

# Online Booking

## Best Practices Guide



 Housecall Pro

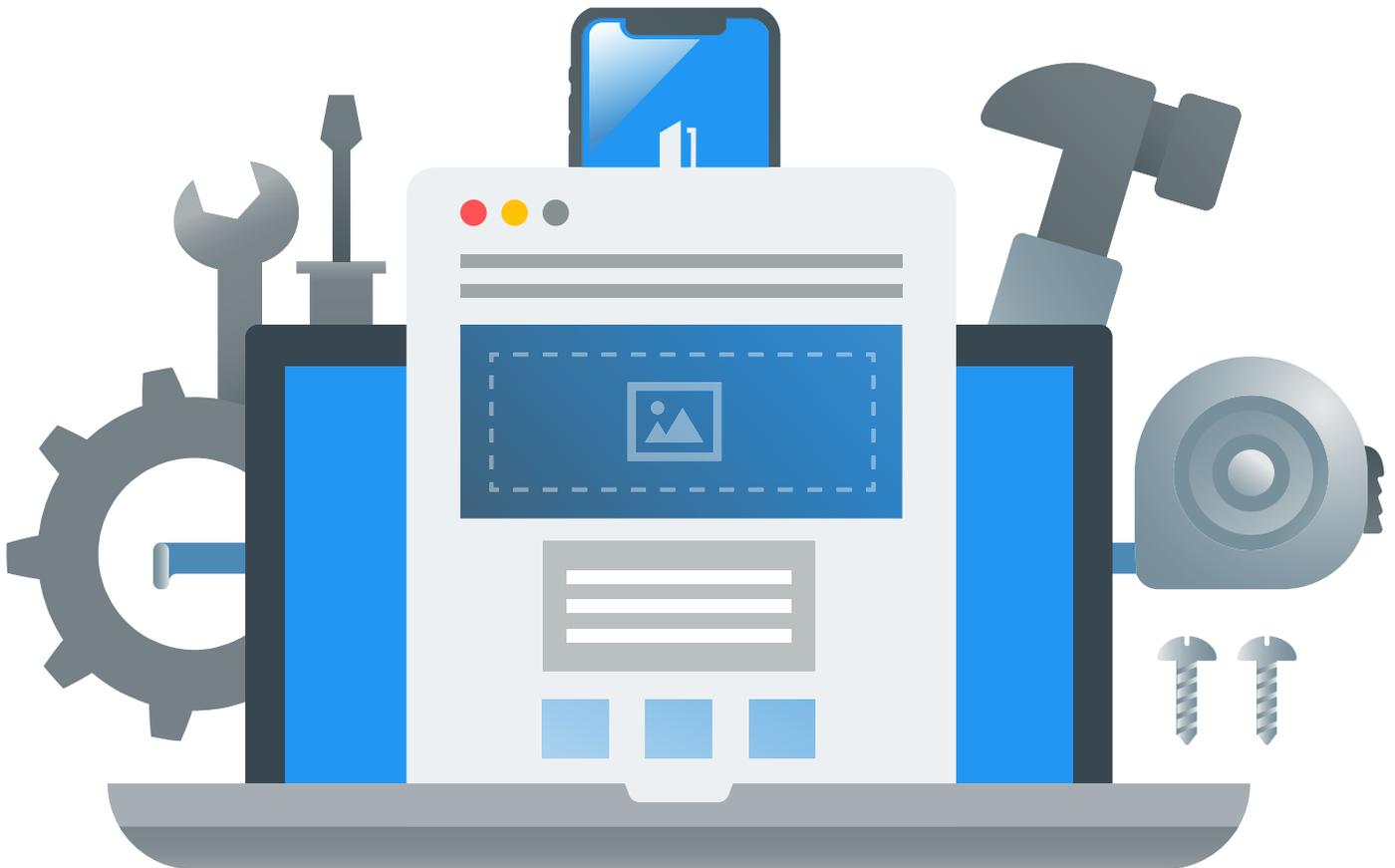
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# Why Online Booking?

