The Starving-Crowd Test for Your ZIP Codes

Three tests, all three have to pass. Answer for the actual ZIP codes you would drive to on a Tuesday, not for your state.

PAIN — the three most urgent drywall problems in your area right now, and who has each one.

PURCHASING POWER — median home value in your target ZIP codes, and what a typical job costs as a share of that.

TARGETABILITY — your three front doors: homeowners, general contractors, painters. Name real people behind each.

THE VERDICT — pass or fail on each test, and the one ZIP code you would start in tomorrow.

Your Homeowner Avatar

One person, not a demographic. If you cannot picture her kitchen, you have not finished this page.

Who is she, what happened to her wall or ceiling, and how long has she been looking at it?

What is she afraid of? Write it in her words, not yours.

What has she already tried, and who has already let her down?

What does she type into a search bar at eleven at night?

Personal Runway Worksheet

Every dollar that leaves your house whether or not you work. Total it, divide your savings by it, and write the months at the bottom.

MONTHLY PERSONAL EXPENSE	AMOUNT	COVERED BY (SAVINGS / SPOUSE / SIDE INCOME)

Demand by Month — Drywall

The index is national search interest for this trade, already filled in. Pencil your own numbers beside it, then look at how flat it is.

MONTH	DEMAND INDEX	JOBS YOU EXPECT	REVENUE YOU EXPECT	WHAT YOU WILL DO IN THE SLOW MONTHS
Jan	0.95			
Feb	1.02			
Mar	0.98			
Apr	1.01			
May	0.96			
Jun	1.13			
Jul	1.01			
Aug	0.97			
Sep	1.01			
Oct	1.04			
Nov	0.97			
Dec	0.95			
Year				

Demand index: 1.00 = an average month for this trade nationally (source in Resources). Your ZIP will differ — pencil your own index in the slow and busy months.

Dream Outcome Builder

Her words, not yours. If a sentence contains a trade term she would not use at her own kitchen table, cross it out.

The outcome she wants, written the way she would say it to a friend.

The timeframe she wants it in, and what event is driving that date.

What makes her doubt it will happen — the specific reason she thinks a patch always shows.

What the job costs her beyond money: rooms, days, noise, disruption, being home.

Obstacle → Solution Map

Fifteen things standing between her and the outcome. Sort each into knowledge, skill, environment or psychology, then reverse it into something you do.

#	WHAT STOPS THE HOMEOWNER	CATEGORY	HOW YOUR OFFER REMOVES IT
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Your Value Stack

Break one job into named parts. Score what each is worth to her against what it costs you, then keep, demote to bonus, or cut.

COMPONENT	PROBLEM IT SOLVES	VALUE TO THEM	COST TO YOU	KEEP / BONUS / CUT

Guarantee and Offer Name

Guarantee only the work you performed, put a clock on it, and write the exclusions in plain words you would say out loud.

What exactly you guarantee — the surfaces and the defects, named.

How long it runs, and what the customer has to do to keep it alive.

The exclusions, in plain words: water, framing movement, other trades, hardware, paint.

What one return visit costs you in hours and materials, and your offer name.

Service Area and Jobs You Will Not Do

A radius you can defend, and a no list you can say out loud without apologising. Both make you money on the same day.

Your radius in drive-time minutes, the ZIP codes inside it, and where your supply house sits.

The drive-time math on your last five jobs: hours invoiced versus hours consumed.

Your travel-charge rule for work outside the circle, and the one exception you allow.

The six jobs you will not take, and the sentence you use to decline each one.

Ten-Competitor Scan

Search your main term, open the first ten, and fill this in. Read their worst reviews — that is the list of promises nobody is making.

COMPANY	GOOGLE RATING	REVIEWS	PRICE SIGNAL	THEIR PROMISE	GAP YOU CAN OWN

Your One-Liner and Positioning Statement

Problem, plan, result. One sentence you can say at a counter without a run-up, and then say identically every time.

The problem, in her words — what she is living with right now.

