

Recurring Appointments — When Your Whiteboard Isn't Enough

Online scheduling can be the pacifier to your organizational nightmares.

By: Stewart Hill

Owning and/or operating a cleaning service business is challenging in and of itself, but scheduling jobs and employees' shifts to meet the demands of your customers is a huge struggle for many.

Most cleaning companies create their shift schedules manually in spreadsheets such as Excel or on whiteboards.

Not only is this stressful and time-consuming, it also leaves room for human error.

This is where online scheduling comes flying in with a red cape.

There are numerous challenges associated with manual scheduling; online scheduling can be the cure.

Time

Do you have to pencil in time in your week to make an employee schedule?

The fact of the matter is, if you schedule your employees manually, this is probably the case.

Why? Because scheduling your employees manually takes a lot of thought and analysis.

You have to make sure you consider the demand, employee preference, time constraints and many other factors; the human mind can only do so much at once.

Therefore, manual scheduling ends up consuming a lot of your time and takes you away from what matters most: Finding customers and generating revenue.

- Online scheduling takes all the considerations into account for you and automatically creates a schedule following the constraints that you have



By compiling employee schedules and workloads by hand, you are inviting inaccuracies that can easily be avoided.

specified. It takes the guesswork out of it and, therefore, the time.

Essentially, having an online service-based scheduling system gives you back that chunk of time you have been spending doing the scheduling yourself. And, as everyone knows, time is money.

Optimization

To reiterate, manual scheduling leaves room for human error.

Humans are amazing, but we can't do everything.

A manual schedule can have accidental overlaps, employees traveling all the way across town to get from one appointment to another and then going all the way back again, as well as other mistakes.

One of the most difficult scheduling tasks for cleaning companies comes when recurring appointments reschedule one appointment, which shifts their normal cleaning schedule by a week or two.

This can be nearly impossible to handle quickly and easily and makes your employees and their work less efficient, which wastes time and money.

- Online scheduling optimizes your schedule for you; it takes into account travel time, appointment distance, lengths of appointment, employees' skills and more when creating your schedule. The schedule will make your employees more efficient, which will help eliminate issues such as employees showing up late to customer appointments.
- Online scheduling also allows you to immediately see your employees' availability from any web connection. If you get a new client call while at a jobsite, you can schedule them immediately. This makes you professional, efficient and gives you 100 percent accuracy because the schedule you see and work from is always up to date.

Customer Satisfaction

It may not seem like sitting at your desk creating the employee schedule for the week would affect customer satisfaction, but it does.

Most people are inherently lazy and they like their lives to be easy.

Planning time to be away so a cleaning crew can come may be seen as an annoyance.

Forgetting the appointment is bad for the customer and for your business.

If you can't get in to clean, you're not making any money.

Lastly, rescheduling appointments can be a major nightmare for cleaning customers who have frequent recurrences.

- Online scheduling allows customers to book their own appointments online and will even send out reminder e-mails to customers about their appointments. Your customers can even schedule appointments from social media applications like Facebook. Online scheduling makes it easier to communicate with your customers, which, in turn, helps to build better, lasting relationships.

Online scheduling meets the needs of cleaning companies perfectly.

The manual process and difficulty of rescheduling recurring appointments with all the correct staff is eliminated.

The woes of the whiteboard, the planner and the headaches that come with manual scheduling are gone.

Online scheduling allows your company to be efficient and effective with every minute of every day.

By scheduling more appointments into each day, you can increase your revenue, take on additional clients and grow your business without increasing personnel costs.

Online scheduling is a win-win for clean-

ing companies of all sizes. *CM*

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