The Numbers Behind a Fence Installation Business

A free field guide from Bytell Press. The figures come from our example financial model for a one-crew fence installation company. They are planning assumptions, not quotes for your market; the worksheet at the end is for your own numbers.

Most new fence companies can set a straight line of posts. Fewer have worked out how many jobs a month cover the truck, the overhead and the owner's pay, or what a winter month does to that sum. This guide gives you that arithmetic in two pages.

1. How the work is priced

Fence is sold by the **installed linear foot**, with adders for gates, corners, tear-out and difficult ground. The example model uses these lines:

Service line	Model price	Model job margin
Chain-link	$15–$30 per foot	33–38%
Pressure-treated wood privacy	$25–$40 per foot	36–40%
Cedar privacy	$30–$50 per foot	38–42%
Vinyl	$30–$60 per foot	44–50%
Aluminum and ornamental	$30–$55 per foot	44–50%
Repair, gate and small section jobs	Walk gates $250–$600 each	48–55%
Blended across a full year		**About 34%**

The line margins are for a single billable job. A year also contains weather days, travel, return visits and dump fees that no customer pays for, and the model's 34% carries all of it. The profit is in vinyl, ornamental and repair work.

2. What it costs to open

The example model opens on about **$85,000**: a $45,000 equipment loan and about $40,000 of the owner's own money.

Use of funds	Amount
Work truck, trailer, auger and skid-steer package, tool kit	About $55,000
Working capital: material float, insurance and registration costs, first marketing, operating cushion	About $30,000

Use of funds	Amount
Total	**About $85,000**

The working capital carries the first spring ramp and the first winter.

3. What it costs to stay open

The model carries these costs every month, whether or not a post is set:

Monthly fixed cost	Amount
Overhead: yard, insurance, vehicle upkeep, fuel, software, phone, admin	$6,200
Equipment loan payment	$967
Total before owner pay	**$7,167**
Owner's draw	$4,500
Total with owner pay	**$11,667**

Two more costs move with sales: marketing at about 5% of revenue and card processing at about 0.6%.

4. The break-even: the one number to know

Break-even revenue = monthly fixed costs ÷ margin.

Marketing and card fees move with sales, so take them off the gross margin first: 34% less 5.6% leaves 28.4% of each dollar.

With the model's numbers: $7,167 ÷ 0.284 = about **$25,236 a month**. The model's target average ticket is $4,500, so that is **about six jobs a month** to keep the doors open.

That figure pays the owner nothing. Add the $4,500 draw and the sum becomes $11,667 ÷ 0.284 = about **$41,081 a month**, or **about nine jobs**. The model's steady month is about $42,000, so a full schedule only just covers the owner's pay.

5. Plan for winter before it arrives

The model starts at about $14,000 in its first month and reaches the steady $42,000 over six months. On top of that it applies a seasonal curve:

Season	Multiplier	On a $42,000 steady month
April through September	1.1 to 1.35	$46,200 to $56,700
December through February	0.40 to 0.50	$16,800 to $21,000

A $21,000 winter month is below the $25,236 needed just to cover overhead and the loan, before any owner pay. It gets through because the peak-season surplus is held back in a reserve sized to cover a full winter of fixed costs and draw.

6. Your numbers

Fill this in with quotes from your own market before you buy the truck.

Question	Model	Yours
Average price per foot you can charge	$15–$60	_____
Average job size in dollars	$4,500	_____
Blended gross margin across a full year	34%	_____
Monthly fixed costs, before owner pay	$7,167	_____
Owner pay you need each month	$4,500	_____
Break-even revenue with owner pay	$41,081	_____
Jobs a month to break even with owner pay	About 9	_____

If your break-even needs more jobs than one crew can install, fix the plan before you buy the equipment: raise the price per foot, sell more of the higher-margin lines, or rent the auger in the first year instead of financing it.

This guide is general business information, not legal, tax, accounting or investment advice. The figures are illustrative assumptions from an example model and are not a forecast or a promise of results. Licensing and insurance requirements vary by state and are not covered here; check yours with the state agency.

Bytell Press publishes the full business plan, the editable financial model behind these numbers, and the operating playbooks for a fence installation contractor.

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