01 / PRICE WITH A PLAN

Mobile Detailing Business Pricing Guide

Build a detailing price around a defined package and the vehicle you will actually work on. Vehicle condition and setup can matter as much as vehicle size.

Four things to include in your quote

- Package: interior, exterior, included tasks, and specialist exclusions.
- Vehicle: size, condition, pet hair, heavy soil, and access to work areas.
- Total time: inspection, travel, setup, detailing, and cleanup.
- Costs: consumables, transport, equipment wear, and allocated overhead.

Keep the offer clear

Use a small set of packages that customers can compare. Explain the condition your starting price assumes. Inspect or request photos, and agree on any additional work and price before you begin.

A useful starting principle

Plan to cover job costs, all labor time, and a share of overhead, then decide what profit allowance your business needs. Check whether customers value the offer at that price. If the numbers do not work, revisit the scope or process rather than guessing lower.

02 / TEST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

A simple planning example

Example only: a $150 job requiring 3 service hours and 1 hour of travel, setup, and cleanup produces $37.50 revenue per labor hour. If job costs are $25, $125 remains before overhead, taxes, and owner pay. Revenue per hour is not profit per hour.

Three pricing mistakes to avoid

- Do not price all vehicles as if they have the same condition.
- Do not include specialist work in a basic package by accident.
- Do not ignore setup when planning the number of jobs in a day.

Review after real jobs

Track job time by package and condition. Use what you learn to adjust package scope, scheduling, and condition-based quotes.

Use these examples to understand the calculation, not as market rates. Your costs, skills, demand, and local requirements will differ. No price or income result is guaranteed.

Continue with the practical decision guide and worksheet on the next pages.

Turn scope into a defensible quote

Work through the decision

Start by distinguishing your basic interior or exterior service from specialist treatments. The package should state actual tasks, vehicle categories, and condition assumptions. Equipment purchases should follow the service you can deliver, not the other way around.

Build the quote from total person-hours, direct costs, and allocated overhead. Select either a fixed profit allowance or an explicitly defined margin method. Check payment fees and taxes separately where applicable. Ask about vehicle size, condition, pet hair or heavy soil, parking and access, weather arrangements, and the water or power your process needs. Clarify what your service will not correct. Check the location and condition before committing to the final scope.

A situation to learn from

Illustrative calculation: three total labor hours at $25 per hour = $75 planned labor; $15 direct costs and $10 allocated overhead bring cost coverage to $100. A $20 fixed allowance produces $120. That is a 20% markup on cost coverage but a 16.67% margin on revenue; a 20% margin would require $125 before excluded fees or sales taxes.

How to respond

Illustrative pilot: two vehicles of the same size required different times because one had heavy pet hair. Use separate condition notes and actual labor records. A flat package needs clear assumptions and a transparent process for agreeing on additional work. Compare quote assumptions with actual jobs. If time or costs differ repeatedly, revise the assessment questions, scope, or pricing method. A competitor's advertised figure does not establish whether your costs are covered or the scope is comparable.

Quote assessment and review log

Use this page with your own service and circumstances. Record assumptions separately from confirmed facts, and update the plan using actual work.

Vehicle / package / condition

Included tasks / specialist exclusions

Site access / utilities / weather approach

Travel / setup / service / cleanup time

Labor rate / direct costs / overhead allocation

Allowance method / fees to check / final agreed scope

Review before taking the next step

Quote wording: Based on [assessed scope], the price is [amount] for [inclusions]. Exclusions: [items]. If conditions differ, we will assess and agree on any change before extra work begins. Insert your actual terms and obtain suitable advice where needed.

- [ ] Scope and condition assumptions recorded.
- [ ] All labor stages included.
- [ ] Costs not double counted.
- [ ] Quoted versus actual results reviewed.

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