The plan, in three steps she can repeat to her husband tonight.

The result, in the words she would use telling a neighbour about it.

The whole thing as one sentence. Rewrite it until you can say it without a breath in the middle.

Entity, EIN and Bank Setup

In this order. Most of the elapsed time is waiting on somebody else, so start the slow ones first.

- [ ] Decide entity type with an accountant who has seen your actual numbers — DATE ______
- [ ] Register the entity with your Secretary of State and file the annual report calendar reminder — DATE ______
- [ ] Apply for the EIN online at the IRS — free, same day — DATE ______
- [ ] Open a business checking account in the entity name and order a debit card — DATE ______
- [ ] Open a second savings account for tax, and route a fixed share of every deposit into it — DATE ______
- [ ] Register for state and local business licences and any city occupational tax — DATE ______
- [ ] Ask your accountant how your state taxes a drywall contract: materials, labour, or the whole thing — DATE ______
- [ ] Set up bookkeeping before the first invoice, not after the first quarter — DATE ______
- [ ] Get the EPA Lead-Safe Certified Firm application started if you will touch older housing — DATE ______
- [ ] Save the entity documents, EIN letter and certificate of insurance in one folder you can email from your phone — DATE ______

License Requirements by State — Drywall

Eleven states, plus the federal rule underneath the table. Confirm every line with the board itself before you spend a dollar — these move.

STATE	LICENSE REQUIRED?	LICENSE	BOARD	FEE	EXAM
Kentucky	No statewide	—	Check city / county	—	No
Texas	No statewide	—	Check city / county	—	No
California	Yes	C-9 Drywall Contractor	Contractors State License Board (CSLB)	$330	Yes
Florida	Yes	Certified Drywall Specialty Contractor (Gypsum Drywall)	Florida DBPR Construction Industry Licensing Board (CILB)	$295	Yes
New York	No statewide	—	Check city / county	—	No
Pennsylvania	Yes	Home Improvement Contractor (HIC) Registration	PA Office of Attorney General	$100	No
Illinois	No statewide	—	Check city / county	—	No
Ohio	No statewide	—	Check city / county	—	No
Georgia	Yes	Residential-Basic Contractor	GA State Licensing Board for Residential and Commercial General Contractors (Secretary of State)	$525	Yes
North Carolina	No statewide	—	Check city / county	—	No
Michigan	No statewide	—	Check city / county	—	No

Federal: EPA Lead-Safe Certified Firm (RRP Rule) (Any firm paid to perform renovation, repair or drywall work that disturbs more than 6 sq ft of interior painted surface (or 20 sq ft exterior) in housing or child-occupied facilities built before 1978 — covers drywall demolition, patching and cut-ins that disturb existing painted wall/ceiling surfaces). Rules change — confirm with the board before you spend a dollar.

Insurance Lines and Annual Cost Ranges

The top of the liability range belongs to large drywall companies. A one-truck start quotes at the bottom. Fill the last column with real quotes.

COVERAGE	TYPICAL ANNUAL COST	WHAT IT COVERS	YOUR QUOTE
General liability	$1,400—$7,500	Damage or injury you cause to others	
Workers comp	4.99—14.25 per $100 payroll	Your crew, hurt on the job	
Commercial auto	$3,000—$4,800	The truck and what it hits	
Bond	$25,000—$25,000	Bond requirements are tied to state contractor licensing and vary by state. California's CSLB requires a uniform $25,000 contractor's bond for issuance of any CSLB license, including C-9 Drywall. None of the other required-license states in this list (PA's HIC registration, Florida's Certified Drywall Specialty Contractor, Georgia's Residential-Basic Contractor) mandates a bond at the state level.	
Tools & equipment		Theft from the truck or site	
Umbrella		Above the GL limit	

Insurance Quote Log

Three agents, same limits, same questions. Quote it before you price your first job — the premium has to live inside your hourly rate.