Have you ever called a potential customer back after missing their call, only to find out that they went with a competitor because you weren't available?

Offering your customers the option to book through your website (like [Housecall Pro's Online Booking feature](#)) allows you to always be available—even while you sleep—and lets customers book your services any time, from anywhere, with the simple click of a button!

• **35%**

Customers prefer to schedule appointments after business hours

• **25%**

Customers under the age of 35 will only book appointments online

• **30%**

Customers prefer online scheduling over booking through a phone call

Online booking lets customers book appointments from their desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone, and across online platforms including your website, Facebook, Yelp and Instagram.

Growing your business depends on staying connected with your customers. Read more below on how online booking will help you grow your business..

**Tip:** For more details about the power of Housecall Pro's Online Booking, [check out this quick video](#).

# The Benefits of Online Booking

## Direct Your Customers

It is important to let your current and potential customers know that your business can be booked online. Make sure you cover all touchpoints:

- **Your Website:** You want to make online booking as seamless for your customers as possible. By placing an online booking option on the homepage of your website, customers will be able to view your availability, options for services, and book an appointment with ease.
- **Text:** If you don't communicate with your customers that you offer online booking, how will they ever know? You have numerous opportunities to communicate with your customers through texts, emails, and even your voicemail. If you change each of these to mention that you offer online booking, it increases the likelihood of them using this tool to book with you— so you can spend less time on the phones. For example, with your voicemail and text messages, you create a response text and include a short URL (bitly.com).

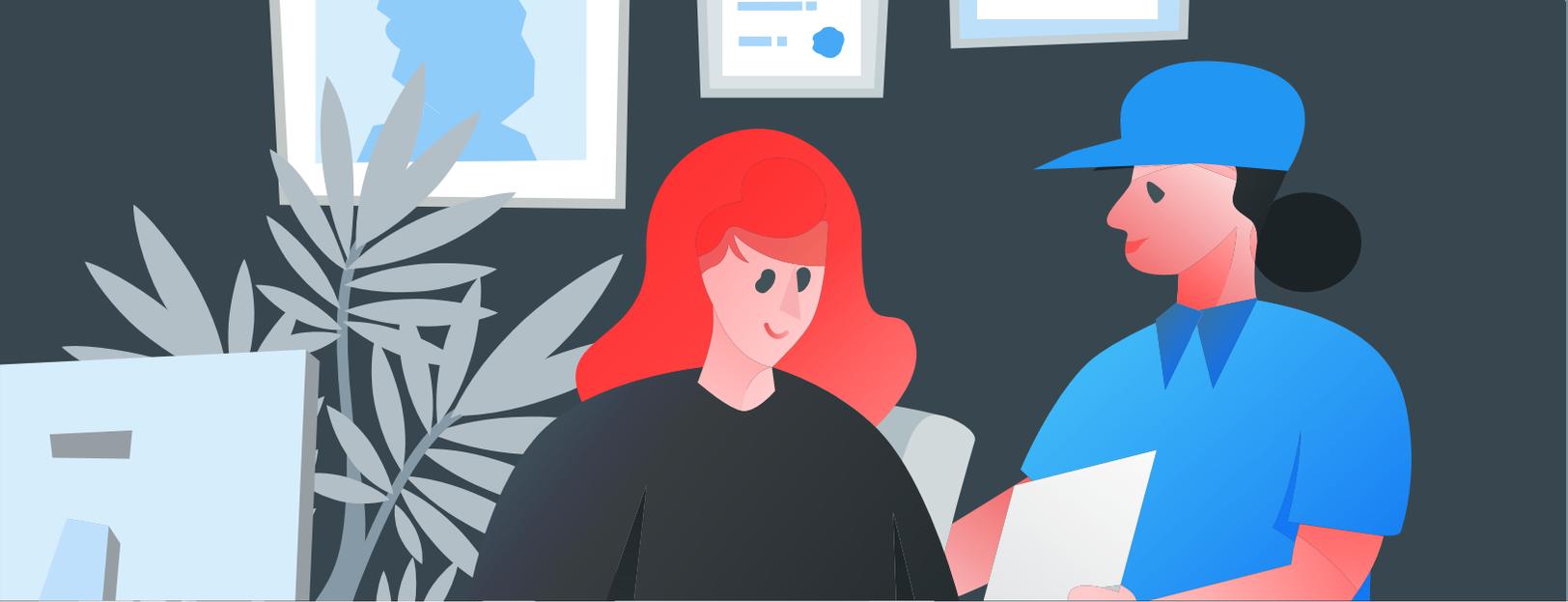
- **Email Signature Message:** Create a brief message at the end of your email signature, letting customers know that they can set up an appointment via online booking. Insert a short URL (bitly.com) at the end of your message, to direct them to your online booking calendar.

