



The Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Booking Systems



For many companies that take bookings, there is an unspoken rule - **if it's working well enough, don't fix it.**

Unfortunately, that means that many of these companies choose not to stray from old fashioned telephone-based systems and scheduling tools, which typically require members of staff on hand to coordinate and organise bookings manually in real-time.

Needless to say, there is a better way of doing things. We speak, of course, about bringing everything online; booking appointments, accepting payments and implementing online bookings. Online booking systems such as BookingLive work by providing a secure and customisable booking platform where your customers can see event availability, book and pay directly via credit card all without ever leaving your website.

In the digital age (it's 2022, after all!) if you don't have an online booking system, you are potentially losing out on bookings and sales to your competitors, as well as wasting the time of certain staff members who could be better utilised elsewhere.

Still need convincing? Check out this guide on the advantages and disadvantages of an online booking system.

Overview:

Advantages of an online booking system

2. It saves you time
3. No need for customers to pick up the phone
4. Integrate your web sales
5. It's a modern approach to booking
6. Gives an opportunity to upsell & increase revenue

Disadvantages of an online booking system

7. It can come at a cost
8. It requires internet access

BookingLive

10. About BookingLive



Advantages of an online booking system

“Our admin time has been infinitely reduced. The BookingLive system has taken about 6 months of work off an employee’s hands a year”






- Oxford Sail Training Trust

1. It saves you time

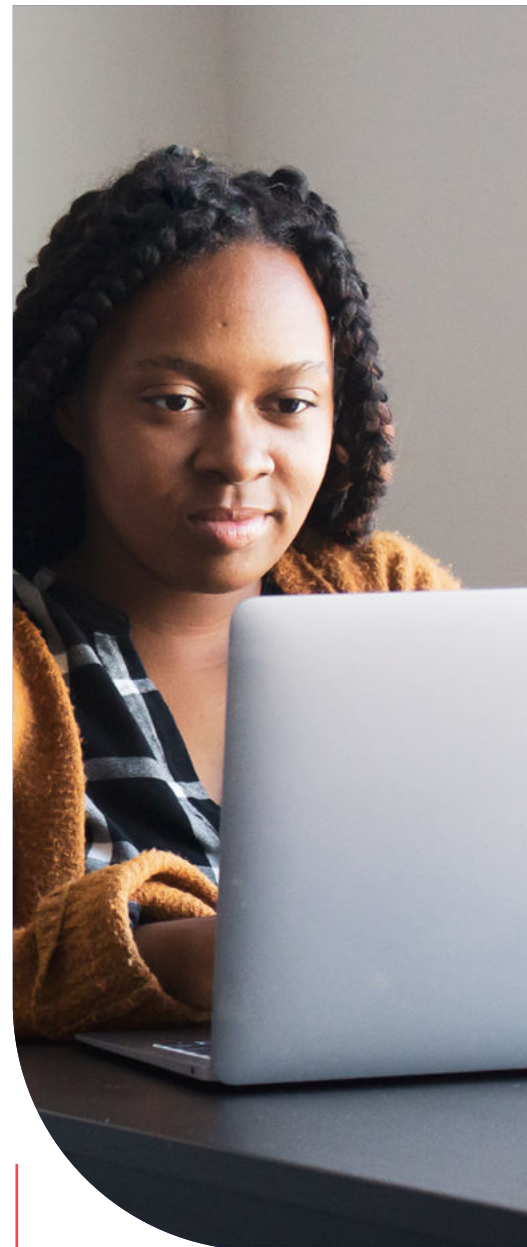
When you think about the workflow of your customer service staff, you’ll probably see that a lot of time is taken up handling phone calls from people looking to book, explaining options to customers and managing schedules.

The demands of a phone-based booking system require a member of your staff to be constantly available to handle bookings. You might not consider this a problem with customer service staff on hand, but consider the man-hours which could potentially be released by moving to an online booking platform.

BookingLive allows you to **make more time for the things that matter**. With an online booking system, you and your staff have more time to...