CARRIER / AGENT	LINE	LIMITS	ANNUAL PREMIUM	DEDUCTIBLE	DECISION

Questions for Your Attorney and Accountant

One focused hour each, with these written down. Cheaper than one job and far cheaper than one dispute.

- [ ] Which entity fits my numbers, and when does an S corporation election start paying for itself? DATE
- [ ] What has to be in my proposal and change order in this state, and will you draft them for me? DATE
- [ ] How should a written warranty be worded so it covers only the work I performed? DATE
- [ ] How does this state tax a drywall contract — materials, labour, or the full amount? DATE
- [ ] How do I hold customer deposits so they are not taxed as income before the work is done? DATE
- [ ] What are the tests in this state for subcontractor versus employee, and where do I get caught? DATE
- [ ] What do I have to do to preserve a mechanics lien, and what is the deadline? DATE
- [ ] What records do I need to keep for the federal lead-safe rule, and for how long? DATE
- [ ] What insurance limits do commercial customers in this market normally require? DATE
- [ ] What should I do first if a customer refuses to pay the final draw? DATE

Equipment Budget — Drywall

Day-one items first, later items after. Fill your own column with real prices from your own supply house, not from this page.

ITEM	LOW	HIGH	DAY ONE?	YOUR PRICE	BOUGHT
Taping/finishing knife set (6-12 in.)	$15	$75	Yes		
Stainless steel mud pan (12-14 in.)	$14	$30	Yes		
Drywall screw gun	$50	$200	Yes		
Manual drywall pole sander	$15	$35	Yes		
Drywall panel lift (4-16 ft. adjustable)	$166	$528	Yes		
Drywall T-square (48 in.)	$14	$32	Yes		
Jab/keyhole saw	$8	$22	Yes		
Retractable utility knife	$3	$23	Yes		
25 ft. tape measure	$8	$25	Yes		
N95 dust mask/respirator (box)	$8	$31	Yes		
6 ft. fiberglass step ladder	$119	$167	Yes		
9x12 ft. canvas drop cloth	$16	$35	Yes		
Texture hopper gun sprayer	$33	$150	Later		
12-gallon wet/dry shop vacuum	$100	$200	Later		
Essential equipment	**$436**	**$1,203**			

Ranges are retail prices at the time of research (sources in Resources). Used and rental are the day-one shortcuts.

Total Startup Budget

Ranges are national research. Your number is the one that matters, so price the truck and the insurance locally before you trust the total.

LINE	LOW	HIGH	YOUR NUMBER
Essential equipment (previous page)	$436	$1,203	
Used half-ton pickup truck, extended bed (2019 model, ~7 years old)	$9,745	$12,520	
General liability, year one	$1,400	$7,500	
Launch marketing	$300	$4,000	
Licenses and permits			
Software and phone, 3 months			
Personal runway (chapter 1)			
Reserve (10% of the total)			
Total startup	**$11,881**	**$25,223**	

Funding Sources

Rank by cost and by what it can take from you if the first year is slow. Fill this in before anybody offers you money.

SOURCE	AMOUNT AVAILABLE	COST (RATE / EQUITY / FAVOR)	SPEED	USE IT?

Client-Financed Acquisition Plan

How the deposit on job one funds finding job two. Write the actual percentages and the actual account names.

Your deposit and draw schedule: what you collect, and at exactly which point in the job.

The share of every deposit that goes straight to marketing, and the account it lands in.

What one more customer costs you to find right now — your honest best estimate.

Your rule for unpaid work: how much, for how long, and what you do when it is crossed.

Typical Jobs and Price Ranges — Drywall

Divide each range by the hours beside it before you fill in your own column. The small jobs pay better per hour and it is not close.