It could look something like this, "Thank you again for choosing us, if you are looking to schedule another appointment in the future, please head over to [housecallpro.com](http://housecallpro.com) to book online!".

- **Voicemail:** Even though you're not available, let callers know that they can visit your website and book an appointment.



*Hey, it's Jonny with [insert company name], sorry I can't come to the phone right now. I am currently out in the field or on the line with a customer. If you are looking to schedule an appointment, head over to [insert your website] and you can book your appointment online. If you are calling with a different query, please leave your name, number and a brief message, we will get back to you shortly. Thank you!*



### **Be Sure To Over-Communicate**

One of the great things about online booking is all the customer information is automatically captured for further use. Without lifting a pen, you'll have access to their phone, email and home address. This makes communication so much easier throughout the entire job from booking to invoicing to getting paid to follow-up marketing.

We recommend calling back your new customers to confirm every booking. If the appointment doesn't suit you, let your customers know. They are already sold and clearly want your services so, in most cases, they'll be happy changing the appointment. Communication and transparency will always lead to more loyal customers.

- **Tip: Say you'll be in their area a day later and because of that they are lucky and qualify for an additional 10% Eco-friendly discount.**

### **Availability**

Think of online booking as lead generation and the scheduled date as the suggested job time. If you don't offer a wide range of availability, you risk losing the opportunity to acquire a customer in the short-term.

- **Tip: Set your calendar to either same day or next day so you don't miss out on any bookings.**
- **Example:** Suppose it's Monday and you've set your soonest availability to one week out—even if you have openings on Tuesday. In the best case scenario, your customers will choose a slot the following week. In the worst case scenario, your customers will book with a competitor instead. To avoid losing customers, set your availability to same-day/next day. Remember, it's a smart calendar, so as long as you have all of your jobs listed, technicians will be dispatched on time, and customers can see your real-time availability!

Still not sure? [Watch this brief video to see Online Booking in action!](#)

# Taking Care of the Details: Online Booking Best Practices

## The Four P's

The Four P's are something that are mentioned quite a lot here at Housecall Pro and it is something that you, the professional, must do to achieve exceptional standards when it comes to online booking. The Four P's are: **Pricing** (where possible), **Pictures**, **Personable** (through your pictures) and **Promotion!**

### Pricing

Some Pros are skeptical about showing their prices online because they think they'll be price shopped or undercut. This happens, but not as often as you'd think. Reputable businesses don't want to devalue their brand and the quality of service they provide. (If you saw your competition was charging \$100 for a job you charge \$150 for, would you match or beat their price? Probably not.) By showing your prices to the public, you are simply setting expectations. Show your prices, set your standard and blow your competition out of the water with the exceptional service that you provide!

### Pictures

When setting up your online booking, make sure you include pictures to give a visual representation of the job being carried out. By adding pictures, your customers will have a better idea of what they're booking and it gives them the confidence to schedule an appointment with you through the online booking tool.