-  **Evolve your processes**
-  **Get on top of that backlog of work**
-  **Build stronger customer relationships**
-  **Increase morale by allowing staff to focus on passion projects**
-  **Take more breaks! Rested employees are productive employees**

“BookingLive has saved us somewhere in the region of 6-10 hours of admin time a week, simply by having such a reliable online booking system” - Clifton College



2. No need for customers to pick up the phone

There are a few different reasons why a business should reduce its reliance on telephone bookings.

Firstly, Millennials and Gen-Z do not like picking up the phone. In fact, they will avoid it at all costs. So if the only way that they can book through you is via the phone, it's likely that they just won't bother.

 **Telephonophobia** (noun)
The mental anxiety of interacting with others on the phone.

Like it or not, Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Gen-Z (born between 1996 and 2015) are either your current target customer or your future target customer. Catering to their needs and preferences is pretty important.

Not only do these generations find phone calls anxiety-inducing, but they also want to be able to book at a time that suits them. With an online booking system, customers don't have to work around you and your office hours. It can be difficult for someone to find the time to book whilst they're in the middle of their workday. Not to mention the fact that only one caller can book at a time unless you're operating multiple phone lines (which, in turn, require more staff to deal with). An online booking system allows 24/7 bookings so that customers can book on their own terms on whatever device they're using.

And sure, many of your customers might prefer to book via the phone. With an online booking system in place to filter out those who don't, your lines will remain quieter to cater for those who prefer to pick up the phone. You significantly reduce the bottleneck in your business that could stifle success by potentially preventing customers from placing their bookings with you.

There's no disadvantage to be found in boosting your appointment booking availability.

Don't hold back on making an online booking platform a part of your online business strategy.

*Source: www.bankmycell.com



81%

of Millennials and Gen-Z admit that they often experience anxiety when talking to someone on the phone and need to work up the courage to press the 'call button.*



68%

Charnwood Borough Council reported a **68% reduction** in calls as a result of their BookingLive online booking system.



3. Integrate your web sales

How often do you find yourself saying, “all our information is on our website” a day? We’re willing to bet that it’s more than a handful. These days, our websites are so much more than mere contact information for our brick-and-mortar locations.

They are huge repositories of information regarding our business, what we offer and more. What isn’t on your website probably isn’t worth knowing.

So, if your website is a one-stop shop for everything related to your business, why not offer the opportunity for your customers to make a booking with you via your website? With BookingLive, you can display a clear ‘book now’ feature that won’t even take customers away from your website in order to make a booking.

After all, by making your customers leave your website in order to place a booking, you’re introducing unnecessary complications for your customers and cutting their chances of making the kinds of impulse bookings that bring in so much revenue. Make it easier than ever for a customer to make a booking and watch those numbers creep up.

Since signing up to BookingLive, our customer has seen huge year-on-year growth in bookings.

2019 - 2020
331%
INCREASE



2020 - 2021
110%
INCREASE

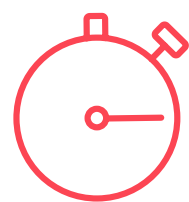
Have you ever tried to find something you want online and been waylaid by a rubbish website that just won’t work right or show you what you want?

If your customer doesn’t find what they need straight away, you’re likely to lose them pretty quickly. Allowing users a complete experience on your website where they have an easy time finding and buying or booking things is the surest way to guarantee web sales and offer a good customer experience.

To top this off, it’s worth remembering that if customers often leave your site quickly without exploring or buying things, it’s likely to add up to you having something called a ‘high bounce rate’. A high bounce rate indicates to search engines that you have a site that isn’t useful to the consumer. This can result in your website being pushed further down search pages, which can really hinder your sales.

So, grab them in 15 seconds or less and offer them a complete experience - from idea to buying - and do it with an online booking system.

*Source: www.crazyegg.com/blog/why-users-leave-a-website



Customers typically spend less than 15 seconds on your website - make that short time count.*



4. It's a modern approach to booking

Today's customers aren't discovering companies through telephone books. They aren't finding information about your products and services by sending off for a catalogue. No, they're finding *everything* that they need to know about you by searching online, on social media or by using mobile apps.

