Tool 08: The monthly numbers

One page, filled in once a month, with a row for each source and the rent-or-own questions from chapter 17.

Purpose

Know whether marketing is working, in numbers you can check yourself. For "can't tell" (chapter 3). The owner's math in every chapter uses these numbers.

Inputs

- Call log or call-tracking report for the month.
- Form and booking inbox.
- Estimates sent and jobs won (your job software, invoices or a notebook).
- Marketing invoices for the month.
- 30 minutes, first week of each month.

Steps

1. **Calls and forms.** Count new inquiries: one person asking about a new job counts once, however many times they call, text, fill in a form or book. Count a returning customer's new job too, marked R. Write missed calls nobody returned on a separate line. Exclude spam, wrong numbers, sales calls and calls about a job already booked.
2. **Booked jobs.** Count estimates or service visits booked from those inquiries. A booking that's cancelled stays in the count; mark it cancelled.
3. **Close rate.** Jobs won (signed or approved) ÷ booked jobs from step 2, cancellations included. Write it as "won N of D, O still open" and update it as open ones are decided.
4. **Average job value.** Invoiced revenue ÷ the jobs it was invoiced for. A signed job isn't revenue until you invoice it; if customers pay late, keep cash received on its own line.
5. **Cost per booked job.** Marketing spend for the month ÷ booked jobs. Do it per source if you can. To see what a new customer costs, use won jobs not marked R.
6. Ask every new customer two questions and tally the answers: "How did you hear about us?" and "Did you look us up first?"
7. Write one line: what changed this month, and why you think so.
8. Keep these at the top of the page and revisit them each quarter: your goal (chapter 1), what the shop can handle, the cost ceiling you agreed (chapter 17), the amount per job you keep for overhead and profit, each source's review date, stop conditions and contract notice.
9. Cost per booked job with no booked jobs is undefined, not zero; write "none booked". While estimates are open, mark the close rate provisional. An estimated contribution at or below zero can't support a positive marketing fee.
10. For each inquiry, keep the source and how you know it apart from the page it came from (tool 02, part E). Several locations: add a location column; one record per job, even when a central office passes it on.

Month	Calls and forms	Booked jobs	Close rate (won N of D)	Average job value	Spend	Cost per booked job	Top source

Per source (one row per paid or tracked source, every month)

Lead month (when the inquiries came in)	Source	Spend that month	Calls and forms	Booked jobs	Closed jobs (so far)	Revenue	Cost per booked job

Credit each closed job to the month its inquiry came in, not the month it closed, so a long sales cycle charges the right month's spend. Update earlier rows as jobs close.

The rent-or-own questions (chapter 17, every paid source, every quarter)

Question	Your answer
Source and what we pay for (lead, call, click, job)	

Question	Your answer
Why we're using it (slow season, new area, new business, job type)	
Start date and stop date	
Monthly spend	
Leads or calls	
Booked jobs	
Closed jobs and revenue	
Cost per booked job (spend ÷ booked jobs)	
What you keep per closed job, before marketing (K)	
Estimated contribution after this source's cost, before overhead (closed jobs × K − monthly spend)	
Account in our name? Phone number ours?	
Contract term, auto-renewal, cancellation notice, termination fee	
Customers added to our own list this month	
What replaces it when we stop	
Decision: keep, cut, or keep until [date]	

If you run plans or recurring routes (pest control, HVAC maintenance, other service agreements), add this, every month

Month	Plan customers at start	New plans sold	Plans renewed	Plans cancelled or lapsed	Plan customers at end	Repeat or referral calls (chapter 16)	Revenue from plan customers

Write renewals as "renewed N of D due this month". A new customer from a rented source who signs a plan is worth more than the first job (chapter 17), so note which source each new plan came from.

What you keep per job (K, in the owner's math). Take three recent invoices for typical jobs. From each, subtract the direct costs of that job: materials, the labor of whoever did the work (your own hours on the job included) and any other cost of doing that job, such as a permit or rented equipment. Don't subtract marketing here; it comes off once, separately. Average the three. That's gross profit: overhead, your management pay and what you take out of the business still come out of it. Three invoices are a first approximation, not a figure for every job.

How to read the result

- Compare each month with your own last month and the same month last year. Searches for most trades rise and fall with the seasons (chapter 18), so a drop in November may be normal for you.
- Cost per lead can look cheap while cost per booked job is high. Cost per booked job shows what it costs to reach an appointment. Check it alongside the jobs won and what's left after the source's cost.
- We found no industry close-rate benchmark with a stated method. Every "average contractor close rate" we found came from a vendor blog with no stated method (chapter 3). Don't measure yourself against one.
- If a vendor's report shows numbers you can't trace to steps 1 to 5, ask where they come from (tool 07).

Don't buy reports built on:

- impressions or "reach";
- "visibility scores";
- AI mention counts or scores you can't check;
- leads with no booked-job count behind them.

Limits

- Small numbers swing. Three booked jobs vs five in a month is too small a change to read on its own; look at three months together.
- "How did you hear about us?" answers are memory, not tracking. They're still worth more than nothing.
- This scorecard shows whether things change. It can't prove which single action caused the change.

Next action

- Can't fill a box: that's the first fix (chapter 3).
- Cost per booked job rising on one source: chapter 17, the rent-or-own decision.

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