b>DOOR TWO</b></p> <p><b>The Showcase</b></p> <p><b>\$2,300–3,400</b> most-booked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Full roofline plus two or three trees or bushes wrapped</li> <li>◆ Wreath and garland accents at the entry</li> <li>◆ Mid-season service with 48-hour response</li> <li>◆ Takedown, labeled storage, and next-season priority</li> <li>◆ Locked rebook pricing if renewed at takedown</li> </ul>	<p><b>DOOR THREE</b></p> <p><b>The Estate</b></p> <p><b>\$4,000–7,500</b> full property</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Complete rooflines, ridgelines, and ground lighting</li> <li>◆ Design consult with a lit mockup photo</li> <li>◆ First-on, first-off scheduling priority</li> <li>◆ Dedicated mid-season service visit</li> <li>◆ Multi-year pricing available</li> </ul>

## PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Fifty percent deposit books the install date; balance is due the night it lights. No deposit, no date: the calendar is the scarcest thing you own.
- Commercial bids price per foot above residential, plus lift costs passed through and an earlier install window. Multi-year agreements deserve a real discount; single years do not.
- Customer-owned lights: decline, or price at labor-only with zero warranty stated twice. Their product fails, you get the phone call: most pros simply decline.
- Rebook lock: this year's price guaranteed if they renew at takedown, through January 31. It converts your takedown crew into a sales team.
- Never price against the box store. You are not selling lights; you are selling a December without a ladder in it.

## THE UPSSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

The takedown is the renewal meeting: while the totes are being labeled, offer next season at this year's price, locked through January 31. Most say yes on the spot, and your next year is half-sold by February. The second ladder up is permanent trim lighting: architectural LED in channels, \$4,500-8,000 per home, sold to your happiest holiday clients as the year-round upgrade. It turns a ten-week sprint into a four-season lighting company.

# Names, not strategies.

Sell in September and October, before a single competitor wakes up. Your first ten deposits come from one lit show house, two affluent zip codes, and every property manager who has ever begged a landscaper to handle the entrance monument.

1

## The show house

Light one prominent corner house in mid-October at cost: yard sign, dusk photos, the whole production. It is your portfolio, your billboard, and your proof, and it will sell its own street within two weeks.

2

## Two affluent zips, door hangers

Early October, two-story homes, hangers that lead with the guarantee: 'installed and lit before Thanksgiving, takedown and storage included.' The date promise out-pulls any discount.

3

## Nextdoor and local Facebook

Dusk reels from the show house starting October 1, posted with install-date scarcity that is genuinely real. Neighborhood envy is the most honest marketing force in this niche.

4

## HOA boards and property managers

Entrance monuments, clubhouses, and common trees: \$2,000-10,000 contracts decided by people desperate for one insured vendor with a certificate ready. Pitch in September; boards move slowly.

5

## Main-street storefronts

Walk in with a photo of their facade lit (a mockup works) and a number. Businesses decide in days, install early, and renew for years because no employee wants the ladder.

6

## Referral partners who do not hang lights

Landscapers, window cleaners, gutter crews: they are asked constantly and want a ten percent finder fee more than a November side job. Five partners is a quiet sales force.

### THE EXACT ASK

*"Hi, I'm [name]: I install custom holiday lighting here in [neighborhood]. Everything is commercial-grade LED cut to fit your roofline exactly, and the price covers install, any mid-season bulb service, takedown in January, and storage at my place: you never touch a ladder or untangle a box again. I'm setting install dates for [month] right now and this street has three slots left before Thanksgiving. Want me to measure the roofline while I'm here? Ten minutes, and the quote is free."*

### THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

First eight installs: \$200 off plus next season locked at the same price, in exchange for a yard sign through December and a review the week it lights. The yard sign is the real currency: a lit house with your name in front of it sells the four houses that can see it, every single evening, free.

# Owned, earned, then paid.

This is envy marketing on a deadline. Dusk photos do the selling, yard signs do the targeting, and the calendar does the urgency. Spend September building proof and October harvesting it; by November you should be installing, not advertising.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
<b>Yard signs on every install</b>	A lit house is the ad; the sign is the caption, visible every evening	Sign in the ground the night it lights, collected at takedown
<b>Nextdoor + local Facebook</b>	Neighborhood envy plus genuine scarcity is the strongest pull in the niche	Two dusk reels weekly from October 1; name remaining install slots honestly
<b>Google Business Profile</b>	'Christmas light installers near me' spikes hard from late September	Claim it now; load dusk photos; collect reviews the week each house lights
<b>Door hangers in target zips</b>	Two-story affluent streets are exactly targetable on foot	Early October drop leading with the before-Thanksgiving guarantee
<b>Partner referrals</b>	Outdoor trades get asked weekly and would rather have a fee than a ladder	Ten percent finder fee, paid the day the deposit clears
<b>August rebook email</b>	Your stored-lights list is next season's revenue sitting in totes	One email in August: install date held, last season's price honored

## FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- The dusk transformation reel: gray afternoon roofline to fully lit, in fifteen seconds
- What professional holiday lighting actually costs in [your city] (the page every searcher wants)
- Commercial-grade C9 vs the box-store box: a side-by-side at night that ends the argument
- Install-remove-store, explained: why you will never own a tangled tote again
- The January takedown time-lapse, captioned with the rebook offer

## THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask the week the house lights, while the family is still walking outside to look at it: 'If it makes you grin when you pull in, a review with a photo would mean a lot: link's in your text.' Night photos in reviews are devastatingly effective social proof for next September's buyers. A seasonal business cannot drip reviews year-round, so harvest the whole crop in the six weeks it exists.