TYPICAL JOB	LOW	HIGH	HOURS	PER HOUR (HIGH ÷ HOURS)	YOUR PRICE
Small hole/nail pop repair	$50	$300	1.5	$200	
Average wall/drywall repair (crack, water damage, larger hole)	$380	$1,436	6	$239	
Drywall install, small bathroom (5x8)	$300	$1,000	4	$250	
Drywall install, bedroom (12x12)	$600	$1,800	8	$225	
Drywall install, large bedroom (12x20)	$750	$2,600	12	$217	
Drywall install, living room (16x20)	$850	$3,100	16	$194	
Whole-house drywall install (2,000 sq ft)	$8,000	$30,000	80	$375	

Crews in this trade bill $60–$100 an hour (quoted per sq ft of drywall hung, taped and finished). Technicians earn $28–$33 an hour.

Good / Better / Best Builder

Three real options, not one job at three prices. Each tier must remove a risk she can understand in a sentence.

	GOOD	BETTER	BEST
Name			
What is included			
What is left out			
Price			
Guarantee			
Who buys it			
Anchor shown first?			

Break-Even Hourly Rate

Everything the business owes monthly whether or not you work, divided by hours you can actually bill. Not hours worked.

LINE	MONTHLY AMOUNT	NOTES
Your pay		
Insurance		
Vehicle + fuel		
Software + phone		
Tools + repairs		
Marketing		
Other fixed		
TOTAL monthly nut		
Billable hours per month		
Break-even hourly = nut ÷ hours		
Target margin %		
Your rate = break-even ÷ (1 − margin)		

Markup vs Margin Table

Fill every row by hand once. Markup is added to cost; margin is what survives in the price. They are never the same number.

JOB COST	MARKUP %	PRICE	MARGIN %

Your Minimum Charge and Trip Rule

The small job an hour away is what eats a week. Decide the rule now, in writing, while nobody is on the phone.

Your minimum charge for any visit, and what it covers.

How many trips a typical repair really takes, and how you price the trips rather than the mud.

Your travel rule beyond the radius from chapter 3, in dollars.

The exact sentence you say when somebody asks you to come look at one small hole.

Your Attraction Offer

The low-risk first thing you sell that reveals the next problem. Write it as something she can picture happening in her hallway.

What the offer is, what you do during it, and how long it takes.

What she walks away holding, and what it says.

What you charge for it and why, or why it is free.

The next problem it reveals, and the offer that solves that one.

Upsell and Downsell Plan

The upsell is what the solved problem creates next. The downsell changes terms or scope — never the price of identical work.

Three real upsells, and the exact moment in the job when each becomes honest to raise.

Your payment-terms downsell: how you split it, and what you require.

Your scope downsell: what comes out, what it saves, and what you say about the finish.

The tape-and-coat option: your price, and how you word the removed guarantee.

Continuity or Referral Plan

This trade has no subscription. Write the referral plays instead — real names, real offers, real dates you will call them.

PLAY	WHAT THEY GET	PRICE / REWARD	WHEN YOU OFFER IT	TARGET TAKE-RATE

Referral Partner Board

Ten people, not ten companies. Track who actually sends work, because two or three names will end up carrying your calendar.

NAME	TRADE	WHAT THEY NEED FROM YOU	LAST CONTACT	JOBS SENT	JOBS YOU SENT THEM

Job-Start Checklist

Everything that happens before a tool comes out of the bucket. This page is where your reviews are actually earned.

- [ ] Walk the room with the customer and say the order of work out loud — DATE ______
- [ ] Confirm the finish level and the finish date, drying days included — DATE ______
- [ ] Photograph the room, the floors and every existing scratch or ding — DATE ______
- [ ] Confirm the water source is fixed and the surface is dry — DATE ______
- [ ] Confirm the lead-safe question on any older home before disturbing paint — DATE ______
- [ ] Containment up: plastic and poles on every doorway into the work area — DATE ______
- [ ] Tape off the HVAC return and every supply register in the room — DATE ______
- [ ] Fan in the window blowing out; room under negative pressure — DATE ______
- [ ] Floors run and taped down; furniture moved or wrapped — DATE ______
- [ ] Agree the family's route to the bathroom and the quiet hours — DATE ______
- [ ] Materials on site and checked against the order — DATE ______
- [ ] Respirator, eye protection and a working light on the truck — DATE ______

Job-Close Checklist

The last hour is what gets written about. Do all of it before you load the ladder, every time, including the small jobs.

