

Advantages of

# APPOINTMENT CONFIRMATIONS

— AND —

# REMINDERS

for Veterinary Practices



# Importance of Streamlining Appointment Scheduling

In regard to appointment scheduling, veterinary practices are no different from any other type of operation. The more appointments you schedule, the higher your revenue. On top of that, the closer the appointments are to each other, the easier it is for your practice to achieve optimal efficiency.

Appointment scheduling must be integrated and streamlined into a veterinary clinic's overall operational processes. When it is, pet parents gain the benefit of not having to wait on the phone to schedule an appointment, which increases client satisfaction and allows your office personnel to focus on other core tasks.

Some veterinary practices are walk-in clinics, but most are not. Some allow for appointments to be rescheduled within a certain timeframe while others will charge you for that luxury. Since no two practices are exactly the same, it is of the utmost value to invest in an intuitive online scheduling platform that can be customized to meet your practice's exact needs.

With Next In Line's automated online scheduling platform, you can streamline your practice's scheduling process according to your own preferences. Want to offer appointment rescheduling options? With Next In Line, you can. Want to send out an appointment reminder message? Next In Line allows you to do this. You can even send out multiple appointment reminder messages if you prefer.

To optimize the streamlining of scheduling appointments into your existing operations, Next In Line takes customization to the next level.

When appointment scheduling is effectively integrated into your practice's operations, your revenue can be maximized, the patient experience is improved, and your staff is freed of the burden that often comes along with having to handle a heavy load of appointment scheduling tasks.



**The ultimate benefit gained from Next In Line is the ability to focus more on the most important part of your veterinary's practice -- your clients and their furry friends.**

## **Features of Next In Line**

Next In Line offers multiple features that can be used to enhance the appointment scheduling process. Even though the platform is meant to exist as an online scheduling tool for your customers to utilize, it should be noted that entries can be manually changed by your staff on an as-needed basis. It is also possible for your staff to go in and change various features of the platform to ensure it is best meeting the exact needs of your vet practice.

### **Customized Online Scheduling**

Your practice has unique needs that you won't find in any other veterinary clinic. Because of these needs, your scheduling practices are likely somewhat different than the practices of other practices. This is why you need an tailored scheduling platform.

Next In Line learns the ins and outs of your practice and how you schedule appointments. As it does, it gets a better understanding of how you want your schedule to look, the various pieces of information you need from customers to schedule appointments, and how your staff is involved in the appointment scheduling phase.

When using Next In Line, one of the first things you will notice is that it seamlessly integrates with your existing practice management system; this in itself can maximize revenue and improve the flow of your entire practice's operations. Patients will enjoy better experiences, lost revenue can be recovered, and from a search engine

optimization (SEO) standpoint, you will even be able to improve your search engine rankings.

## **Virtual Waitlist**

Patients want service and they want it fast. Your staff becomes frustrated when clients cancel appointments and other customers could have easily booked that vacated spot had they been properly informed. To compensate for no-shows and canceled appointments, your practice needs a better waitlist. With Next In Line, you get to build a virtual waitlist that can improve your practice's bottom line, and get pets in as soon as possible.

Next In Line provides a virtual waitlist feature that enables patients to easily sign up for instant notifications regarding last-minute cancellations and openings. If another person does not show up for their scheduled appointment or cancels right before they are supposed to arrive, those on the virtual waitlist will be notified of the immediate opening. If someone on the waitlist is able to fill the vacant appointment slot, all they have to do is respond to the notification.

Did you know with Next In Line, you can fill an open slot in less than 15 seconds? That's right, and when you do, this increases your revenue and provides both your staff and customers with better experiences.

## **Appointment Confirmations and Reminders**

It's easy to forget an appointment. There's a good chance you've forgotten one or two in your lifetime and your clients are no different. With the hustle and bustle of life going on around us, it becomes incredibly simple to forget about a scheduled trip to the local vet's office.

With appointment confirmations and reminders from Next In Line, sending out reminders can become a streamlined and automatic part of your operations. This will reduce your no-show rate as well as help minimize cancellation rates.

The appointment confirmations and reminders feature on Next In Line enables you to customize reminder messages according to appointment type and can be sent out to pet parents according to intervals that you most prefer. You can send out reminders 12 hours before appointment time all the way up to several days in advance. It's all up to you.

With Next In Line appointment confirmations and reminders, you can decrease your no-show rate by up to 34%.

## **Online Check-In**

When the check-in process is not streamlined for a vet's office, especially for those offering walk-in and emergency services, the patient wait time can become extremely long. More so, patient flow becomes hindered and the entire operation is put into a frenzy.

