

A WORKS CO. MANUAL · NO. 09

# The Mobile Valeting Works

---

*How to build a recurring mobile valeting round, one drive at a time.*

# The Mobile Valeting Works

Second edition (v2.0), July 2026 · Published by The Works Co. · [theworksco.co.uk](https://theworksco.co.uk) · [hello@theworksco.co.uk](mailto:hello@theworksco.co.uk)

## COPYRIGHT

© The Works Co. All rights reserved. Your purchase entitles you to personal use of this manual and its toolkit. It may not be redistributed, resold, or republished, in whole or in part, without written permission.

## WHAT THIS MANUAL IS — AND IS NOT

This manual is a detailed account of how a mobile valeting business works, written with care and published in good faith. It is information, not professional advice. Three things to hold onto:

- **The numbers are honest examples, not promises.** Prices, costs and incomes reflect the UK market in 2026 and the worked examples we built. Your results will depend on your patch, your effort and your decisions. Nobody can guarantee you an income, and we do not.
- **Tax, legal and insurance specifics change.** Verify any figure that matters — thresholds, rates, regulations — with HMRC, your insurer or a qualified professional before relying on it. The templates in your bundle are working documents, not legal advice.
- **Valeting uses machines and chemicals that can damage a vehicle if misused, and waste water must be disposed of lawfully.** Pressure washers, polishers, steamers and cleaning chemicals all demand care, and dirty valeting water must never enter a surface-water or storm drain — that is a pollution offence, not a guideline. This manual is guidance, not training. Follow every product's instructions, your insurance requirements, the relevant environmental regulations, and your own risk assessments. You are responsible for working safely and lawfully.

Suppliers and products are named because working operators use and rate them, not as paid endorsements. Where The Works Co. may earn a commission on a recommendation, it costs you nothing and never decides what we recommend.

## UPDATES AND THE REFUND PROMISE

Updates and new editions are included in your purchase — the current edition is always at [theworksco.co.uk/library](https://theworksco.co.uk/library). And if this manual is not what you hoped, email [refunds@theworksco.co.uk](mailto:refunds@theworksco.co.uk) and we will refund you in full, the same day. No questions, no friction. Keep the files.

# Contents.

|                                       |                                              |     |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>First</b>                          | Read this first — your first weekend         | 4   |
| <b>PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS</b>         |                                              |     |
| <b>Ch. 01</b>                         | The Mobile Valeting Opportunity              | 6   |
| <b>Ch. 02</b>                         | Is This For You?                             | 12  |
| <b>Ch. 03</b>                         | Setting Up the Business                      | 17  |
| <b>PART TWO · THE CRAFT</b>           |                                              |     |
| <b>Ch. 04</b>                         | Equipment: The Van Setup                     | 24  |
| <b>Ch. 05</b>                         | Equipment: Machines, Chemicals & Consumables | 30  |
| <b>PART THREE · THE CUSTOMERS</b>     |                                              |     |
| <b>Ch. 06</b>                         | Getting Your First 20 Customers              | 37  |
| <b>Ch. 07</b>                         | Own Your Customers                           | 44  |
| <b>Ch. 08</b>                         | The Trust Kit                                | 52  |
| <b>Ch. 09</b>                         | Speed to Lead                                | 59  |
| <b>Ch. 10</b>                         | Pricing, Quoting & Getting Paid              | 65  |
| <b>Ch. 11</b>                         | Pricing That Wins                            | 71  |
| <b>Ch. 12</b>                         | Get Paid, Every Time                         | 77  |
| <b>Ch. 13</b>                         | Doing the Work                               | 84  |
| <b>PART FOUR · COMMERCIAL</b>         |                                              |     |
| <b>Ch. 14</b>                         | Dealers, Traders & Fleets                    | 91  |
| <b>Ch. 15</b>                         | Winning Commercial Contracts                 | 97  |
| <b>PART FIVE · GROWING</b>            |                                              |     |
| <b>Ch. 16</b>                         | Scaling the Business                         | 105 |
| <b>Ch. 17</b>                         | The High-Ticket Stack                        | 112 |
| <b>PART SIX · THE MODERN OPERATOR</b> |                                              |     |
| <b>Ch. 18</b>                         | The 2026 Tech Stack                          | 120 |
| <b>Ch. 19</b>                         | Your AI Co-Pilot                             | 125 |
| <b>Ch. 20</b>                         | The First 90 Days                            | 132 |
| <b>PART SEVEN · THE MOAT</b>          |                                              |     |
| <b>Ch. 21</b>                         | EVs, Ceramics & the Decade Ahead             | 139 |
| <b>APPENDICES</b>                     |                                              |     |
| <b>App. A</b>                         | Toolkit Index                                | 146 |
| <b>App. B</b>                         | Prompt Library                               | 148 |
| <b>App. C</b>                         | Supplier Directory                           | 151 |
| <b>App. D</b>                         | Glossary                                     | 153 |
| <b>App. E</b>                         | Sources and Further Reading                  | 156 |

