

25. Scheduling

Efficient scheduling is as important as efficient cleaning methods.

Mrs. Smith calls and tells you that she wants to change her cleaning day to Friday. You see that team 2 does have an opening in their schedule for Friday, so you agree to do so . . . without first checking to see what part of town team 2 is working in on Fridays. Low and behold, Friday the houses they're cleaning are all the way over on the other side of town, half an hour away from Mrs. Smith!

Inefficient scheduling of client cleanings can have a major negative impact on your overall efficiency. It's not absolutely in any sense to over-rely on the cleaning skills of your employees. You turn them out and lose them through inefficient scheduling of their work.

Software to Help You Schedule

- You need to obtain a software program. *Microsoft Expedia Streets & Trips*. This is very expensive (about \$100) but it can help you schedule your clients efficiently. It's essentially the same as the free map software that you can download from the Internet, but you can use it to schedule your clients every day of the week and

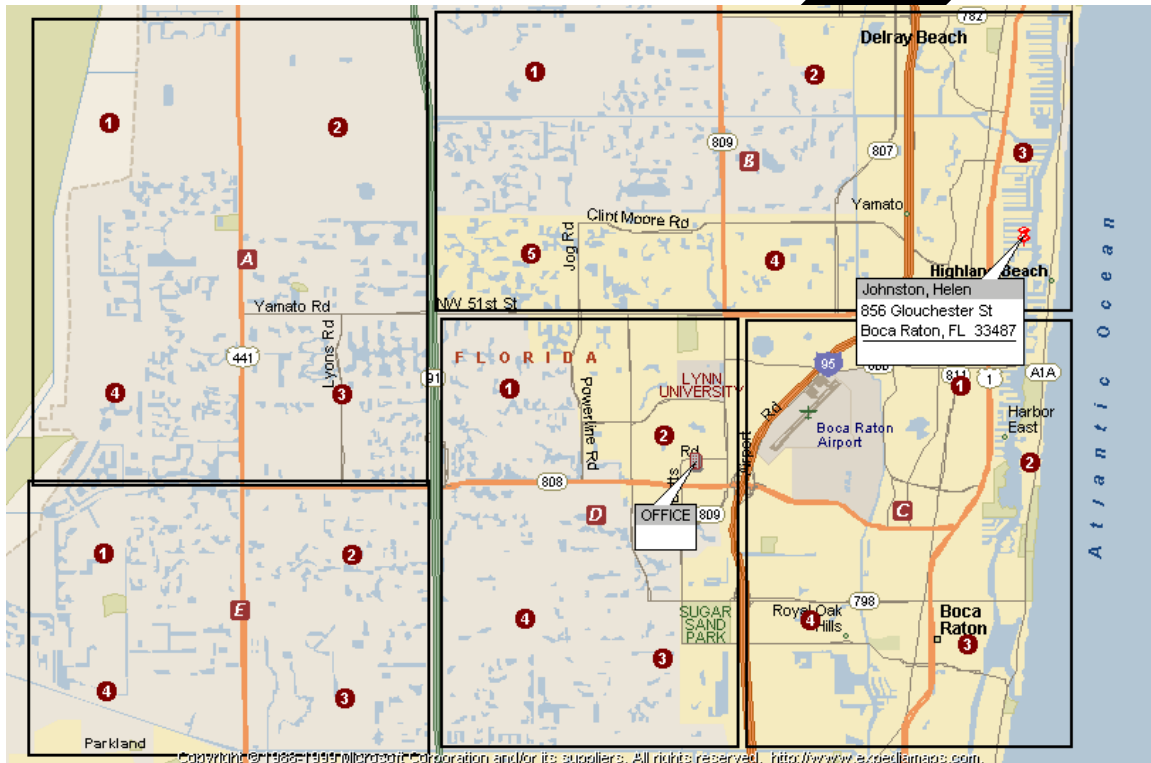
- You can also use *Microsoft Map* to show at a glance which areas you're servicing. When a client calls wanting to change her cleaning day, you can see if there are any other clients in her area on the day she is requesting. If you have a program on client calls, you can plug her address into *Microsoft Map* and it will show (a) where she is located and (b) which other clients are in that area. You can also plug her address into your schedule if she becomes a client.

Here is an example of how you can create Grids on your software map to divide an area into blocks. You can use the rectangle drawing tool to create the grid lines. You can use the PUSHPIN tool to create your grid lines.

We have divided this area into 5 blocks and labeled them A to D. The divisions are based on city or community boundaries, population clusters and other boundaries.

Then, within each block, we placed numbers from 1 to 5, depending on the layout of the area we've subdivided. The idea here is to more specifically identify where on the grid existing clients and inquiring callers are located.

The next step is to locate your office on the map and identify it with a pushpin. Simply type in the address of your office. The office address will be located automatically on the map. Then select a pushpin from the tool bar, and type in the word "OFFICE". It will appear on the map as illustrated here.



Here, you click to insert your office service. She tells you she lives at 856 Gloucester St. You type in her address to FIND ADDRESS. Her location is identified and you insert a pushpin (which we'll use to signify a prospective client) at her exact location on the map. You enter her name, address, and phone number.