### Personable

You'll also want to make sure that you use pictures that are personable. What does this mean? Pictures of you or your employees carrying out the work, or a team picture where the customer can see you, your team and your trucks. These types of photos are extremely powerful. It shows the customer who you are, communicates your values and removes any anxiety about who they are booking online. Plus, it establishes a rapport with your customer without ever having to have a conversation with them.

### Promotion

If you do not communicate with your customers that you offer online booking, how will they ever know that it is available to them? This can be done in numerous ways including Facebook and Google Ads, changing your voicemail, auto-text after a missed call, or postcard and email blasts. Get creative with it— offer online booking on your truck wrap!

## The Power of Descriptions

One of the best practices when setting up online booking is utilizing the power of descriptions. This enables you to create a clear and concise outline of the services and prices offered. If a job varies in pricing based on the task, creating descriptions lets customers know upfront. Make sure you set your expectations by using your descriptions and you'll avoid some of those unpleasant conversations. Below are several service examples:

- **Plumbing Example:** A preventative plan would include: Inspection and clearing of all visible drains. Inspection of all visible plumbing lines for leaks or breaks. Inspection and testing of hot water heaters, toilet tanks, showerheads, and testing of shut-off valves.



### SILVER SERVICE PLAN

2 visits per year. Priority scheduling. Inspection and clearing of all visible drains. Inspection of all visible plumbing lines for leaks or breaks. Inspection and testing of hot water heater. Inspection of any issues customer wants addressed.

### GOLD SERVICE PLAN

2 visits per year. Priority scheduling and no after hours fees. Silver plan services plus inspection of all toilet tanks and showerheads, inspection and testing of shut-off valves, and 10% off all repairs.

### DIAMOND SERVICE PLAN

2 visits per year. Priority scheduling, no after hours fees, and no dispatch fees. Gold service plan plus flushing of water heater, inspection of all fixtures for leaks and corrosion, and 20% off on all repairs.



- **Carpet Cleaning Example:** One room, deep cleaning of carpeted areas. No hidden fees. Price includes vacuuming (as needed), light spot-removal, pre-treat, and deodorizer/sanitizer. Additional charge for gum or red stain removal and pet stain treatment, please select as “Add-On” below. It does not include stairs or hallways.