## BEFORE CHAPTER ONE

# Your first weekend.

You do not need to read the whole manual before you earn a pound. This page is the shortest honest path from here to your first paid valets — the chapters fill in everything else as you need them.

## 1 Saturday morning

Make the kit decision and place the order: the £1,500–£3,000 starter kit — pressure washer, wet/dry extractor, water tank, basic chemicals — or commit to the pro van conversion. Chapters 4 and 5 make the case. Either way, sort a bunding mat first.

## 3 Saturday afternoon

Do three friends' or family cars for nothing. You are not earning yet — you are building your before-and-after library and getting your two-bucket wash and interior routine up to speed on cars nobody will mind you learning on.

## 5 Sunday morning

Post the before-and-afters to your local Facebook groups, Marketplace and a new Instagram account. Plain caption, your area, a from-price. Join every group for the towns you can reach in twenty minutes.

## 2 Saturday midday

Sort your waste-water containment before you touch a car. Dirty valeting water must not enter a surface-water or storm drain — it is a pollution offence. A bunding mat and a plan for where the run-off goes is non-negotiable (Chapter 3).

## 4 Saturday evening

Photograph each one properly: same angle, same light, before and after — the filthy footwell next to the spotless one. Those photos are the marketing for your first twenty jobs.

## 6 Sunday afternoon

Price the first jobs off the tier ladder: mini valet £25–£40, full valet £55–£90 (Chapter 7). Reply to every enquiry the same day, name a specific day, and book your first paid valets. A named day closes better than a polished quote.

### IF YOU ONLY READ FOUR CHAPTERS

Chapter 2 (is this for you) · Chapter 6 (first customers) · Chapter 10 (pricing) · Chapter 20 (the 90-day plan).  
Everything else will be waiting when you need it.

### THE ONE-WEEK TARGET

Your first three paid valets. A kit on order, waste water sorted, three cars photographed, the first before-and-afters posted — that is a business starting, not an idea. Registering with HMRC comes once the money starts (Chapter 3).



PART ONE

# Foundations

---

*The trade, the money, the setup.*

# 01

CHAPTER 1 · PART ONE

## The Mobile Valeting Opportunity

---

*Why this trade. Why now. What it pays.*

At 7:40 on a Tuesday morning, Dale Hartwell parks his Transit on a sloping driveway in a cul-de-sac outside Solihull and the day is already half-sold. Three jobs on the sheet. A monthly maintenance valet for the silver Qashqai he last did four weeks ago, £40. Another maintenance valet two doors down — the neighbour who saw the first car drying on the drive last month and asked for the same — £35. And the one that pays for the week: a full interior detail on a three-year-old BMW, booked by a man who is selling it and wants it to photograph like new, £140 agreed on the phone, deposit already taken.

Dale runs his hose off a 450-litre tank, his power off a leisure battery and inverter, and his bunding mat is down before the first drop of dirty water moves. By 9:15 the Qashqai is done and the owner has tapped a card against the little reader on Dale's phone. He has not driven to a unit. He has not waited for a customer to come to him. He brought the business to three driveways within half a mile of each other, and by half past nine he has £75 in and a £140 job in front of him for the rest of the morning. That is mobile valeting. It is not glamorous and it is not effortless, but it is real, it is repeatable, and on a good week Dale clears more than people assume a man with a pressure washer ever could.