- [ ] Raking-light walkthrough with the customer, room lights off — DATE
- [ ] Punch every item found, the same day — DATE
- [ ] Containment down and removed from the property, not left in the bin — DATE
- [ ] HVAC vents unsealed and the filter checked — DATE
- [ ] Floors vacuumed, surfaces wiped, path swept from door to work area — DATE
- [ ] All scrap, buckets and offcuts loaded — nothing left behind the shed — DATE
- [ ] Primer applied if it is in scope, and the primer named on the invoice — DATE
- [ ] Paint and sheen written down for whoever paints it next — DATE
- [ ] Warranty explained out loud, exclusions included — DATE
- [ ] Balance collected on site — DATE
- [ ] Photos filed against the job — DATE
- [ ] Review requested in person, using the script from chapter 10 — DATE

Family Worksheet

You are working inside a home while a family tries to have a normal week. Answer these at the estimate, not on day two.

Your written dust plan: containment, negative air, HVAC sealing, and how you sand.

Floor and furniture protection: what you use, and what you photograph first.

The scheduling questions you ask: routes, nap times, night shifts, pets, calls.

Your change-order rule for while you are here, and the daily clean-up standard.

Equipment Log

A minute a month. It decides replacements, feeds your accountant, and gives your insurer a serial number instead of a guess.

ITEM	BOUGHT	COST	SERVICE DUE	SERVICED	NOTES

Your Warm 100 — 1 of 2

Everyone in your phone, not just the ones you think need drywall. Painters, remodelers, plumbers and old foremen go at the top.

#	NAME	HOW YOU KNOW THEM	CONTACTED	RESPONSE	REFERRAL?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					

Your Warm 100 — 2 of 2

#	NAME	HOW YOU KNOW THEM	CONTACTED	RESPONSE	REFERRAL?
26					
27					
28					
29					
30					
31					
32					
33					
34					
35					
36					
37					
38					
39					
40					
41					
42					
43					
44					
45					
46					
47					
48					
49					
50					

Lead Magnet Plan

One narrow question answered completely, honestly enough to say when not to call you. Then the bigger problem it reveals.

ELEMENT	YOUR ANSWER
Narrow problem it solves	
Type (reveal / sample / one step)	
Delivery format	
Name (test three)	
Time to consume	
The next problem it reveals	
The offer that solves it	

LTGP : CAC Worksheet

Fill this in once per source, never blended. A homeowner and a referring painter are not the same animal and the average hides both.

LINE	AMOUNT	HOW YOU GOT IT
Average job price		
Gross margin %		
Gross profit per job		
Jobs per customer (lifetime)		
LTGP		
Marketing spend last 30 days		
New customers last 30 days		
CAC		
LTGP : CAC		

Rule of 100 — Daily Tracker

One channel, every working day, for twelve weeks. On the Friday when nothing has happened, look at the boxes rather than the phone.

MEASURE	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12
Cold reaches												
Warm reaches												
Content minutes												
Ad minutes / dollars												
Follow-ups sent												
Estimates booked												

WEEK NOTES

Estimate Visit Checklist

Questions before solutions. Do not name a price until every box above the line is ticked and written down.

- [ ] Certificate of insurance and lead-safe certification emailed before you arrive — DATE
- [ ] Work light, tape, notepad, sample board and business cards on you at the door — DATE
- [ ] Ask what happened and when, and write the answer down — DATE
- [ ] Confirm the water source is fixed, by whom, and that it is dry — DATE
- [ ] Ask the age of the house and settle the lead question — DATE
- [ ] Ask what the room is used for and what light hits it — DATE
- [ ] Ask what date is driving this, and say the real timeline back including drying days — DATE
- [ ] Ask what happened last time somebody worked in the house — then stop talking — DATE
- [ ] Walk the surface with the work light held flat and let her look — DATE
- [ ] Name the finish level out loud and explain it in one sentence — DATE
- [ ] Describe the dust plan before you describe the work — DATE
- [ ] Leave the sample board on a room-sized job, or the match photos on a patch, plus the crack guide — DATE
- [ ] Give the price in writing, with the finish level, the date and the payment schedule on it — DATE
- [ ] Book the next step before you leave the driveway — DATE

Objections and Replies — Drywall

The ones this trade actually hears, with what each really means. Write your reply in your own words, then say it out loud in the truck until it is yours.

