



# AN APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY

The Time for Web-Enabled Scheduling Has Arrived

Research conducted by J.D. Power and Associate indicates that BMW customers are particularly sensitive to time-related issues. Focus group discussions have confirmed that our customers often get frustrated over having to wait for an appointment. And when you consider that, industry wide, failure to secure an appointment on the desired day results in at least a 100-point drop on the J.D. Power and Associates CSI index, it's clear that the issue is important in our customer's eyes.

While customers expect the ability to schedule service when it's convenient for them, they also expect the latest technology to be employed at all BMW center touchpoints to enhance their ownership experience, just as it is in BMW vehicles. Today, centers can meet those expectations while also giving customers the freedom to schedule convenient service appointments on their own time. And it's all thanks to an online solution called Web Scheduling.

"As an infant technology that can be molded to fit the needs of individual BMW centers and their customers, Web Scheduling offers BMW the opportunity to take a leadership position," says Matt Russell, BMW Service Retail Operations Manager. "It's all about developing customer loyalty and repeat business by recognizing customer needs and by being able to deliver a premium experience on the customer's terms."

An online process that gives your customers the ability to make appointments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, Web Scheduling is an easy-to-use, browser-based application that schedules the customer's service appointment in real-time. Because Web Scheduling provides comprehensive service schedule management, Service Advisors can spend more of their time assisting customers and selling services more effectively. And that's something any manager can appreciate.

## WEB SCHEDULING IN ACTION

"We had been considering ways to free our advisors up from being on the phone so they can work one-on-one with service customers," says Bill Fyffe, Parts and Service Director at Kelly BMW in Columbus, Ohio. "We looked at a lot of alternatives and came to the conclusion that Web Scheduling was the most customer- and user-friendly program on the market."

Since it first began using Web Scheduling software in 2005, Kelly BMW has already achieved some significant

results with the technology. For example, the center has watched its average monthly service hours climb from 250 hours in 2006 to 400 hours in 2007 to date—which has led to a marked increase in service revenue. While better capacity utilization due to more efficient scheduling can explain some of those gains, Kelly BMW attributes them primarily to increased customer satisfaction and retention.

"Today, 25% to 35% of our service customers make their appointments online each month," says Mr. Fyffe. "That means that somewhere between a quarter and third of our Service Advisors' time—time they would have spent on the phone scheduling appointments—can now be spent answering customers' questions, thoroughly explaining the services needed and how much it will cost, and making sure the right work is being performed on the vehicle. That way, the customer gets better, more convenient service, and a better understanding of the service value."

Mr. Fyffe is quick to point out that increased customer satisfaction often stems from increased employee satisfaction. After all, employees who have the time and feel empowered to do their jobs well not only perform at a higher level, but also communicate confidence to customers. At Kelly BMW, Web Scheduling has actually decreased the stress felt by employees and, in turn, decreased turnover.

"Overall, we're seeing that our service employees are happier," says Mr. Fyffe. "And if your employee is happy when a customer comes in for service, they're going to do a much better job, in all respects, than someone who's just watching the clock."



## BOOK IT

Integrated with your center's DMS, Web Scheduling allows service customers to schedule convenient appointments online, based on your available capacity.

The end result: more satisfied clients and a healthier bottom line.

## PUTTING TECHNOLOGY TO WORK

Among the many advantages it offers, Web Scheduling can be customized to fit into your existing BMW center operations. Service Advisors have the ability to input center-specific Web Scheduling parameters, such as hours of operation, holidays and time intervals between appointments. And because the technology is integrated into your current DMS, it will offer appointment times based on your service capacity.

“It used to be that if you put an appointment in one system and someone else made a phone appointment, there was a lot of overlapping,” says Gordon Rhea, Service Operations Manager at Kelly BMW. “Now the process is practically error free.”

Essentially, real-time capacity management allows Service Managers to control center operations based on available resources, and to make exceptions as needed. What’s more, Web Scheduling offers extensive reporting capabilities that enable managers to monitor, manage and improve service department operations.

“It allows us, as managers, to have a lot more awareness of what’s going on,” says Mr. Rhea. “It’s all about using a single system to give you the control and the flexibility to do a better job.”

Despite its robust functionality, the application is relatively easy to implement. In fact, Web Scheduling consultants will work with your center to integrate the software into your DMS, incorporate the service into center operations and train all users at every level.

“I didn’t grow up with computer technology like a lot of our younger employees did, but the program wasn’t hard for me to get comfortable with,” says Parts and Service Director Bill Fyffe. “The truth is, the little bit of time it takes to learn yields bigger, long-term results.”

For Kelly BMW, those results have been hard to miss: happier customers, happier employees and a healthier bottom line.

## A PRETTY PICTURE

While you may reap some of the benefits of Web Scheduling right away, it’s important to recognize how the technology can impact your center’s success over the long haul. See if you can picture this: You’re giving customers the freedom to make a service appointment at their convenience, while simultaneously managing your service capacity in real-time, which ensures you’re making the most of available space, staff and resources. Because your customers appreciate that you understand the value of their time, they’ll likely return to your center in the future for service. Since your Service Advisors have more time for face-to-face consultations, they have ample opportunity to

## WEB SCHEDULING AT A GLANCE

Online, appointment-scheduling technology isn’t meant to replace your Service Advisors. Instead, it affords them time to give customers more personalized attention and focus on activities that address clients’ needs more quickly and effectively.

- Real-time Online Scheduling**  
 Customers get real-time information and immediate appointment confirmations, similar to how they book airline tickets online. It eliminates the extra work and inconvenience of e-mail exchanges between your customers and staff.
- Live Service Catalog**  
 A live service catalog lets your customers know what services you provide and how much they cost.
- DMS Integration**  
 Appointments are automatically entered into your ADP or R&R Dealer Management System as pre-written Repair Orders.
- Online Promotions and Discounts**  
 A powerful online promotions engine helps you market your services to the right audience at the right time.
- Capacity Management**  
 An intelligent capacity management system knows exactly when your resources can accommodate a given appointment, based on the services requested.
- Internal Scheduling System**  
 Your staff will benefit from a user-friendly system with functionality for booking phone appointments and managing shop schedules.
- Significant Usage Volume**  
 You can expect anywhere from 15%–50% of service appointments to be made with Web Scheduling.

inform customers about other products and services your center provides. And all the while, customers are getting more personalized service, resulting in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Connect the dots and it’s not hard to imagine how a service appointment made by a customer online could lead to the purchase of another vehicle from your center down the road.

“For centers who want to be successful and at the forefront of the industry in the future, Web Scheduling is the only way to go,” says Mr. Fyffe. “I can’t believe that every center in the country wouldn’t want to sign up for a program like this.”



For more information on Web Scheduling options for your center, visit the Aftersales Portal on CenterNet.