You Got Through Year 1…

NOW WHAT?

What nobody tells you about year two in the septic business

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this presentation are the presenter's own and are not reflective of NOWRA.

HOW I GOT HERE

I was starting over from scratch.

1

Starting over

Divorced, single mom, building a life back up from nothing.

2

The plan I had

I thought I was going to be a police officer. That didn't work out.

3

The plan I got

I met my now-husband on Tinder. He sold real estate and saw a gap: a septic company that answered the phone.

Here's everything I knew about septic:

Nothing.

- I had never driven a big truck.
- I had no idea where it went when you flushed.
- I had never run a business.

He said he saw my work ethic. So Turner Septic was born.

HOW I GOT HERE

Where to start?

A CDL license?

A truck?

A camera?

Someone to teach me how to do this?

Nobody hands you the list. You find out in the order it breaks.

YEAR ONE

You wore every single hat.

HR

CSR

Bookkeeper

Accountant

Mechanic

Head pumper

AND THE OWNER

YOUR TURN

SO HOW DID YOU GUYS & GALS DO?

Did you make money — or did you just stay busy?

Do you know what one stop actually costs you?

Did you pay yourself?

Did you take a single day off?

What broke that you couldn't fix?

YOU DID IT!!!

You survived your first year in business.

Were you busy?

Or overwhelmed?



This was the end of my first year.

THE NEXT 45 MINUTES

Six shifts between year one and a real business

1. From hustling to knowing your numbers
2. From one truck to a fleet decision
3. From doing it all to your first real hire
4. From chasing jobs to owning a reputation
5. From pumping only to adding septic inspections & repairs
6. Exploring social media & how it can help with growth

SHIFT 1

Know your numbers, or the truck owns you

Revenue is not the same thing as money.



SHIFT 1

The only number that matters: cost per gallon

Add up a full month, then divide by the number of gallons you pumped. Everything below is a real cost, whether you've written it down or not.

Disposal

Per-gallon dump fees and plant minimums

Fuel

Deadhead miles count too — both ways

The truck

Payment, insurance, plates, DOT, tags

Wrench time

Pump rebuilds, hoses, tires, PTO, downtime

You

An actual wage. Not "whatever's left."

The office

Phone, software, bookkeeping, licenses

SHIFT 1

Then raise your price. Really.

What year one sounds like

"I'll match whatever they quoted."

"I can't charge more, I'm new."

"I'll eat the extra 40 miles."

"I'll bill them next month."

"No, there's no charge for that."

What year two sounds like

"My price is my price."

"Outside 25 miles there's a trip fee."

"Payment is due at the truck."

"Digging the lid is a separate charge."

"That job isn't a fit for us."

YOU ARE WORTH IT.

SHIFT 2

Let's talk about your software.

However you're keeping records right now — that's your system.

What are you using?

Paper, a spreadsheet, QuickBooks, or real service software?

What has to live in it

Customers, tank locations, pump dates, manifests, invoices.

The test

If your phone died today, could you still run tomorrow's route and bill for last week?

When to change

Switch before you're desperate. Mid-season is the worst time to move.

SHIFT 3

Are you ready for the second truck?

Be honest. The truck is the easy part.



