Online Scheduling Improves Productivity and Profit

Time management is critical to success in the service industry. Today, more and more spas and salons are using appointment scheduling software to make the most of their time.

How Online Appointment Scheduling Works

Having an online scheduler is like having a virtual receptionist 24/7. Clients can go online anytime, see when you have openings, and book their own appointments right from the web.

You still maintain full control over your schedule by setting your own hours and establishing rules governing when and how appointments can be booked. Some systems even give you the option of reviewing each request on a case-by-case basis, so you have a chance to screen prospective clients and double-check your calendar before confirming.

Since this type of software is web-based, you can access it from anywhere with an Internet connection. Oftentimes, you can even manage your schedule on the go from a mobile phone or tablet.

Save Time

Online scheduling lets you focus on what's most important: serving your clients. You don't have to waste time playing phone tag anymore. Many businesses report saving up to an hour a day because they no longer have to listen to voicemail or return missed calls.

Plus, online scheduling software typically includes automated email reminders (and sometimes text message reminders too). These reminders have proven to cut no-shows by a third. Eliminating that unpaid idle time equates to earning more income.

Grow Your Business

These days, 97% of people looking for local businesses search online. Once they find your website, you want to make it easy for them to take the next step and make an appointment. That's exactly what online scheduling does. With a widget on your website, clients can schedule appointments right then and there - before they click the back button or move on to the next search result.

You can incorporate online scheduling into your social media efforts, too. For example, you can add an appointment scheduler to your Facebook business page so visitors can do more than just 'like' you. And when you have a last-minute opening, you can get the word out quickly through Twitter and link to your scheduling page to fill it.

If you're thinking of running a daily deal with Groupon or Living Social, you'll want to have online scheduling in place beforehand to handle the influx of new clients. Some scheduling programs will let you limit the number of slots available to coupon holders and spread out those

appointments over time. That minimizes the disruption to your business and helps ensure existing clients can still get in to see you.

Keep Clients Coming Back

Appointment scheduling software can help retain clients in other ways too. Most include a client database that is updated every time someone books an appointment. This makes it incredibly easy to keep track of your clients' contact info and appointment history, which is key to building lasting relationships and a loyal clientele.

Some online scheduling software even comes with built-in email marketing capabilities to help you stay in touch with clients. For example, you may be able to send special offers to clients who you haven't seen in a while or e-cards to your regulars on their birthdays. These kind of targeted and timely messages can be highly effective at driving repeat business.

Studies have shown that 70% of consumers want to make appointments online, so offering this convenience in and of itself is a great way to make your clients happy... and keep them coming back again and again.

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