Why? Because pretty much everything is digital these days. Over 25% of the global population are **digital buyers**. Before COVID-19, the growth in online sales had been 14.2% year on year for 5 years. Nice and slow and steady. Everything was moving online slowly yet surely. However, 2021 smashed those records right out of the water and showed growth in digital shopping of 50.55% when compared to 2019. The trend towards digital shopping doesn't seem to be slowing down, so it's time to take a modern approach and get online.



Even if your target market includes older generations such as baby boomers, it's outdated to assume that they aren't using the internet and mobile apps to online shop, research brands and make bookings. In fact, the proportion of people aged 75 years+ using the internet **nearly doubled** from 29% in 2013, to 54% in 2020. Perhaps all those Zoom calls and quizzes had our parents and grandparents realising that the internet wasn't so bad, after all.

If you are not already, making the most of the tremendous opportunity the internet offers business could be the best thing you ever did for your sales. By integrating your booking platform with your website, you can go where, increasingly, all your customers are.

As the telephone booking trend slowly dies, the competitive disadvantage of not having an online booking platform will widen, leaving you and small businesses especially behind. So, keep up with the booking trend and move online.



“In 2020, 92% of adults in the UK were recent internet users”

Office for National Statistics



5. Gives an opportunity to upsell & increase revenue

Let's face it, you're going to face immense competition in pretty much any business. This typically leads to something of a race to the bottom in regards to price. That's why it's so important to upsell goods and services to your customers.

This could be:

 A meal included on a tour

 Equipment to hire for an activity

 A follow-on course

 A car park ticket

Online booking systems such as BookingLive introduce upselling into the booking process. This lets you offer context-specific items and offers to customers who might not have come across them otherwise.

It's just another advantage of online booking systems and another way to help grow your business in an age of internet-first bookings.

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

The Passage, London-based charity

The Passage came onboard with BookingLive in December 2021 and have since made use of our upselling features. The Passage provides accommodation, community and support services for those at risk of becoming street homeless, those who are street homeless and those who are victims of modern slavery.

They have increased their revenue by utilising upsells via BookingLive such as speakers, catering and equipment alongside initial bookings, maximising their overall return on investment.



Disadvantages of an online booking system



1. It can come at a cost

One of the major disadvantages of an online booking system is that, for all their positives, they do often come at a monetary cost. Don't believe all of the promises of free trials or free online booking systems.

Some charge you per transaction. Others charge a flat monthly fee for booking services, so you'll always know how much you're paying. Custom made online booking systems will charge you a hefty lump sum upfront as well as recurring costs for bug fixes and support.

Ultimately, the benefits of an online booking system for your business far outweigh the small monthly cost it would take to implement one. But the notion of cost is something you're going to have to come to terms with.

BookingLive is a subscription SaaS model based on the volume of bookings your company will take each month. As your business grows and you journey up the tiers, the booking fee goes down and all the way to zero as you reach the Enterprise tier.

This means that you will receive the best possible value and return on investment for your online booking system.

Start	Grow	Professional
£0 / month (paid annually)* Up to 25 bookings per month**	£9.99 / month (paid annually)* Up to 100 bookings per month**	£29.99 / month (paid annually)* Up to 500 bookings per month**
Start includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✔ Support articles✔ Help guides✔ Stripe payment gateway✔ Paid booking 3% + 40p fee✔ No fees on £0 value booking	Grow includes: All the features in start and... <ul style="list-style-type: none">✔ Automated chatbot support✔ Waiting list✔ Customisable branding✔ Custom confirmation emails✔ Facebook integration✔ Zapier integration✔ Appointment reminders✔ Stripe payment gateway✔ Paid booking 2.3% + 40p fee✔ No fees on £0 value bookings	Professional includes: All the features in start and... <ul style="list-style-type: none">✔ Live chat + automated support✔ Waiting list✔ Customisable branding✔ Custom confirmation emails✔ Facebook integration✔ Zapier integration✔ Appointment reminders✔ Stripe payment gateway✔ Paid booking 2% + 40p fee✔ No fees on £0 value bookings

*prices vary if paid on a monthly subscription; Grow is £11.99 per month and Professional is £35.99 per month (but you can upgrade and downgrade your tier at any time if you pay monthly!)