If you offer walk-in and emergency services, there's a good chance you don't concern yourself with no-shows and cancellations. In fact, on any given day, you probably have enough people show up as a walk-in that you are able to keep your vacated spots more than full. Still yet, you need to ensure the check-in process is streamlined with your overall operations.

With Next In Line's online check-in feature, customers can easily see for themselves where they are in the wait line. This feature enhances the waiting experience for both customers and staff members and allows patient flow to stay at an optimal level.

Did you know that the perception of a customer's wait time actually matters more than the actual wait time? In fact, a study was recently conducted that discovered 80% of customers admitted as long as they were told upfront how long they were going to have to wait, this made the overall wait experience much more pleasant. Even if a customer had to wait 50 minutes, it was much easier and less frustrating of a wait as long as they

had been told beforehand how long they were going to have to wait. This same 80% of customers also stated their wait time and their being informed of how long they were going to have to wait was much more important than being offered Wi-Fi or TV in the waiting room.

## **Benefits of Next In Line for Veterinarian Offices**

An intuitive online scheduling platform should serve as an extension to your existing staff. It should bring forth a plethora of benefits, including those relating to virtual waitlists, check-in services, flexible appointment scheduling, and more. With the right platform, your practice can focus more on what's truly important -- providing first-class care to your customers and their furry friends.

Veterinary offices are capable of bringing in high revenue, but only when they operate according to a methodology that streamlines their operations and provides a good customer experience. With Next In Line, you literally get to focus your attention on the next person in line. You get to send out reminders to all of those who have upcoming appointments as well as fill in vacated spots of no-shows and last-minute cancellations.

Ultimately, Next In Line helps you recover lost revenue. Think about it. On any given day, it's not uncommon to have at least two no-shows. By the time revenue is accounted for regarding what you could have made off of these customers, you're looking at a loss of nearly \$500 for both no-shows. With Next In Line, you can fill these cancellations in as little as 15 seconds, easily allowing you to recover the lost revenue. If you do this even only three times a week, that's \$1,500 in lost revenue recovered each week. That's \$78,000 a year in recovered revenue.

Next In Line also enables you to increase practice efficiency. If your front office staff is spending more than two minutes on the phone with any given customer when scheduling an appointment, this is too much time. Yes, staff members need to collect information relating to the customer's demographic information, their appointment time preferences, and their furry friends' symptoms, but four to six minutes per customer is

not a proper or profitable way to allocate front office resources. With Next In Line, the appointment scheduling process in its entirety can be reduced to 30 seconds.

It is also with this intuitive online scheduling platform that you can give your customers 24/7 access to your front desk. And when it comes to pleasing today's customer, convenience is the most highly-valued aspect from a customer standpoint. They want to be able to set appointments according to their own needs, according to their own schedules, and according to a method that decreases or eliminates the amount of time they have to spend on the phone with the front office staff.

Next In Line opens up your front office and turns it into a virtual office that is accessible 24/7. You optimize convenience for your customers, allowing them to schedule appointments at a time that works best for them. Whether it be noon or three in the morning, customers can hop online, book their appointment and go right back to whatever it is they are doing.

It cannot be stressed enough just how important the customer experience is in today's age and time. If you fail to deliver a good customer experience, you likely cut yourself off from ever being able to serve that customer again. Even worse is that customers are apt to take their bad experiences and share them with friends and family on social media. This is why delivering the best experience possible is of the utmost importance. Next In Line helps you mold an experience that is fueled by convenience and seamless integration.

## **Next In Line FAQ and Answers**

If you're wondering how Next In Line can help propel your veterinary office toward success, you first need to have a clear understanding of the platform and how it integrates with your practices.

### **What Is Next In Line?**

Next In Line is a scheduling platform that intuitively gets to know your veterinary office and helps you streamline the appointment scheduling process. There are several value-added features that enhance the overall use of the platform, including appointment confirmations and reminders.

### **What Types of Businesses can Next In Line Help?**

Any business that conducts its operations based on appointments or reservations can benefit from Next In Line. The platform is also advantageous to those entities that use waitlists as part of their operations.

### **How Does It Work?**

Next In Line helps you get appointment information to your customers in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The platform allows customers to book their own appointments, change their own appointments, and even sign up for waitlist notifications.



# Understanding Forward Booking and How Next In Line can Help

In addition to using Next In Line, we highly recommend that you take advantage of the forward booking scheduling methodology. This can help expand your revenue possibilities as well as help ensure all features of the Next In Line platform are being taken advantage of. For now, let's take a closer look at forward booking and how it can be optimized with Next In Line.

