

Seven scheduling secrets that will make your service profits soar.

An increase of just twenty minutes per day (billable revenue) will drive your profits up by a minimum of \$4,000 per technician per annum. Maximising technician productivity is the fastest way to dramatically increase your service profits.

Although the traditional whiteboard or Excel sheet may work in a scheduling environment, it is definitely inefficient, error prone and cumbersome when things inevitably need to change. Electronic whiteboards and scheduling utilities primarily reduce administrative overhead by saving time eliminating double entry. However far greater savings are made through superior scheduling practices to directly improve the productivity of technicians. Here are seven (7) strategies you can immediately implement to increase your service profitability through superior scheduling practices.

1. **Schedule first daily call directly from technician home.**

In doing so you are slashing the employee cost of the first call every day. Based on an average technician cost of \$40 p.h that's an additional \$100 saving per week, based on 30 minutes average travel time. This also eliminates the water cooler effect, first thing in the morning.

2. **Geographical scheduling throughout the day.**

Most companies try to keep technicians geographically based throughout the day. In doing so, non productive travel time is reduced, as is employee cost, as is vehicle cost. This is easier to accomplish when you have preventative maintenance jobs that can be slotted in around the service and breakdown jobs within a geographical location.

3. **Let service personnel work.**

Avoid interrupting phone calls from the office and directly from customers. These interruptions slow down work and will blow out schedule times. SMS is often convenient for job details while calls are limited to essential only.

4. **Make sure appointment times are kept.**

If appointment times are not going to be met then the customer has to be informed. Several service companies in Melbourne now advertise if they are not on time then the callout or the first hour is free of charge. What a point of difference that makes to prospective customers calling in.

5. **Schedule and bill in time blocks.** Many companies schedule and bill in 10, 15, 30 or even hour long intervals. It may be surprising to many that some Melbourne service organisations consistently record > 110% productivity from their technicians. That is 110% of productive time billed. As highlighted in the opening paragraph. 20 minutes increase p.d = \$4000 increase per year.

6. **Schedule the technician who can complete the call first time.** To successfully achieve this, information documented from the customer call must be accurate and complete. Then schedule the technician with the right skills & parts (in vehicle) to complete the call the first time. This will have the greatest impact on your bottom line from cost savings. Your customer satisfaction levels will also increase.

7. Book in additional service tasks. Your technician is the best salesman for the organisation while on the ground at the customers premises, able to scope and advise on additional services for the customer. If requested by the customer then additional service tasks, must be called in. If the schedule is tight, you can come back, if not then get the job done and move on. The schedule coordinator must be kept up to date.

Make sure you are making the right decisions.

The critical benchmarks and KPI's used to gauge the performance of your service scheduling should include:

- Average time from call logging to call resolution.
- Number of call backs or second calls to resolve customer requests.
- Technician productivity & profitability. Productivity is based on hours worked to hours billed. Profitability is based on employee cost (inc. overhead) x billable revenue.
- Average travel time per job.
- Service Coordinator(s) to technician ratio (1/18 is best practice).
- Number of Contract renewals and repeat customers. By meeting appointment times and contract KPI's through improved scheduling performance customer are less likely to move to the unknown opposition. Increase your repeat business and up goes revenue.
- Growth. Growth can come in many forms, number of calls, average value of calls, number of service contracts, number calls resolved and invoiced per day.

Synergy can provide applications and further consultation on implementing these best practise scheduling processes. Call and ask to speak with our Field Service consultants on 1300 552 455.