**on free or paid bookings. If the service offered is at £0 value, you will not be charged the paid booking fees, but these bookings will count for your monthly limit of bookings respective of your tier.

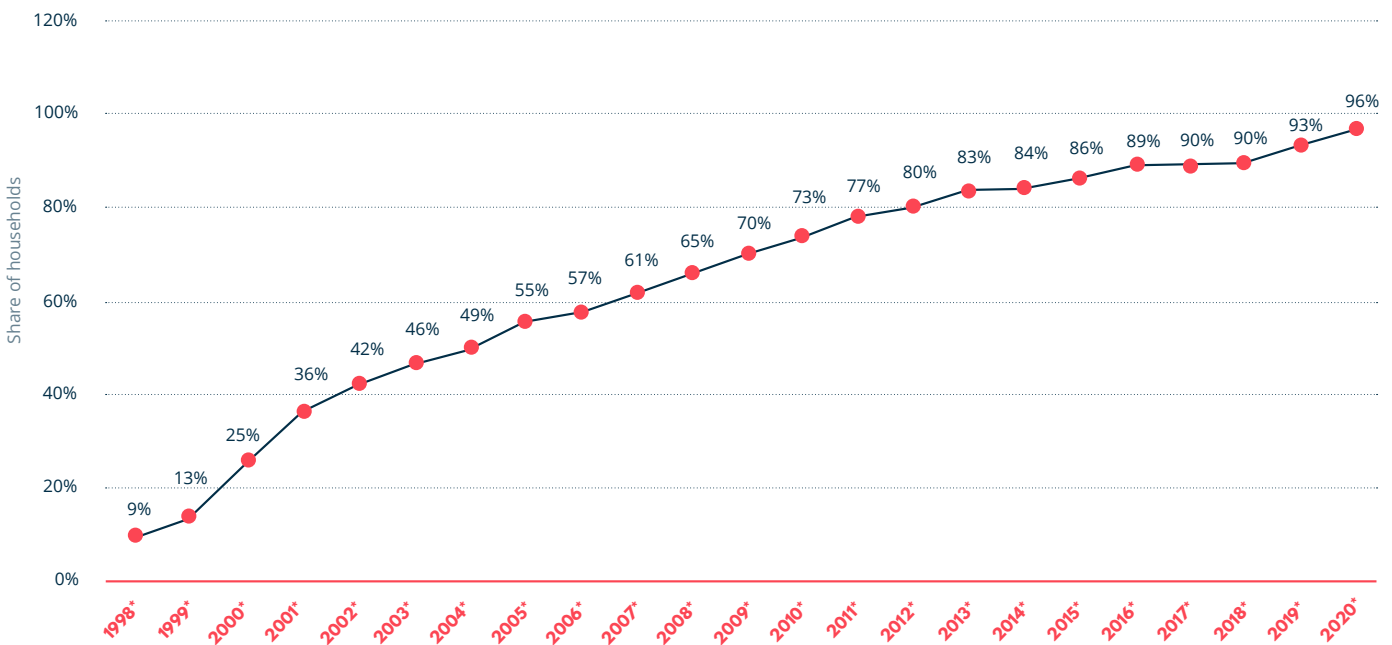
7. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Booking Systems

2. It requires internet access

Though internet access is widespread these days, it remains true that one of the major disadvantages of online booking systems is their reliance on internet connections. In order to book through an online booking system, your customers will have to have internet access. This can be on their smartphone, tablet, computer, laptop or any other internet-enabled device.

But - is it that much of a disadvantage if nearly 100% of your target market have wifi in their homes? With a staggering **96%** of UK homes (in 2020) fully equipped with a wifi connection, you don't have to worry about your customers browsing at home. They'll be able to book online at the click of a button (and a few key taps, of course). To top this off, **internet usage across the UK doubled in 2020**, and this growth shows no sign of stopping.