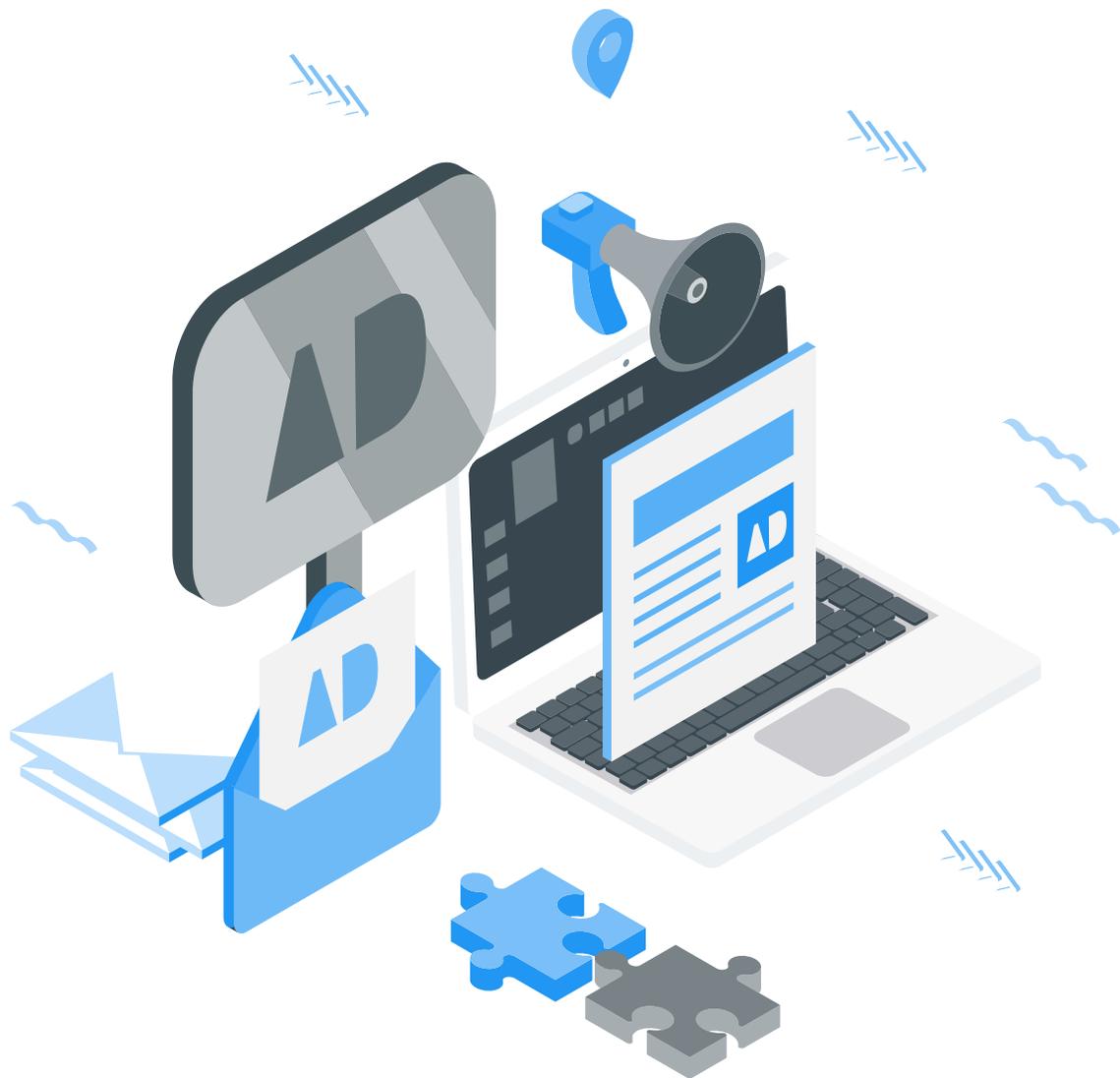
The price assumes that each room is approximately 200 square feet. Once we’ve been able to survey the rooms, we will be sure to let you know if any additional fees apply before cleaning begins.

- **Electrical Example:** For annual visits/safety check-ups, basic service plan will include annual or bi-annual visits to check fuse boxes, main panels, and sub-panels. For generator maintenance, bi-annual power supply inspection of residential and commercial so you will have backup power when it really matters. For holiday light hanging, let us climb up to install and remove all your holiday decorations.
- **Pest Control Example:** Basic Service Plan (¼ acre). 4 visits per year. Spray yard for common invaders. Every additional ½ acre costs \$X more. Integrated Service Plan (¼ acre). 4 visits per year. Integrated strategies for a broader array of invaders, including both insects and rodents. Every additional ½ acre costs \$X more.
- **HVAC Example:** A furnace tune-up keeps your heating system in good working order. We know how inconvenient it is when your furnace breaks down on one of the coldest days of winter! Avoid the problem by keeping your equipment in top condition to maximize performance with our 21+ point tune-up.

## Follow-Ups

Even if a customer didn't book your services online, you should communicate or direct them towards it for future jobs. This will reduce the volume of calls coming to your business while maintaining or increasing the number of jobs on your schedule. How can you promote online booking through follow-ups? Easy. This again ties back in with directing them to it, whether it is a phone conversation, text messages, emails or marketing campaigns— just mention that you offer online booking in each of these potential follow-ups and you will see more traffic to your online booking.