SHIFT 3

Buy truck #2 when these are true

GREEN LIGHT

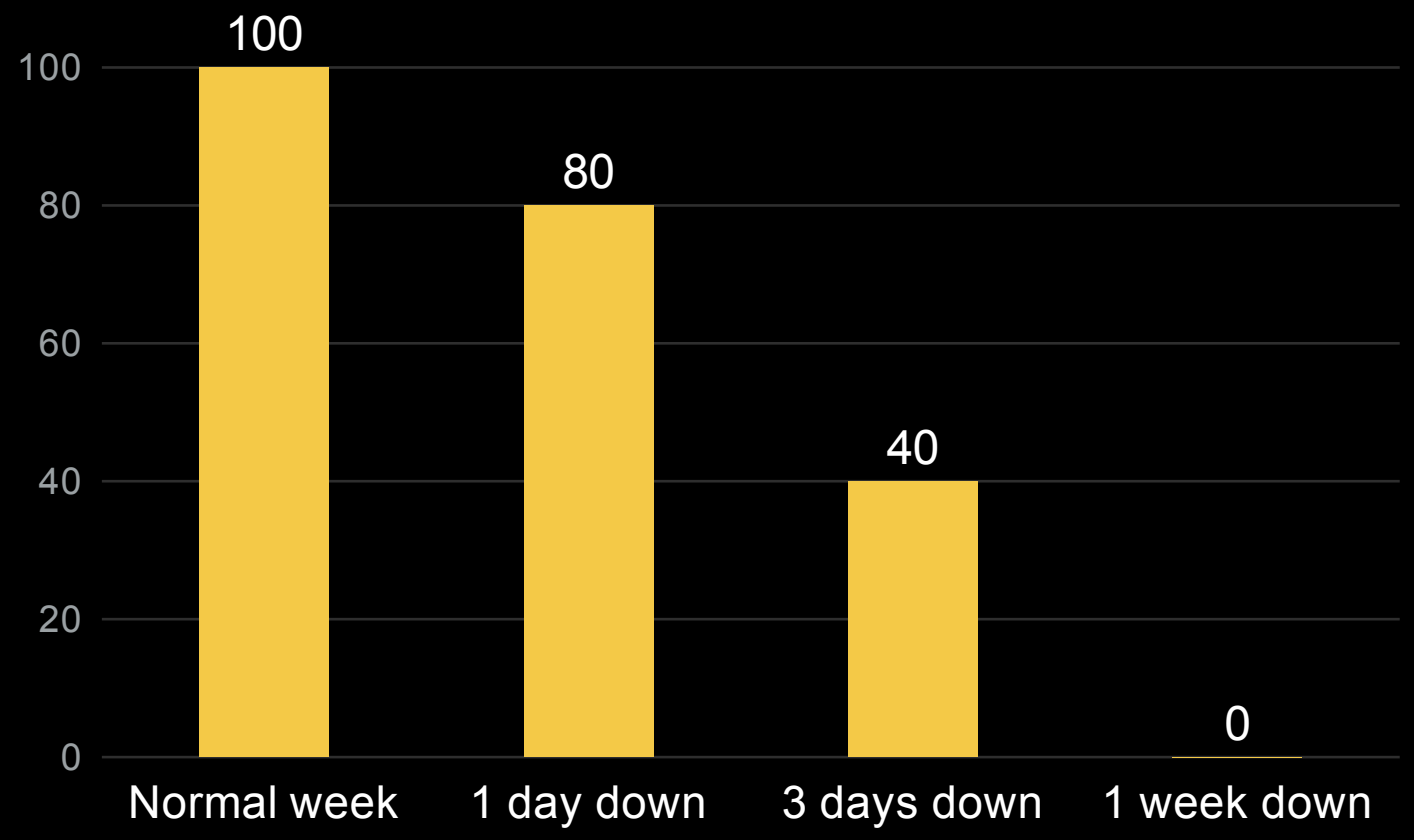
- Turning away work every week, not just in spring
- You've raised your price and they still call
- You know your cost per gallon and it's profitable
- You have a driver lined up — a real one
- A bad month still covers the payment

NOT YET

- You're behind because your routes are scattered
- You're behind because truck #1 is always down
- You want to feel like a bigger company
- The dealer said the payment is "only"…
- You haven't priced insurance, DOT and plates

SHIFT 3

What a week down actually costs



% of a normal week's revenue

The payment doesn't stop.

Neither does insurance, the phone, or Thursday's customer.

A maintenance fund and a shop that takes you same-day are cheaper.

SHIFT 4



YOUR FIRST HIRE!!!

This can be one of the scariest moments of growing your business.

Someone else driving your truck, representing your company, and doing things the way you want them done.

SHIFT 4

Hire for personality — you can train them

Personality first

You can teach the pump. You can't teach someone to be decent to a homeowner having the worst day of their month.

They represent you alone

Once they pull out of the yard, they ARE your company. Reputation rides in the passenger seat.

Write down how you do it

Route sheet, what to check, what to photograph, when to call you. If it's only in your head, it can't leave your truck.

Know the cost before you post

Wages, workers' comp, insurance, training time, and the jobs they'll be slower on for months.

