

Smoother Drive — Business Plan

Executive Summary

Smoother Drive is building the premier brand for affordable, supervised driver-assist technology. We source high-quality OpenPilot-compatible hardware from Alibaba — including units with built-in navigation (\$700–900/unit) — rebrand them under the Smoother Drive name, flash open-source OpenPilot software, and professionally install them in customers' vehicles. We launch in Austin, TX, bootstrapping out of the founder's garage with guerrilla marketing and PPC advertising.

- **Year 1 Goal:** 200 installs at \$2,000 = **\$400K revenue**
- **Year 3 Goal:** Expand to 50 franchises nationwide via \$25K fees + 6% royalties, targeting **\$5M+ system-wide revenue**
- **Startup Needs:** \$10K seed round
- **Margins:** ~55–65% on hardware installs, plus recurring revenue from optional subscription
- **Market:** Booming ADAS aftermarket — \$500B+ and growing 20% YoY

Market Opportunity

- **US automotive aftermarket:** \$500B+, with ADAS/CVT growing **20% YoY** (SEMA)
- **Competitor pricing gap:** Leading OEM driver-assist subscriptions charge **\$100+/month** with mandatory fees just to use the system. Smoother Drive has **no required monthly fee** — you buy it, you own it.
- **Austin, TX:** Tech hub, 1M+ registered vehicles, heavy traffic congestion — perfect for cheap guerrilla sign marketing
- **No direct franchise competitors** in this space; modeled after car audio/electronics install chains (e.g., Cleveland Soundwave: \$500K Year 1 sales)
- **Consumer sentiment:** Consumer Reports rates OpenPilot above most OEM driver-assist systems

Products & Services

Smoother Drive Device (Rebranded Hardware)

- Alibaba-sourced OpenPilot-compatible units with **built-in navigation**: **\$700–900/unit**
(volume pricing at \$700 when ordering 2+)
- Rebranded under Smoother Drive with custom packaging and branding
- Rigorously tested before customer deployment

Installation Service

- **2–4 hour** professional installation / testing with vehicle-specific harness (sold separately with markup)
- **Price:** \$2,000 installed — or shipped to customer + harness at additional cost
- Harnesses marked up and sold as add-on, specific, per vehicle model

What's Included (No Hidden Fees)

- Smoother Drive device with OpenPilot pre-installed
- Supervised assisted driving: lane centering, adaptive cruise control, navigation
- OTA software updates (free, forever)
- **No required monthly subscription** — unlike competitors charging \$100+/month

Optional Premium Package + \$80/month

- **Wi-Fi connectivity** for the vehicle and system
- **Additional camera module** for enhanced recording
- **Premium support** with priority response
- Recurring revenue stream for the business

Legal Framework

- Ironclad disclaimers: **Driver is 100% responsible at all times — supervised assist only, not autonomous**
- Warranty void acknowledgment signed by customer
- Open-source terms indemnify installers

Operations

Phase 1: Bootstrap (Now)

- **Founder installs all systems personally** out of home garage in Austin, TX
- Lean operations — no rent, no employees, maximum margin
- Build reputation, refine process, collect testimonials

Phase 2: Formalize

- Form LLC
- Hire **certified mechanics** to handle installations
- Secure a dedicated shop space as revenue allows

Phase 3: Scale & Franchise (Year 2+)

- **Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD):** \$20–40K legal setup (Texas exempt notice: \$25)
- **Franchise Fee:** \$25K (covers training, territory rights, operations manual)
- **Total Franchise Investment:** \$50–400K per shop (including buildout and tools)
- **Royalties:** 6% of revenue
- **Ad Fund:** 2% of revenue
- **Scale:** 5 Texas shops in Year 2, nationwide expansion in Year 3

Hardware Sourcing

- Source top-selling Alibaba units with navigation capability
- Also purchase one official comma 3 unit for benchmark testing
- Test multiple Alibaba models side-by-side to select the best for rebranding
- Volume pricing: \$700/unit at 2+ quantity