This chapter is about whether that morning could be yours, what it actually pays, and how the rest of this manual gets you there.

## Why mobile, and why now

The old model was a fixed site. You rented a unit or a forecourt, you stuck a sign out, and you waited for cars to come to you. It works, but it is expensive and it ties you to one spot. Mobile flips it. Your overhead is a van and a tank of water, and you take the service to the customer's drive while they work from home, mind the kids, or simply sit inside with a cup of tea and let you get on with it.

Two things make this a good trade in 2026. The first is convenience. People will pay a premium not to give up their Saturday morning to a car wash queue, and the man who turns up on the drive captures that premium. The second is that cars have got more expensive and people keep them longer. A customer with a £40,000 car they intend to run for six years has every reason to protect it, and they would rather hand it to someone they trust on their own driveway than leave it with strangers at a hand wash.

The trade has three layers of money, and the operators who do well stack all three:

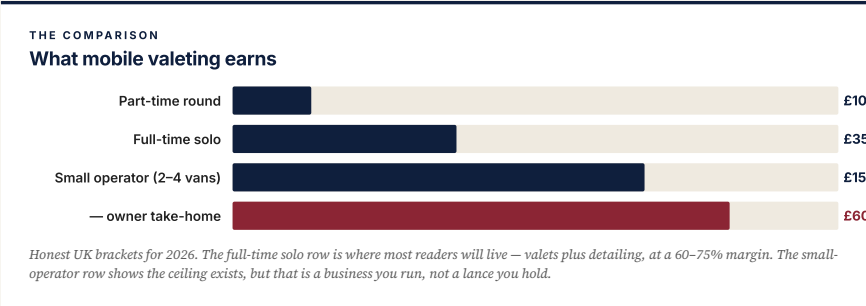
- **Regular valets** — the recurring monthly maintenance round. This is the backbone. Predictable, repeatable, the same drives every four weeks.
- **Premium detailing** — interior details, machine polishing, paint correction, ceramic coating. The high-ticket work that turns a decent week into a strong one. We cover the full stack in Chapter 17.
- **Dealer and fleet volume** — independent used-car traders, forecourts, small fleets. Lower price per car, but volume and reliability. The commercial side runs across Chapters 14 and 15.

You do not need all three on day one. Most operators start with domestic valets, add detailing as their skill grows, and pick up commercial volume once they have a van that looks the part and a reputation that travels.

There is one more reason the timing is good, and it is the weather you cannot see. Mobile valeting is far less weather-dependent than people think, because so much of the value is inside the car. A full valet, an interior detail, a shampoo and protect — none of it cares whether it is raining, because you are working in footwells and on dashboards, not just hosing panels. That means a year-round trade rather than a summer one. There is a slight dip in the deep winter weeks, and the detailing and ceramic work clusters in spring and the run-up to summer, but the recurring round keeps turning over in January as it does in June. A trade you can do twelve months a year is a trade you can build a living on.

## What it actually earns

Here are the honest brackets. These are UK figures for 2026, and they are not the top of the market — they are what a sensible operator can expect.



| Stage                     | Revenue                   | Notes                                          |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Part-time round           | £10,000–£20,000/yr        | Evenings and weekends, a small recurring round |
| Full-time solo            | £35,000–£65,000/yr        | Valets plus detailing, margin 60–75%           |
| Small operator (2–4 vans) | £150,000–£400,000 revenue | Owner take-home £60,000–£140,000               |

Read the middle row carefully, because that is where most readers will live. A full-time solo operator running valets and detailing can expect **£35,000 to £65,000 a year**, and the margin is the part people miss: **60 to 75 per cent** when you are solo. You are not buying stock to resell. Your costs are water, chemicals, fuel, insurance and the wear on your kit. On a £140 detail your consumable cost might be £15. The rest is your time and your skill, and that is why this trade rewards the person who turns up rather than the person with the biggest premises.