YEAR TWO

Tool & equipment upgrades

The stuff that pays for itself the first time you need it.

Buy it before you need it

The part you limp home without is always cheaper than the day you lose.

Upgrade what slows you down

If a tool costs you 20 minutes every stop, it is costing you money every day.

Carry the spares

Hoses, fittings, gaskets, a pump kit. What would let you finish the day?

Buy quality once

Cheap tools get bought twice. The good one is on the truck five years later.

YEAR TWO

What equipment will help you grow?

Not what looks good in the yard — what lets you say yes to work you turn down.

A camera & locator

Opens inspections. Finds the tank, proves what you found.

Jetter or root cutter

Turns a callback into a repair you can bill for.

A bigger tank

Fewer trips to the plant on the same route.

Excavation & lid tools

Stop losing an hour to a buried lid on every job.

Grease & commercial

Opens accounts that pay through the slow season.

The office side

Software, a phone that gets answered, a card reader.

YEAR TWO

Advertisement = Growth

Nobody calls the hauler they've never heard of.

Your truck is a billboard

It sits in a driveway all day where the neighbors can read it.

Show up where they search

A findable listing, real reviews, and a phone that gets answered.

Social media

Free reach. People will watch this work all day — let them.

Reviews & referrals

Ask while you're still standing in the driveway.

YEAR TWO

Word of mouth is the cheapest advertising you will ever buy.

You pay for it with how you show up — not with money.

Answer the phone

Half of it is just being the one who picks up.

Show up when you said

Or call before they have to wonder.

Explain what you found

Homeowners repeat what they understand.

Fix the one that went wrong

That customer talks the loudest, either way.

YEAR TWO

Paid advertising

The part you can turn up — and the part you can waste a lot of money on.

Go where they search

Someone looking for a pumper today beats a hundred people scrolling.

Set a number and hold it

Decide the monthly spend before you talk to anyone selling ads.

Track every call

Ask how they found you. Cut what isn't working.

Local beats broad

Money spent outside your service radius is money spent on jobs you'd turn down.

Watch the contracts

Ad reps sell year-long deals. Month-to-month first, until you see results.

Paid gets the call

Everything else on the last three slides is what keeps them.

YEAR TWO

Google reviews

For most homeowners, your reviews are the first thing they ever learn about you.

Claim your listing

Free, and it's what puts you on the map when someone searches nearby.

Ask every single time

Most people will if you ask in the driveway. Almost nobody does on their own.

Make it one tap

A QR code, a text with the link, a card in their hand. Don't make them search.

Answer the bad one

Calm, short, no arguing. The next customer is reading your reply, not the complaint.

Photos and details help

A real photo and a name beat five stars with nothing written under it.

It compounds

Reviews are the one thing that keeps working while you're asleep.

SHIFT 6

Build the reputation nobody can undercut

Reputation makes the phone ring. Your work ethic and how you run your business gets the repeat calls.



SHIFT 6

The 4 relationships that grow your business

1 Installers & providers

At the tank before and after you. Refer work, it comes back.

2 Inspectors & health depts

Be the hauler with clean paperwork. You get answers, not violations.

3 Realtors & property mgrs

Inspections and multi-property accounts pay on schedule.

4 Restaurants & commercial

Grease accounts smooth out the slow seasons.

ONE MORE THING

Ask for help.

Being a business owner can be exciting — and lonely.

1

Have a team behind you

People who will pick up when it's a bad day. Nobody does this alone.

2

Hire a business coach

Somebody outside your business who will tell you the truth about it.

3

Remember to have a life

The business is supposed to pay for a life, not replace one.

You already did the hardest part.



You started something you knew nothing about, in an industry that didn't expect you, and you're still here.

Year two is just deciding what kind of company you're building.

Questions

Ask me anything — especially the money questions.

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WHO HELPED ME GROW

THE BLUE COLLAR SUCCESS GROUP™

NATIONAL TRUCKCENTER

TANK TRACK

INSPECTORCAMERAS.COM — QUALITY SERVICE THE WAY IT SHOULD BE

GSOWA — GRANITE STATE ONSITE WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION

NAWT — National Association of Wastewater Technicians