Share of households with internet access in the United Kingdom (UK) from 1998 to 2020



But, if it's online booking on the go you're worried about, we get it. It's not like online shopping using mobile devices has **more than doubled** since 2018.

Oh, wait... it has.

6.378 billion people own smartphones, and more and more of them than ever are shifting to the convenience of shopping from their mobile phones. In fact, many **experts predict** that by 2025, a total of 10% of all sales across all industries will happen on a mobile phone. And, with some mobile phone providers offering over 16,000 free wifi hotspots across the UK, you can rest assured that most of your online booking customers are catered for.



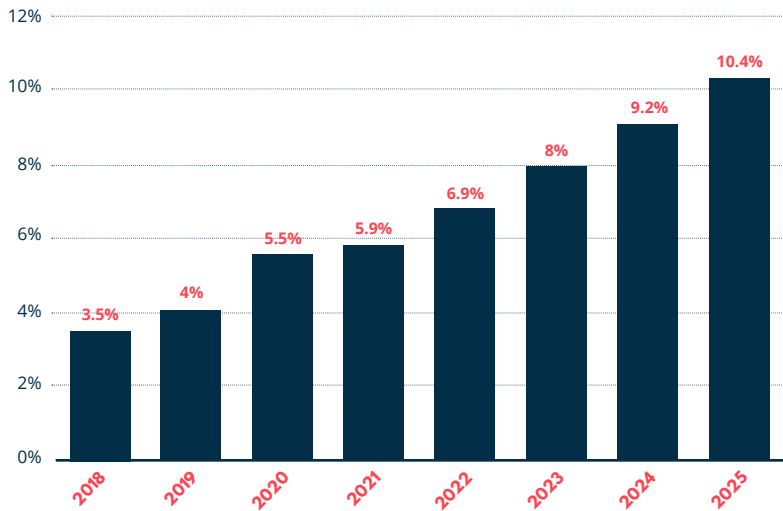
10% of all sales across all industries will happen on a mobile phone



Disadvantages of an online booking system

2. Integrate your web sales (cont)







Mobile commerce sales as percentage of total retail sales from 2018 to 2025



However, we do understand that some people aren't big online users, and many people may not have internet access when they need it (if you've ever tried to load a hilarious cat video your friend sent you whilst on the train during rush hour, you know this is true).

That's why at BookingLive, our system enables you to maintain telephone bookings, plugging the information directly into our system so that you can easily maintain and manage your bookings - even when they aren't made online.

Online booking systems open your business up to a range of opportunities, including:

-  Maximising social media
-  Saving your staff time
-  New revenue stream via upselling
-  More functionalities on your website
-  24/7 bookings
-  And plenty more!



About BookingLive

BookingLive is a booking, cancelling, rebooking and amends automation tool that allows you to save time by relieving administrative burdens while increasing sales. It keeps your business online 24/7, 365.

It will automate customer comms, saving time and enabling your staff to focus on only the most important tasks when they are in the office. This customer communication automation drives new revenue channels by automating up and cross-selling, whilst also mitigating no-shows through automated multiple reminder touch-points.

We have also partnered with Zapier, a tool created to transform business automation. You can use Zapier to connect your BookingLive system with thousands of the most popular apps such as social media platforms, multiple CRMs, Microsoft Office and G-Suite. You can automate and integrate practically every tool needed to run and manage your business operation.

To set up an account, you just need to select your tier, pay via ChargeBee (our industry-leading, secure subscription billing software of choice) and fill out your company details. When you enter your BookingLive dashboard, you will be greeted with helpful hints and tips on how to build and customise your booking system.

As your business grows, it's easy to upgrade your subscription and you can do so at any time. This not only allows you a higher volume of bookings but also allows you to gain access to more features such as custom branding, customisable emails and API access. To upgrade, simply jump into your user profile within your dashboard and select your new tier of choice from the 'manage subscription' section.

Although BookingLive is a self-managed system, we're here to help every step of the way. Alongside our informative set-up guide within your admin dashboard, we have a team of system specialists to help you with any queries you may have. As with any system, there will be some admin management needed. This support will ensure you know your system inside out and can not only provide the best possible service to your customers but also streamline your business processes.

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