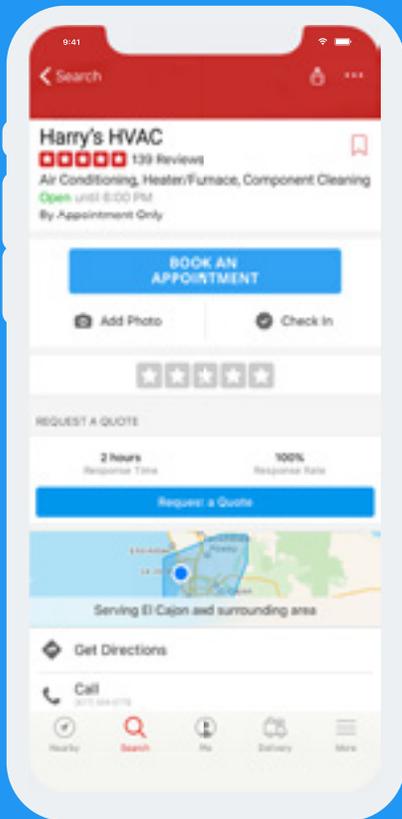
[Click here to learn how Online Booking has improved the business flows for our pros.](#)



# From Zero to Hero: Putting it All Together

Throughout this guide, you've learned the ins and outs of Online Booking. We've covered what it is, the benefits, how to use it, and best practices. Now it is time to put it all together! If you would like to find out more about Online Booking or are ready to get started, [schedule a free demo of Housecall Pro](#).

## BEFORE THE JOB



### Online Booking

Potential customers search Yelp and other review websites for home services professionals that have good reviews and online booking capabilities.

### History

You receive a notification and call to confirm the appointment and discuss additional services.

### Confirmation Text/Email

After the job has been confirmed, the customer receives a text and email reminder of the date and time for the job.

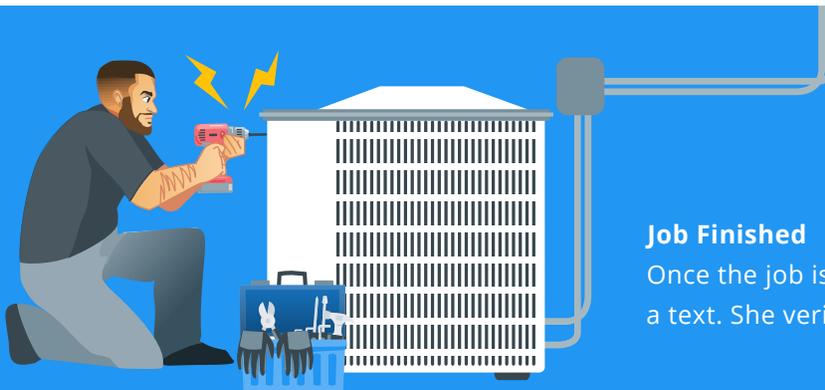
### OMW (On My Way)

On the day of the job, they receive a text notifying that you are en route.

### SMS Chat

The customer can send messages through the app, such as a gate code, where to park or any other info not yet discussed.

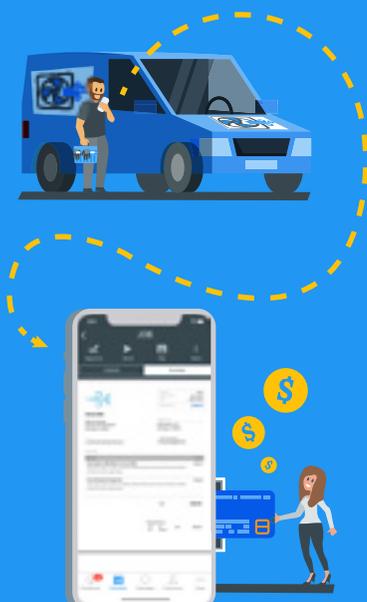
## DURING THE JOB



### Job Finished

Once the job is finished, the customer receives a text. She verifies this by signing off digitally.

## AFTER THE JOB



### Auto Invoice

You immediately send a custom branded invoice to their email inbox.

### Payment

Directly from the invoice, she clicks to pay and enters her payment info, completing the process.

### Follow-up Marketing

Several days later, the customer receives a "thank you" email and request for a review. Now, others can read about your great work and service.