# One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: one middle-door install in year one, when you are still buying inventory, and a November running full with one helper. Watch the materials line: on a year-two rebook it nearly vanishes, which is the entire genius of owning the lights.

ONE UNIT: ONE SHOWCASE INSTALL (\$2,600, YEAR ONE)	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: NOVEMBER, 15 INSTALLS, ONE HELPER	AMOUNT
Revenue (install + takedown + storage)	\$2,600	Revenue (\$2,300 average)	\$34,500
Lights + materials (year-one inventory)	-\$700	Lights + materials	-\$9,300
Clips, cords, timers, fuel, consumables	-\$120	Helper wages (~210 hrs)	-\$4,600
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$75	Fuel, consumables, lift rentals	-\$1,150
Insurance + overhead share	-\$110	Insurance, software, phone	-\$520
Gross profit (1.5-2 days solo)	\$1,595	Marketing (signs, boosts)	-\$650
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$430	Pre-tax profit	\$18,280
Yours, per install	\$1,165	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$4,935
		Owner take-home	\$13,345

BREAK-EVEN

## 2-3 installs

The lean build comes back inside the first two or three installs, and the same spools earn again every season after. Year one is the worst margin this business will ever show you: every rebooked house after that is the same revenue with the biggest cost line deleted.

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 with height coverage confirmed in writing and bound
- Contractor-license check completed with state and city
- Wholesale account opened; first spools and clips ordered
- Contract finalized: deposit, outage promise, takedown, storage

## WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- Show house lit at cost; dusk photos and yard sign up
- Google Business Profile claimed; reels posting
- Door hangers dropped in two affluent zips
- HOA and property manager pitches sent with certificates
- Ladder, harness, and anchor practiced on your own roof

## WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- Quotes from real measurements; 50% deposits collected
- Install calendar built backward from Thanksgiving
- Helper recruited; workers' comp quote bound
- Main-street storefront walk-ins done
- Referral partners signed at ten percent

## WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- First paid installs lit and photographed at dusk
- Takedown scheduled in writing at every install
- Reviews requested the week each house lights
- Rebook terms printed for January takedowns
- Month-one P&L against the deposit target

### DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 8+ signed deposits (\$12,000+ booked), the show house pulling calls, calendar full to Thanksgiving. Yellow: quotes but thin deposits: urgency is the problem, not price: lead with the guaranteed install date and the real slot scarcity. Red: under 3 deposits by November 1: pivot the back half of the season hard to storefronts and HOA monuments, and book January consults for next year: the list you build now sells itself in August.

# How this business fails, and how it grows.

## THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **Retail box-store lights**  
One windstorm of callbacks erases the margin and the reputation at once. Wholesale C9 socket wire and LED bulbs, custom-cut: repairable, brighter, and the reason you can charge what you charge.

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- ✗ **Quoting from the curb**  
Steep pitch, brittle tile, dead outlets, and rotten fascia all hide from the street. Walk every roof, test every outlet, and photograph everything before a number leaves your mouth.

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- ✗ **No takedown system**  
January is half your reputation and all of your rebook pipeline. Schedule the takedown in writing at the install, or spend February as the company that ghosted forty rooflines.

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- ✗ **Uninsured height work**  
The one unforgivable shortcut in this trade. Confirm roof coverage in writing, harness on steep pitches, comp on every helper. One fall without paper ends everything, permanently.

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- ✗ **Treating it as one season**  
No labels, no storage, no January rebook means restarting from zero every September. The totes in your garage are the business; the install was just how they got there.

## THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The crews**  
A trained two-person crew hangs two or three installs a day. Your job becomes design, quoting, and quality drive-bys at dusk. Two crews in November is a six-figure month in a market that barely noticed you last year.

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- 2 **Commercial and municipal**  
Shopping centers, restaurants, HOA monuments, and town main streets sign multi-year agreements, install in early November, and pay like the contracts they are. One anchor commercial client can underwrite your whole inventory buy.

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- 3 **Permanent trim lighting**  
Architectural LED in hidden channels, \$4,500-8,000 per home, sold to your happiest holiday clients and serviceable year-round. It converts the ten-week sprint into a permanent lighting company with a December spike.

### YOUR FIRST HIRE

A ground person from November 1 at \$18-25 an hour: they feed line, stage clips, move ladders, and watch the base while you work the roof. Throughput rises 60-80 percent and safety rises more, with workers' comp bound before their first shift: in this trade the paperwork is part of the ladder.

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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