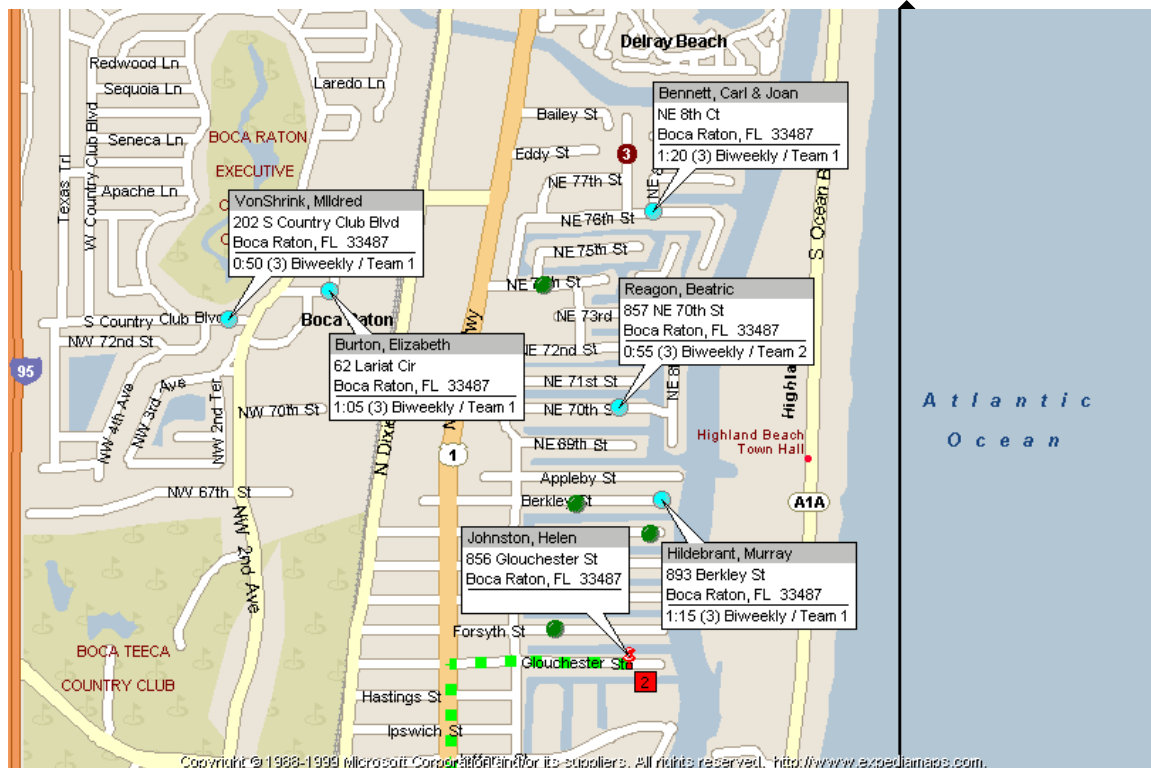
You'll note that Mrs. Johnston is located in Zone B3. Assuming you book an appointment with her for a cleaning consultation, you'll check to see what other appointments are booked in her zone, if any, and on what days.

You will also want to see which clients are located in Zones B2, B4 and C1 and what's available on the schedule for teams working in those zones.

You can book an appointment with Mrs. Johnston to meet with her at 10:00 AM tomorrow morning. You can print out a map to her home from your office, along with specific written directions. The software tells you that the distance is 5.7 miles and it will take you

In this illustration, 5 are being cleaned on Mondays and 5 on Thursdays.

You can click on the pushpins to see more information about each client.



You already know how to click on the pushpins to see more information about each client. Monday because of the color of the pushpin.

Each client has a cleaning team that depends in the home. (This can be weekly, biweekly, or monthly if more time is required) Note that this is the time spent in the home, not the total cleaning time. We can determine this by dividing the total team minutes by the number of team members . . . which is the (3) besides the frequency of cleaning: weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Since these five clients are all biweekly, so would be cleaned every other week Monday every other week.