The top row matters too, because it tells you there is a ceiling well above a one-van wage if you want it. A small operator with two to four vans and staff can run **£150,000 to £400,000** of revenue, with the owner taking home **£60,000 to £140,000**. That is no longer you holding the lance every day — it is you running a business. We get to that in Chapter 16. For now, know that the path exists and the numbers are not fantasy.

A worked week makes the solo figure concrete. Say you run five working days. Two of them are mostly recurring round — six maintenance valets a day at an average £40, so twelve visits and £480. Two days are full valets and interior details — three jobs a day averaging £100, so six jobs and £600. The fifth day you keep for the high-ticket booking when it comes, or a half-day of dealer cars when it doesn't. A steady week like that is around £1,400 of valeting plus whatever the fifth day brings. Hold that across a working year, allow for holidays, quiet winter weeks and the days a job overruns, and you are sitting squarely in the middle of the full-time solo bracket. Add a couple of ceramic coatings a month at £400 to £900 each and you are pushing the top of it. None of that needs a unit, a second van or a member of staff. It needs a full diary and a finish people talk about.



**MENTOR MOMENT**

The brackets are wide for a reason. The difference between £35,000 and £65,000 solo is rarely talent with a polisher. It is whether you built a recurring round or chased one-off jobs forever. The operator who fills his diary with monthly customers wakes up knowing what the month earns before it starts. The operator who relies on the phone ringing wakes up hoping. Same skill, same van, very different year. Build the round first.

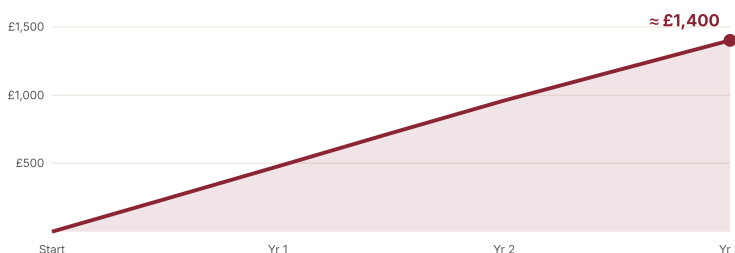
## The recurring round is the whole game

If you take one idea from this chapter, take this. The single most valuable thing you can build is a round of monthly maintenance customers.

A monthly maintenance valet sits at £30 to £50 a visit.

**THE COMPOUNDING CUSTOMER**

### One monthly customer, kept for three years



*A single maintenance customer at around £40 a visit, done every month and kept for roughly three years, is worth about £1,400 before a single detail on top — and the acquisition cost after the first booking is effectively nil. Win the driveway once and the value returns every month.*

Picture forty regular customers at an average of £40, each done once a month. That is £1,600 a month, £19,200 a year, from the recurring round alone — before a single detail, ceramic coating or dealer job. It is also the most efficient work you will ever do, because a car you valet every four weeks never gets truly filthy. The Qashqai Dale did in under ninety minutes that morning was a Qashqai he had done four weeks earlier. A first-time deep clean on the same car might take three hours.

**COACH MOMENT**

From your very first customer, ask the question: "Most of my customers have me back every month — would you like me to pop you in for the same time in four weeks?" Say it on the drive, while they are looking at the car you have just made gleam. That is the moment they value the work most. One sentence is the difference between a one-off £40 and a customer worth £480 a year. Ask it every single time. Chapter 10 gives you the script and the GoCardless setup to make it automatic.

The round also de-risks the rest of the business. The detailing and ceramic work is more profitable per job but lumpier — it comes in waves, heavier in spring and before summer. The recurring round pays the bills in the quiet weeks so you are never desperate, never tempted to drop your price, never taking the job you should walk away from. It is the floor under everything else.

