

Cash In A Flash - Gas Engine Repair

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Cash In A Flash - Gas Engine Repair

The morning chill bit through Drake Schnatter's worn jacket as he cruised up the aisles of the weekly flea market. Schnatter's eye scanned the vendor's wares until he found what he was looking for - a neglected, dirty lawn mower with a three horsepower engine. He bought the mower for five dollars and carried it away (the wheels were missing). One week later he sold the mower with fresh paint, new wheels, and an engine tune-up for \$175. (Normally the price would have been \$200, but Schnatter took \$25 off because the customer brought in his old mower for trade-in.) Now he had an old snapper mower to work on and \$175 in cash. Not bad for a five dollar investment.

If you have any knowledge about small gas engines (or are willing to learn) you could turn that interest into extra income. Schnatter started at age twenty and now invests the profits from his "hobby" in real estate. His secret is simple - find small gas engines, buy them cheap, and resell them at a profit.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Where can you find small gas engines for five dollars or less? For some the task might be difficult, but not for Schnatter. "I first discovered a way to buy small gas engines cheap when I exhausted my sources at the local flea market," says Schnatter, "I remembered a friend in the hauling and clean-up business who told me about the good, usable trash his customers wanted hauled away."

Schnatter made an agreement with this friend and several other haulers he found in the local paper.

"I asked the haulers if they would mind setting aside lawn mowers, edgers, anything with a small gas engine in their pick-ups," Schnatter says, "I told them I would pay up to five dollars a shot, depending on the condition of the items. Most of the haulers liked the idea. It left them more room in their pick-ups and meant less trips to the dump. Plus, they received a cash bonus," Schnatter is a firm believer in creating win-win situations.

When Schnatter decided he needed even more inventory, he placed an ad in the Magic Ads, a local give-away paper. The ad brought in so many gas engines that Schnatter had to turn down many offers. His ad read as follows:

Wanted! Cash Paid For Small Gas Engines - running or not - lawn

mowers, edgers, mini-bikes. (phone number).

"My phone was ringing constantly! I told the callers I paid five dollars for non-running engines and a little more if the engines run. Within two weeks I had a backyard full of rebuildable engines, lawn mowers, edgers, rototillers, and a couple of mini-bikes. I even got a few free mowers from people wanting to clear out their garages," says Schnatter.

Once Schnatter felt his inventory was sufficient, he advertised inexpensive small gas engine repair and sales. He built up a good customer following by offering special services often unheard of at commercial lawn mower repair shops. One of the services he offered was a ninety-day guarantee on any lawn mower he sold.

One of Schnatter's satisfied customers says, "Who ever heard of a lawn mower shop replacing a broken mower with a working mower?" In this case, Schnatter traded a bent up mower for one he had just rebuilt. Schnatter says, "Well, I gave customer a mower which only cost me five dollars and had just been rebuilt. And I took his bent up mower for blades and later sold the mower for \$125. So, both the customer and I were happy."

About two weekends a month Schnatter gathers his rebuilt lawn mowers and other garden equipment, and rents a space at the local flea market. Schnatter also provides a pick-up and delivery service that keeps his business thriving is offering loaners to his customers. A commercial gardener says this is a service he couldn't afford not to have.

From March through June, Schnatter can barely keep enough supplies in inventory because his service is in such demand. He charges between \$125 and \$150 for gas powered lawn lowers and usually sells about ten mowers a weekend. Not a bad income for a hobby.

Schnatter also suggest contracting with local commercial lawn mower repair shops during the spring months. "Small gas engine repairmen are scarce, and most shops are backlogged during the spring rush," says Schnatter. "I suggest you get a contract with them to do repairs and have a steady income from the shops."

Schnatter calls his business a hobby. He says anyone who likes to work on small gas engines or willing to learn can turn their knowledge into cash in a flash.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

HOME STUDY COURSES

NRI SCHOOLS, McGraw-Hill Continuing Education Center, dept 10-1, 3939 Wisconsin Ave., Washington, DC 20016. Offers a course on Small Engine Servicing. Send for free catalog.

FOLEY-BELSAW INSTITUTE, Dept 10-1, 6301 Equitable Rd., Kansas City, MO 64120. Course, tools and equipment to start a business in Small Engine Repair. Free booklet.

BOOKS

HOW TO REPAIR BRIGGS & STRATTON ENGINES by Paul Dempsey. Tab Books, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294-0580; \$11.20 ppd.

HOW TO TROUBLESHOOT AND REPAIR ANY SMALL GAS ENGINES by Paul Dempsey. Tab Books, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294-0580; \$13.10 ppd.

SMALL ENGINES: OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR Tab Books, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294-0580; \$17.10 ppd.