

Case Study.

## **Halfway Garage Thatcham**

Halfway Garage have provided Class 4 Car MOTs, Class 5 light vehicle and class 7 MOTs to customers and trade partners as well as repairs and vehicle servicing in the Newbury and Thatcham areas since owner Don Riches, established the business in 1994.

Although Don had always advertised his fixed price servicing and MOT facilities in the local press, he decided to establish a web site in 2006 because he was aware that more of their potential customers would be looking at his garage online to get a feel of his business before they would call to book or e-mail to ask for a contact.

By late 2008, Don, and his branch manager Danny Reed had completed an analysis of the source of their new business and it was apparent that more and more people were finding them on the web and e-mailing them with a view to making a booking for either a MOT or a service, but often when the business was closed. E-mail contacts did not always turn into bookings. Danny estimated they were losing business, but could not tell how much.

“We were not around in the evening to answer calls, e-mails or have access to the business diary” said Danny but it was clear people wanted to book our services – like most people, I have booked flights and tickets online and it occurred to me that it would be good if we could offer MOT’s and Servicing online booking to”

Via a contact from the Autosafe Organisation of which Halfway Garage is a member, the business was introduced to Webbooker Ltd in December 2008

Webbooker were able very quickly to create the booking slots and match them to the availability of resources at the garage for any given day. Webbooker was also able to create each type of MOT as a separate activity as well as put Fixed Priced Car Servicing online. All of this in real time.

“What I liked” said Don, was that I was able to consider all of the services that we offer to the trade and the public, decide what I could put online and Webbooker could easily tailor it for me. I was even able to determine whether or not I wanted to take money up front for some of the services and I may go back to that.”

Dan was impressed by how easy the whole thing was to get started. “ It was a link from our website, straight into our booking pages, calendar and diaries, without any integration or messing with our systems”

“ I was trained very quickly on how to take a telephone booking using the same package and I was able to train other employees to use the system in no time at all”

Steve Waters, Web Design Director at ITsECPC noted that it took him very little time to install the booking link. “ It was quick, easy and straight away I could see more ways to improve the look and feel of this for my clients”

The results have been very encouraging for Halfway Garages. “Smaller garages without MOT facilities love it” said Don. Before, they would have one of their customers on the end of the line asking for a MOT date and they (the small garage) would be on the phone to our people trying to co-ordinate diaries to book MOTs. Now they have their own online account with us, they simply book online on the spot over the internet No more three way calls!” With Webbooker, because it operates in real time it is impossible to double book therefore our trade partners get their MOTs booked and know that the availability is guaranteed, it does not need to be confirmed later. E-mails confirm bookings and Webbooker sends me a reminder e-mail when a service is due soon.

As for the public, Dan is says it is working well. We only started advertising online services to the public in the last three weeks. So far we have had a number of full services and MOT’s booked online. We are now truly open all hours for business, have increased the conversions from our website to bookings and therefore have more money coming through the door.

“For the public, it is about convenience” said Dan, “they want to look up and book our services when it is convenient to them – not us. For trade partners, it is about speed and time. They want to know that a time they have selected for an MOT is real and available and once booked theirs.

Webbooker Ltd

Contact [enquiries@webbooker.com](mailto:enquiries@webbooker.com) for more information about this article or product range.