# The Numbers Behind a Junk Removal and Hauling Side Hustle

*A free field guide from Bytell Press. The figures come from our example financial model for a part-time, one-person hauling business run with a pickup the owner already has. They are planning assumptions, not quotes for your market; the worksheet at the end is for your own numbers.*

Most part-time haulers stay busy. The ones who quit were busy and still short of cash, because nobody priced the dump fee into the quote. This guide gives you that arithmetic in two pages.

## 1. How the work is priced

Junk removal is sold by **volume: the fraction of the truck or trailer a load fills**. The example model uses these lines:

| Service line | Model price |
|---|---|
| Single-item pickup | $75–$150 |
| Quarter truck | $150–$275 |
| Half truck | $275–$425 |
| Full truckload | $500–$700 |
| Estate or whole-home cleanout | $600–$1,500+ |
| **Blended across the mix** | **About $325 per job, at a 62% gross margin** |

The profit on a job is set the moment you quote it. Direct costs run about 38% of the price in the model, and the dump fee is the biggest part. A half-truck garage cleanout at $375 carries about $143 of direct cost and leaves about $232. Light, bulky loads are where the margin is. Dense loads such as dirt, concrete or wet debris cost far more to tip and have to be quoted higher.

## 2. What it costs to open

The example model's base case is **$4,000**, paid from savings with no loan.

| Use of funds | Amount |
|---|---|
| Used utility trailer | $800–$2,000 |
| Dollies, straps, ramps, tarps, tools and safety gear | $750–$1,800 |
| Local fees and first insurance payment | $500–$1,000 |
| Starter marketing (truck lettering, yard signs, door hangers) | $300–$700 |
| **Total** | **$2,350–$5,500** |

On top of the kit, the model starts with about $3,000 of opening cash for fuel and dump fees. At about $200 of gross profit per average job, the $4,000 base case is earned back in roughly the first twenty jobs.

## 3. What it costs to stay open

There is no rent, payroll or debt in the model.

| Monthly fixed cost | Amount |
|---|---|
| Insurance, phone and booking app, fees, bank and admin | $260 |
| Owner draw | $1,600 |
| **Total** | **$1,860** |

Two costs move with sales instead: card processing at about 2.8% of revenue and marketing at about 6%.

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

**Break-even revenue = monthly fixed costs ÷ margin.**

Start with the 62% gross margin. Take off 2.8% for card fees and 6% for marketing. That leaves about 53%. With the model's numbers: $1,860 ÷ 0.53 = about **$3,509 a month**. At $325 a job, that is **about 11 jobs a month** to cover the overhead and pay yourself the $1,600.

Without the draw, the business itself breaks even at $260 ÷ 0.53 = about $491 a month, or two jobs.

## 5. Plan for the ramp and for winter

The model does not start full. It opens near $1,400 a month and takes about six months to reach a steady $4,800. After that the seasons move it:

| Point in the model | Monthly revenue | Left after variable and fixed costs |
|---|---|---|
| Opening month | About $1,400 | About $482 |
| Winter | About $3,600 | About $1,648 |
| Steady month | About $4,800 | About $2,284 |
| Spring and early-summer peak | About $6,000 | About $2,920 |

Compare the last column with the $1,600 draw. The opening months do not cover it, and a winter month clears it by about $48. The peak months leave about $1,320 extra. Hold part of that back instead of drawing it out, and winter is covered.

## 6. Your numbers

Fill this in with your local dump rates and prices before you buy the trailer.

| Question | Model | Yours |
|---|---|---|
| Average price per job | $325 | _____ |
| Margin after card fees and marketing | 53% | _____ |
| Monthly fixed costs plus your draw | $1,860 | _____ |
| Break-even revenue (fixed costs ÷ margin) | $3,509 | _____ |
| Jobs a month to break even | 11 | _____ |
| Opening cash | $3,000 | _____ |

If your break-even needs more jobs than your part-time hours allow in a slow month, fix the plan before you buy: raise the price on dense loads, quote the whole space instead of one item, or lower the draw until the route fills.

*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 junk removal and hauling side hustle.

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