WHAT THEY SAY	WHAT IT REALLY MEANS	YOUR REPLY
My cousin does drywall. He said he would do it for half.	I cannot see what makes one drywall job different from another, so price is the only dial I have.	
Can you just tape it and I will sand and paint it myself?	I am trying to buy some of this price back with my own weekend.	
Why does a hole the size of a doorknob cost that much?	The price is not attached to anything I can see happening.	
The last guy left dust on everything for a week.	I am not afraid of the price. I am afraid of my house.	
Can you match the texture?	I believe a patch always shows, and I am bracing myself for it.	
Can you start tomorrow?	Somebody already let me down and I need to know you are real.	
Can you knock something off if I pay cash?	I want to feel like I got a deal, and I have heard this works.	
Do I really need a licensed guy for drywall?	I am trying to work out whether the cheap bid is actually a risk.	

Review Request Script

Asked in person, on site, right after the walkthrough. Ask everyone, offer nothing in exchange, and never write it for them.

Your words, exactly, for asking at the walkthrough. Write it as you would say it.

How you send the link, and when — before you load up, not next week.

Your reply template for a good review: what you name back so it reads as a person.

Your reply for a critical review: acknowledge, fix, invite offline. Write it while calm.

First-Hire Scorecard

All seven have to be true, with evidence, not with a feeling. Especially the cash one — that is the row people skip.

SIGNAL	YES / NO	EVIDENCE
Turning away work weekly		
Working > 55 hours		
Callbacks rising		
Cash covers 8 weeks of wages		
A job description exists		
A training week is planned		
A 90-day exit plan exists		

30 / 60 / 90 Ramp Plan

Write it before they start. Safety and dust control in the first week, finishing last, and one honest review on the day it is due.

MILESTONE	DAY 30	DAY 60	DAY 90

Org Chart at $250k, $500k and $1M

Sketch all three. The one you drift into is always the middle one, and the middle one has the thinnest money and the longest hours.

At $250k: who does what, and how many days a week are you on the wall?

At $500k: what did you stop doing, and who took it?

At $1M: the seats that exist, and the one you actually want to sit in.

Which of the three you are aiming at, and the first thing you must hand over to get there.

Twelve-Month Forecast

The index is national search interest, already filled in. It barely moves for this trade, so your forecast is built from your decisions.

MONTH	DEMAND INDEX	JOBS	AVG TICKET	REVENUE	COSTS	PROFIT
Jan	0.95					
Feb	1.02					
Mar	0.98					
Apr	1.01					
May	0.96					
Jun	1.13					
Jul	1.01					
Aug	0.97					
Sep	1.01					
Oct	1.04					
Nov	0.97					
Dec	0.95					
Year						

Demand index: 1.00 = an average month for this trade nationally (source in Resources). Your ZIP will differ — pencil your own index in the slow and busy months.

Cash Flow Log

Weekly, not monthly. A month is too long a window to notice a problem you could have caught on a Friday.

WEEK	CASH IN	CASH OUT	BALANCE	DEPOSITS HELD	NOTES

Profit First Allocations

Split every payment the day it lands, before expenses get a vote. If the percentages feel impossible, your price is too low.

ACCOUNT	TARGET %	THIS MONTH $	ACTUAL %
Income (100%)			
Profit			
Owner pay			
Tax			
Operating expenses			
Materials / subs pass-through			

KPI Scorecard — Drywall

Targets are national midpoints, printed for reference. Score weekly and per job — the blended average hides the job type that is bleeding.