## Who this suits

This is an honest trade and it deserves an honest test. It suits you if:

- **You take pride in a finish.** You are the sort of person who notices the swirl mark someone else missed, and it bothers you until it is gone.
- **You are comfortable around people's prized possessions.** You can be trusted with a customer's £40,000 car on their own drive, and you carry that responsibility without it weighing you down.
- **You are physically up to a full day's graft.** Valeting is on your feet, bent over panels, in and out of footwells, in all weathers. It is real work.
- **You are happy dealing with customers face to face.** Most of your marketing is the conversation on the drive and the photo you post afterwards.
- **You will invest properly in a van and a kit.** This is not a hobby done out of the boot of a hatchback. A van is required.

## Who it doesn't

Equally honestly, walk away if:

- **Detail bores you.** If "good enough" is good enough for you, your reviews will say so, and reviews are the business.
- **The responsibility worries you.** If the thought of a wash mitt scratching someone's bonnet keeps you up, this trade will be a source of stress, not income.
- **You will cut corners on waste water.** Dirty valeting water must not go into surface-water or storm drains — it is a pollution offence, not a guideline. If you are not willing to put a mat down and manage your run-off every time, this is not your trade. We treat this properly in Chapter 3, because doing it right is both the law and one of the clearest signals to a customer that you are a professional and not the cheap bloke with a bucket.
- **You want money without showing up.** This trade pays the person on the drive. There is no version where the van cleans the car by itself.

### MENTOR MOMENT

We make a small fortune from people who buy this manual, and we would still rather you read this page and decide the trade is not yours. We would rather you spent the £47 on a coffee with someone you love than on a manual for a trade that wasn't yours. If two of the red flags above are clearly you, close the file. The refund is same-day and no-friction — email [refunds@theworksco.co.uk](mailto:refunds@theworksco.co.uk), keep the materials, and we part as friends. The people who succeed at this are the ones who read both lists and felt the first list describing them.

## What you are holding

This is not just a book. The bundle is the manual, a **15-file Excel toolkit**, and a **95-prompt AI library**, and the three are designed to work together. The manual tells you what to do and why. The toolkit gives you the spreadsheets to run it — a self-assessment scorecard, a job database that doubles as your CRM, a pricing calculator, a proposal template, a 90-day checklist and more. The prompt library is ninety-five ready-made AI prompts for the admin that eats your evenings: writing quotes, replying to enquiries, drafting the dealer cold-email, turning a before-and-after into a social post.

A sensible way to use all three: read a chapter, open the toolkit file it points to, and run the matching prompts when you hit the admin. Chapter 2 hands you the self-assessment scorecard. Chapter 6 leans on the job database and the prompt library hardest, because finding your first twenty customers is the make-or-break. Chapter 18 wires the whole modern tech stack together. You do not have to read cover to cover before you start — but read Part One before you spend a pound.

Everything is yours to keep, and updates are free for life. When the rules change or the kit improves, your copy improves with it.

## What success looks like in one year

Set the picture, because a target you can see is a target you hit. Twelve months from a standing start, a focused solo operator looks something like this.

You have a recurring round of **thirty to forty monthly maintenance customers** at £30-£50 a visit — call it £1,400 to £1,800 a month of predictable income before anything else. Around that round you fit full valets at £55-£90 and interior details at £90-£160 through the week. You have done your first handful of ceramic coatings at £400-£900 each, the high-ticket work that lifts a good month into a strong one, and you have one or two small dealers feeding you a steady trickle of trade cars. Your van is paid down or paying for itself, your insurance covers public liability, your tools and the customers' cars in your care, and your waste water has never once gone where it shouldn't.

On the numbers, you are tracking toward the lower-to-middle of the full-time solo bracket — comfortably into **£35,000-plus**, on your way to £50,000 and £65,000 as the round fills and the detailing skill compounds. You are not rich. You are independent, you are busy, and every month starts with money already on the sheet.

That is the destination. The next chapter is the most important question before you spend a penny on a van: is this honestly for you? Turn the page, open toolkit file 01, and find out.

# That was Chapter 1.

The other twenty chapters, the Excel toolkit and the AI prompt library are in the full bundle.

[theworksco.co.uk/mobile-valeting](https://theworksco.co.uk/mobile-valeting) · GBP 47 · refund without frict