Local Scheduling Platforms: An Anchor for Commerce

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Executive Summary

Online and mobile appointment scheduling is being integrated as an anchor for a wide range of SMB closed loop marketing and back office activities. Many scheduling solutions, for instance, are incorporating cloud-based email, point of sale processing and billing. Scheduling is also effectively applied for deals and offers.

Part of scheduling’s potential lies in the fact that it provides businesses with so much intelligence. Businesses that utilize and track scheduled appointments will know roughly what consumers are interested in, how much they will spend, when they have appointments and where they will be.

Scheduling’s development is also driven by the widespread use of mobile tablet and smartphone apps. These are frequently accessed throughout the day; are geo-based; and may provide reminders, smart actions, push notifications and profiles. The trend toward mobile scheduling will become even more pronounced if wearables like the Apple Watch catch on, given their heavy orientation toward notifications.

Which types of scheduling platforms, and which specific companies will ultimately win in the marketplace, is less clear. More than 75 scheduling programs currently compete for a potential marketplace of 2.6 million SMBs. These include vertically integrated SMB marketing players that provide a wide range of services, such as Intuit and Square; horizontal SaaS scheduling providers, such as Booker and Agendize; and vertical subject specialists, such as MindBody.

Just 16.6 percent of SMBs currently use an online scheduling program, according to BIA/Kelsey’s Local Commerce Monitor Survey (Wave 18). No scheduling program has taken more than a 5 percent share. Consequently, scheduling remains a greenfield opportunity.

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About BIA/Kelsey

BIA/Kelsey is a market research and analyst firm that focuses on all things local. Local media is an increasingly dynamic area of ad spending and is quickly evolving with emerging digital platforms like mobile, social and search.

Over the past three decades, BIA/Kelsey has been an authority on these developing technologies as well as their forbearers in traditional media, which continue to transform as they likewise compete for local ad dollars and consumer affinity.

Through a suite of products that include research reports, articles, conferences and client consulting, BIA/Kelsey analyzes the financial, social and technology trends affecting local media.

Readers, event attendees and clients are given the inside track on data, analysis and tactics needed to grow and transform in a rapidly evolving media and advertising landscape.

About the Author

Peter Krasilovsky, VP and Chief Analyst, BIA/Kelsey

Peter Krasilovsky is well-known for his insights into the shifts of media and commerce and has been deeply involved in extending major media and commerce brands into new digital revenue streams and digital services.

With more than 26 years of experience, Krasilovsky has been highly visible in his work, which has ranged from new cable TV and telephone services to e-commerce and promotions. As a strategist, Krasilovsky has consulted with such companies and organizations as AT&T, AOL, the National Football League, NBC, Discovery Communications, Hearst and Meredith Publishing.

Krasilovsky is widely quoted on digital media and commerce trends, and has been writing the Local Onliner blog since 2006. Previously, he was a columnist and editor of several telecommunications and digital media newsletters.
In 1986 Krasilovsky began his career as director of research at the Cable Television Information Center. From 1990 to 1998, he was vice president for Arlen Communications. In 1998 Krasilovsky joined The Kelsey Group, a predecessor of BIA/Kelsey, to launch the Local Online Commerce program.

Krasilovsky has an M.A. in communications management from the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California. His B.A. is in liberal arts from Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York.