The Numbers Behind a Pressure Washing Side Business

A free field guide from Bytell Press. The figures come from our example financial model for a part-time, one-person pressure washing and soft-wash service. They are planning assumptions, not quotes for your market; the worksheet at the end is for your own numbers.

A pressure washing side business is cheap to start, so many people start one without doing the arithmetic. This guide shows how many jobs a month the business needs, and what winter does to that number.

1. How the work is priced

The example model quotes one **flat price per job**. The model uses these lines:

Service	Model basis	Model job price
Driveway and flatwork	$0.15–$0.30 per sq ft	$150–$300
House soft-wash (siding)	$0.10–$0.20 per sq ft of wall	$250–$500
Roof soft-wash	$0.30–$0.60 per sq ft of roof	$400–$800
Blended across the mix	**About $300 per job**	**70% gross margin**

The margin is in the bundle. Much of the cost of a job is travel and setup. The model's example is a $250 house wash plus a $200 driveway on one visit: a $450 ticket with about $135 of direct cost, leaving about $315 of gross profit. Direct cost means chemicals, fuel, water and equipment wear, not the owner's labor.

2. What it costs to open

The example model opens on savings, with no loan. The base case is **$3,500**, within a range of $2,500 to $4,000.

Startup item	Model cost
Gas pressure washer	$700–$1,300
Surface cleaner	$150–$400
Soft-wash setup, tank and mixing supplies	$300–$900
Hoses, reels, wands, tips and connectors	$250–$500
First chemicals	$150–$300
Safety gear	$150–$300
Fees and first insurance payment	$400–$800
Starter marketing	$200–$500

Startup item	Model cost
Total, base case	**$3,500**

On top of the kit, the model starts with about **$2,500 of opening cash**.

3. What it costs to stay open

There is no rent, no payroll and no debt in the model, so the monthly bill is small:

Monthly cost	Amount
Fixed costs (insurance, phone, admin)	$220
Owner draw	$1,400
Total to cover each month	**$1,620**

Two more costs rise and fall with sales: card processing at about 2.8% of revenue and marketing at about 5%.

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

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

Because card fees and marketing move with sales, the model takes them off the margin first: 70% – 2.8% – 5% = 62.2%. Then $1,620 ÷ 0.622 = about **$2,600 a month**. At $300 a job, that is **about 9 jobs a month** to cover the fixed costs and the owner's draw.

Leave the draw out and the business itself breaks even on about $354 a month, a little more than one job. Nearly all of the break-even is your own pay, so you decide how high to set it.

5. Plan for winter before it arrives

The model takes roughly six months to reach a steady in-season rate near $4,200 a month. After that the season sets the pattern:

Period	Model monthly revenue	Against the $2,600 break-even
Spring and early-summer peak	About $5,900	Well above
Steady in-season month	About $4,200	Above
Deep winter	About $1,500	Below

A $1,500 month leaves about $933 after direct and variable costs, against $1,620 of fixed costs and draw. That is a gap of about $687 for each deep-winter month. The model covers it by holding back part of the peak-season surplus instead of drawing it out.

6. Your numbers

Fill this in with prices from your own area before you buy the machine.

Question	Model	Yours
Average ticket per job	$300	_____
Direct cost as a share of the ticket	30%	_____
Monthly fixed costs	$220	_____
Monthly draw you want to take	$1,400	_____
Break-even revenue (fixed costs and draw ÷ margin)	$2,600	_____
Jobs a month to break even	About 9	_____
Opening cash reserve	$2,500	_____

If your break-even needs more jobs than your free hours allow, fix the plan before you buy the kit: raise the average ticket by bundling surfaces, lower the draw for the first season, or cut a fixed cost.

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Bytell Press publishes the full business plan, the editable financial model behind these numbers, and the operating playbooks for a pressure washing side business.

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