How Interview Scheduling Software Simplifies the Hiring Process

by Appointment-Plus Online Scheduling Software
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I. Introduction

Scheduling job applicants for their interviews is a crucial component of the hiring process. Whether done by a company’s in-house human resources department, through an outsourced service or recruiting company, or assigned to hiring coordinators, the task of scheduling and managing interview dates and times—as well as candidate information—can be tedious and time-consuming, especially if these interviews are scheduled over the phone, via e-mail or in-person.

And based on recent survey results from the National Association for Business Economics that projects payrolls will rise an average of 170,000 employees per month in 2012, the need for efficient interview-scheduling methods will become increasingly vital as the economy continues to improve.

These days, there’s a better way to simplify and automate this important task: through interview scheduling software.

II. How HR Professionals, Coordinators and Recruiters Use It

Interview scheduling software improves the hiring process by giving job candidates the ability to schedule their own interview times online at their own convenience and at any hour of the day, not just during normal office hours. When communicating to the job candidate about scheduling his or her interview, a company’s HR department, coordinator or a recruiting agency simply provides the candidate with a “Book Now” button or URL link that, when clicked on, takes the individual to an online scheduler. Once there, the candidate can review instructions, view available interview times and instantly schedule the interview, all without having to pick up the phone, compose an e-mail message or stop by the hiring facility to book his or her interview time.
III. The Benefits of Interview Scheduling Software vs. Traditional Methods

Businesses, organizations and recruiters that implement interview scheduling software can expect to see immediate, positive improvements over their previous scheduling method, as the benefits of this technology greatly outnumber those of traditional interview booking processes. Oftentimes, the burdens of scheduling and managing job applicant interviews are not immediately apparent, as they’re so ingrained and intertwined with the everyday processes conducted by HR personnel and recruiter that they’re just accepted as standard operating procedure. However, a quick analysis of all the resources that are necessary for managing the interview-scheduling process shows just how burdensome and time-consuming it truly is.

These benefits of interview scheduling software include:

- Time savings, as HR personnel and recruiters spend less time on the phone scheduling, canceling and rescheduling candidate interviews. There are also fewer voice messages left by candidates that have to be returned. On average, a reduction of 70 to 80 percent of a recruiter or interview coordinator’s time scheduling interviews can be seen.

- Monetary savings, as staff responsibilities can be shifted to more pressing tasks and no new administrative or support hires are necessary to manage the interview process. For example, a telecommunications company that schedules 500 interviews monthly saves over $3,000 in costs related to the scheduling process.

- Fewer “no-shows” who miss their scheduled interview times.

- Less time spend managing records and compiling reports, as the software eliminates the need to maintain separate spreadsheets, files and folders.

- Dramatic reduction in errors, such as over-bookings, incorrect interview dates and times, and inaccurate candidate information.

- Greater flexibility and convenience for job candidates, as they’re able to book their interviews 24 hours a day.
IV. **What is Interview Scheduling Software?**

Online interview scheduling software differs from more traditional software programs in that it’s accessible and securely housed completely online, making it accessible from any Internet-connected device. It’s not confined to an individual desktop computer or network.

a. **Features**

Among the standard features found in interview scheduling software applications are:

i. Online self-scheduling, whereby job candidates can schedule their own interviews from their home computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets or any other Internet-connected device.

ii. Automated e-mail and text message reminders, which the system sends to candidates at a specified time prior to their scheduled interview, such as one day before. These can reduce the “no-show” rate by over 50 percent.

iii. Advanced record-keeping and reporting capabilities, which allow HR personnel and recruiters to instantly view interview and candidate information from one centralized location, instead of having to search paper appointment books, spreadsheets, files or other documents that previously stored such information.

b. **Advanced Functionality**

Businesses and organizations that routinely schedule a large number of job interviews or have specific scheduling needs can benefit from online interview scheduling software, as the framework behind the technology easily allows for this.

Depending on the service provider selected, this advanced functionality can include:
i. High scalability, which allows the software to accommodate large number of interview appointments and candidates, staff interviewers, and different positions that the company or organization is hiring for.

ii. Web services integration into existing software already in use at the business or organization.

iii. High configurability to accommodate more specific and advanced scheduling needs.

iv. Readily available, 24-hour live customer support from locally-based representatives.

v. Customer graphic user interface (GUI) development.

c. Implementation

Being a cloud-based technology, interview scheduling software does not require any downloads, installations or additional hardware to utilize. Additionally, it typically does not require the involvement of in-house or contracted IT staff (unless special customization or integration is part of the implementation). Once a provider is selected, the company or recruiter usually has the ability to configure the system to its specific needs and adjust settings to match their current processes, such as marking available days and time to schedule interviews, adding staff interviewers and specific positions, and specifying the type and frequency of reminders to job candidates.

V. What to Look for In a Provider

Numerous interview scheduling applications are available, so it’s important to consider several factors when choosing a service provider.

These include:
i. Features and functionality. Not all applications offer the same features and functionality. HR representatives and recruiters should determine what they currently need or may have a need for in the future and compare it with the features and functionality of the system being considered.

ii. Professional services. Some businesses and organizations may need services beyond the standard functionality of the system. Inquire on what the provider currently offers and its limitations for customization and advanced services.

iii. Security. Reputable providers incorporate the latest security measures and practices, such as secure server databases, data storage and back-up procedures, as well as processes related to failover and federal regulations, if applicable.

iv. Cost. Although free software applications exist, most lack the features and functionality to effectively manage the interview-scheduling process. Dependable and robust systems typically charge a nominal monthly fee that’s well within the budgets of most businesses and organizations.

v. Customer support. This can vary from a FAQ page to live, 24-hour customer phone support. Given the importance of interview-scheduling in the hiring process, this is an important consideration when selecting a provider.

vi. Dependability. Longevity is usually a good tell-tale sign of a dependable service provider. Find out how long the service provider has been in business and the types of clients it services.

VI. Conclusion

Any organization or business that routinely schedules interviews for its job applicants can benefit from interview scheduling software. It’s an affordable, easy-to-use alternative to the cumbersome process of manually scheduling interviews over the phone, e-mail or in-person. By giving candidates the ability to book their interview dates and times on their own, HR departments, coordinators and recruiters can focus more of their time and energy on more pressing responsibilities, thereby making the entire hiring process more efficient and effective.