MEASURE	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8	W9	W10	W11	W12
Target gross profit margin (target 27.5%)												
Net profit margin (small contractor) (target 20%)												
Overhead share of revenue (target 10%)												
Average repair job price (target 907 USD)												
Average installation job price (target 2,103 USD)												
Installed cost per sq ft (target 2.5 USD/sqft)												
Repair labor hourly rate (target 70 USD/hr)												

WEEK NOTES

Monthly P&L

Fill it in monthly and read it out loud until the lines stop being a foreign language and start being the story of what you did.

MONTH	REVENUE	MATERIALS + SUBS	LABOR	OVERHEAD	NET PROFIT

Days 1–30: Get Cash

One paying job and the paperwork that lets you take the second one. Do the slow things first — they wait on other people.

- [ ] Entity registered and EIN applied for — DATE
- [ ] Business bank account open, plus a tax account and a marketing account — DATE
- [ ] General liability quoted from three agents and bound — DATE
- [ ] Lead-safe firm certification started if you will touch older homes — DATE
- [ ] Map listing claimed, filled out completely, with real photographs — DATE
- [ ] Phone answered or returned the same day, every day — DATE
- [ ] Written price sendable from a driveway — DATE
- [ ] All hundred warm names contacted — painters and remodelers first — DATE
- [ ] Attraction offer live: light walk, one-page report, sample board — DATE
- [ ] Crack guide written and printed — DATE
- [ ] First job booked, priced at your calculated rate, deposit collected — DATE
- [ ] Deposit split into profit, owner pay, tax and marketing the day it landed — DATE
- [ ] Job done to the chapter 8 standard, raking-light walkthrough completed — DATE
- [ ] Balance collected on site and the review asked for in person — DATE

Days 31–60: Get More Cash

More out of the work you already have, which is far cheaper than finding more work. Raise the price once, on purpose.

- [ ] Upsell offered on every single job — count offers, not acceptances DATE
- [ ] Finish level named on every proposal DATE
- [ ] Smooth-finish upgrade offered on every light-critical wall DATE
- [ ] Price raised once, on the next new customer, and the result written down DATE
- [ ] Every unconverted estimate from month one followed up DATE
- [ ] Rule of 100 run every working day in one channel DATE
- [ ] Cash log filled in weekly, deposits held in their own column DATE
- [ ] First month's margin calculated per job, not blended DATE
- [ ] Callback log started with a cause beside each entry DATE
- [ ] Second and third customers reviewed and replied to DATE
- [ ] Supply-house account opened with terms DATE
- [ ] Minimum charge and travel rule written down and used out loud DATE

Days 61–90: Get the Most Cash

The referral engine, then an honest look at the numbers. The first-hire answer is usually no, and that is a good answer.

- [ ] Ten named referral partners contacted with a specific standing offer — DATE
- [ ] At least one job sent to a partner first, on purpose — DATE
- [ ] Every past customer contacted with a photo and one referral line — DATE
- [ ] Referrals tracked by name on the partner board — DATE
- [ ] Margin, callbacks and lead source reviewed together for the first time — DATE
- [ ] LTGP to CAC calculated per source, not blended — DATE
- [ ] Price raised a second time if month two's nos stayed rare — DATE
- [ ] First-hire scorecard run honestly, all seven rows — DATE
- [ ] Twelve-month forecast rebuilt with three months of real numbers — DATE
- [ ] Accountant appointment booked for entity, tax and job costing — DATE
- [ ] Next ninety days written on the milestones page with dates — DATE
- [ ] One thing you did badly this quarter, written down, with the fix — DATE

Milestones and Tripwires

Every tripwire from the pre-mortem, with a date. A tripwire without a date is a hope, and hope is not a control.

MILESTONE	TARGET DATE	TRIPWIRE (WHAT TELLS YOU IT IS OFF)	HIT?

Decision Log

What you decided, why, and when you will look at it again. In a year this page will be the most useful one in the book.

DATE	DECISION	WHY	REVISIT ON