Forward booking is a concept that veterinarians should put into action within their practices and it involves the encouragement of customers to book their pet's next appointment before they leave the office during their current visit. In doing so, it helps streamline the appointment scheduling process and it helps ensure pets are getting the care they need. Whether a customer is bringing in a pet for a preventative health exam or for regular medical services, forward booking expedites the scheduling process and can lead to higher revenue.

There are advantages to be gained by everyone with forward booking, including customers enhanced ability to bring their pets in on time due to the fact that the appointment is already on their calendar. Because forward booking sometimes leads to appointments being scheduled well in advance (sometimes months ahead of time), it is not uncommon for customers to forget about these appointments. But with Next In Line and its intuitive reminder feature, your office can take comfort in knowing all customers will receive a reminder according to intervals you prefer that remind them of the upcoming appointment.

Forward booking doesn't give the customer the choice to book their appointment at a later time. Instead, it ensures an appointment is booked before the customer leaves the office. With Next In Line, though, you can offer customers the choice to cancel or change their appointment according to their own convenience. It's like the best of both of worlds combined into one.

A research study was conducted by the Partners for Healthy Pets, and it was discovered that numerous pet owners actually have good intentions regarding scheduling appointments for their pets to get regular checkups. Because of the hustle and bustle of life, though, this priority often gets pushed to the side. With forward booking, there is no reason to stress about booking an appointment because it is

already done. And when using Next In Line, if an appointment needs to get changed, there is no need to spend time contacting one of your staff members. Instead, customers can simply go online and change their appointments.

In 2013, a [report published by the AAHA State of the Industry](#) stated that organizations who increased their forward booking efforts from five to 10 percent would be able to generate close to \$40,000 a year in additional revenue; this totals out to be about a three percent increase in your overall revenue growth. For the industry as a whole, this leads to an increase of about \$350 million dollars for services related to preventative care.

Knowing how to integrate forward booking into your existing operations is pertinent to optimizing the use of Next In Line as well as achieving a higher return on investment. Ideally, the last person to come into contact with the customer will be the person responsible for initiating the forward booking process. This will either be the veterinary assistant, the vet, or the office receptionist.

It depends on your operational processes as to who the person is that will come into contact with the customer last. No matter who it is, though, an appointment should be scheduled and it should be clearly conveyed to the customer that if they would like to make any changes to their appointment, they can go online and use the office's Next In Line online scheduling platform to make the change.

If customers don't know your office is using Next In Line, how are they supposed to know they can take advantage of it? You have to let them know it is available and that it can make the appointment scheduling process more convenient for them. Once they hear the word convenient, they will be all up for checking it out and using it.

## Using Next In Line to Implement Cluster Scheduling

In addition to using forward booking, you should try your best to take advantage of cluster scheduling. Cluster scheduling has the ability to result in 20 to 30 percent more appointments on any given day and this leads to improved revenue.

With cluster scheduling, you do your best to keep all appointments as close to another as possible. And With Next In Line, you can easily create your clusters using in-the-office forward booking while still allowing customers to change their appointments on an as-needed basis. In the event a customer does change their booking, your ease-of-access to Next In Line enables you to see which appointment changes can be used as the base for a new cluster.

According to Heather Romano, an expert in comprehensive marketing for veterinary offices, "Cluster Scheduling can provide a streamlined way to maximize your schedule and create clarity within your team while improving client experience and loyalty. That leads to more clients who stick with you as their veterinary healthcare provider for many years to come."

## Choose Next In Line Today

You can try all you want to find a one-size-fits-all solution to your appointment scheduling issues, but the truth is, you won't ever find one. With Next In Line, though, you get a solution that can easily be customized to fit your exact needs. You get an intuitive platform that molds itself to your operational practices. More importantly, you get a platform that enhances the overall customer experience. And as stated before, in today's marketing and economic era, the customer experience is the most valuable asset you can own. You can have the best veterinarian in the world working at your office, but if you can't deliver pleasant customer experiences, you are going to lose your customers to the competition.

It's not every day that you get the chance to impress a first customer. In fact, this only comes around once per new client. This is why you need to implement practices that show your customers from the very beginning they are the most important part of the practice. With Next In Line, you can easily showcase this belief to your customers, and don't forget, when you integrate the platform with forward booking and cluster scheduling, you are going to optimize profit potentials to the max.

[Request a Next In Line demo](#) today and see how we can revolutionize your appointment scheduling process.