Risk Mitigation

- Hardware QA via pilot testing program (multiple units from different suppliers)
- Liability insurance
- LLC structure shields personal assets

Marketing & Sales

Guerrilla Marketing

- **3x3 ft roadside signs** on high-traffic corridors: Mopac, I-35, Lamar
- Sign variations:
 - *"Driver Assist for YOUR Car — No Monthly Fee — \$2K Installed -- SmootherDrive.com - 512.555.5555"**
 - *"Hands-Free Driving Bliss — SmootherDrive.com — \$2K Installed — 512.555.5555"**
- Rotate sign locations to avoid code enforcement

Digital Marketing (PPC)

- Google Ads and social media PPC campaigns: **\$500–1,000/mo**
- X (Twitter) and Reddit ads targeting driver-assist enthusiasts
- Social media content: install videos, before/after demos, testimonials

Business Cards & Local Presence

- Professional business cards for networking, car meets, and local events
- Partnerships with local auto shops for referral commissions

Year 1 Target

- **17 installs/month** driven by signs, PPC, and word of mouth

Revenue Streams

Stream	Revenue	Notes
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Device + Installation	\$2,000/install	Core business
Shipped Device + Harness	\$1,200–1,500	For remote/DIY customers
Harness Sales (markup)	\$50–150 each	Per vehicle model
Optional Premium Module	\$80/month/subscriber	Wi-Fi, cameras, premium support
Franchise Fees	\$25K per franchise	Year 2+
Franchise Royalties	6% of franchisee revenue	Recurring

Financial Projections (Conservative)

Startup Costs: \$10,000 (Seed Round)

Item	Cost
LLC Formation	\$300
Liability Insurance	\$500
Roadside Signs (advertising)	\$500
PPC / Digital Ad Budget	\$500
Business Cards & Branding	\$200
Computer + AI Credits (operations)	\$1,000
Founder Operating Budget (focus time)	\$1,500
Prototype Units — 1× comma 3 official (\$500) + top Alibaba units for testing (\$3,000)	\$3,500
Harnesses for test vehicles	\$500
Miscellaneous / Contingency	\$1,500
Total	**\$10,000**

Year 1 Projections (conservative)

- 200 installs × \$2,000 = **\$400K revenue**
- Gross profit per install: ~\$1,100 = **\$220K gross profit**
- Additional revenue from harness markup, shipped units, and subscriptions
- **ROI:** 20–40x on \$10K seed

Franchise Revenue Model (Year 2–3)

Source	Year 2	Year 3
Franchise Fees (5–50 shops)	\$125K–\$1.25M	\$1.25M+
Royalties (6%)	Scales with installs	\$1M+
Premium Module Subscriptions	Recurring	Growing

Franchise Model (Inspired by Tint World / Midas)

- **Fee:** \$25K per franchise (covers training, territory, ops manual)
- **Total Franchise Investment:** \$250–400K (shop, tools, inventory)
- **Support:** Centralized hardware sourcing, marketing co-op, annual conferences
- **Scale:** 5 TX shops Year 2 → nationwide Year 3 (low regulatory barriers outside 14 states)

Team & Funding Ask

- **Founder:** Solo founder — performing all installations personally during bootstrap phase
- **Seeking:** ***\$10,000 seed round for 10% equity** — or \$1,000 for 1% equity (up to 10% maximum this round), preserving room for future funding rounds
- **Use of Funds:** LLC formation, insurance, prototype hardware (1x comma 3 + top Alibaba units), signs, PPC budget, business cards, computer/AI credits, founder operating budget, harnesses
- **Exit Strategy:** Acquisition by auto aftermarket chain (e.g., Driven Brands) or PE rollup
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Smoother Drive — the smoothest supervised driving experience, for the car you already own.





www.johnfgrahamjr.com