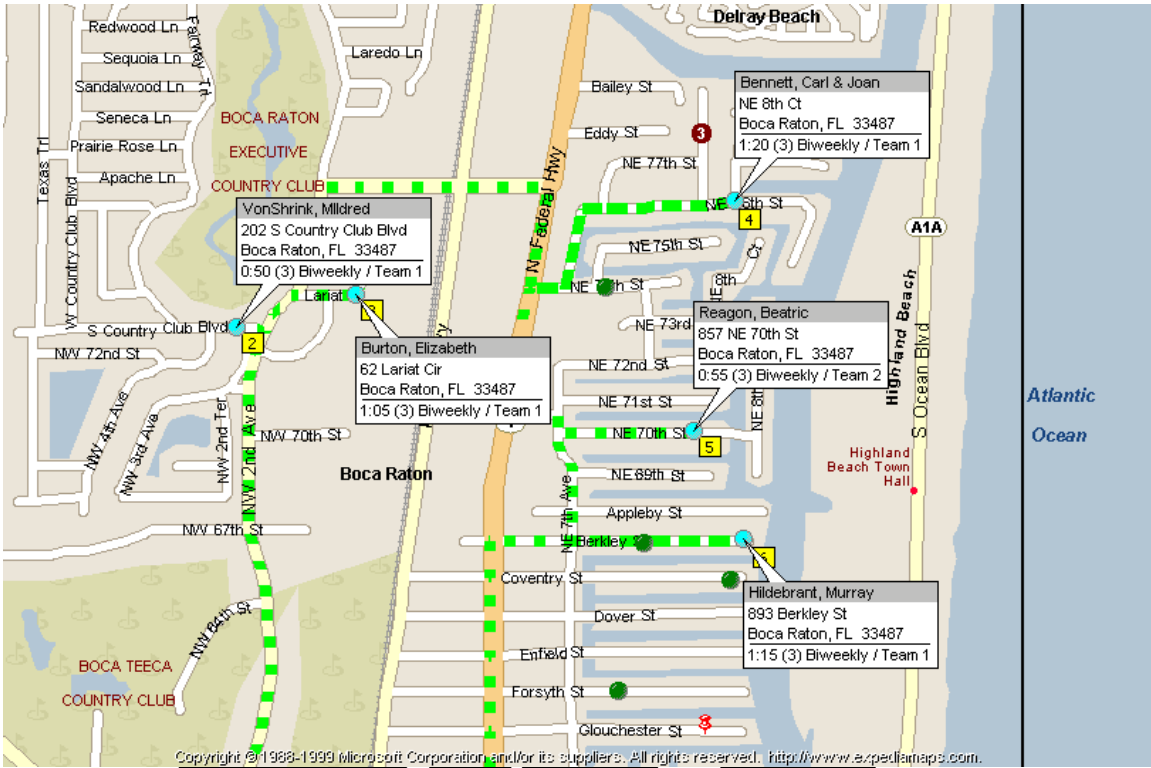
Establish Efficient Routing

- Once the preceding information is entered one time (which takes only about 20 seconds or so per entry), it becomes very easy to develop efficient routing to and between clients. This information will also

help you determine whether or not a given team can take on a new client on the day they're in the general neighborhood.

- You select ROUTE from the dropdown menu. Click on "SET START POINT" and either type in "Office" in the "PLACE" dialogue box or enter your office address in the "ADDRESS" dialogue box.
 - Next you click "SET END POINT" and again enter "Office" in the "PLACE" dialogue box or your office address in the "ADDRESS" dialogue box. The team will start the day at the office and end the day at the office.
 - You will next highlight "Office" in the Route Dialogue Box and click on the CLOCK icon beside it. Set the "Depart" time to 8:30 AM (or whatever time the team is scheduled to leave for the day). Again, this time can be changed in seconds. The time it takes to clean the clients will have been predetermined and automatically added to the schedule. The team should be at any given point in the route at the time it will arrive at the time they are expected to reach the client.
 - Now it's time to add clients to your routing schedule. Click on the ADD button and enter the name of the clients to be cleaned that day. You can add clients by entering their name (such as "Vonnegut Children's Hospital") or their address. You'll find it easier to enter the address.
 - Click on the client name and click on the CLOCK icon. In the "FOR" box, enter the time you want the team to spend at the client. In the "BY" box, enter the time you want the team to leave the client's home. In our example, the team will spend 50 minutes at the client's home and leave by 9:30 AM.
 - Repeat the scheduling procedure for each client on this day's schedule. Once all the clients have been entered into the routing schedule, you can click on the CLOCK icon. The routing, related travel and cleaning times for the day will be tabulated and displayed.
 - The computer software will tell you that if the team leaves the office at 8:30 AM in the morning, they should be back at the office by 2:37 PM. In our example, the total time for the day should be 6 hours and 7 minutes.
- In a six hour day in our illustration, a total of 42 minutes will be spent on travel time. This represents 11.4% of this work day, which is pretty efficient scheduling. Remember, though, that this is for three people in the vehicle, so actual non-productive time is 126 minutes, or 2 hours and 10 minutes.

Cleaning Order is Important



The 6 hour and 7 minutes it takes for this group of Monday clients was based on the following sequence:

1. VonShrink to second client

2. VonShrink to fifth client

3. VonShrink to first client

4. VonShrink to second client

5. VonShrink to fifth client

6. VonShrink to first client

7. VonShrink to second client

8. VonShrink to fifth client

- Instead of 6 hours and 7 minutes, its going to take 6 hours and 19 minutes to do the same clients. Sure, it's only another 12 minutes of total team time, but it's another 36 minutes of time that has to be

accounted for if it's a three-person team. At a PPM of 20¢ a minute that's a wasted \$7.20.

- Multiply one day's inefficient scheduling by a month's worth of cleanings and that can add up quickly. And that's only for one team. With several teams this could wind up to be a fairly large number at the end of a month, quarter or year. If you're paying by the hour, it's not fair to you; if you're paying on piecework (per person or predetermined team share), it's not fair to your employees.
- For this reason you should NEVER PROMISE A SPECIFIC DAY which your team will arrive. You can promise that Monday is scheduled as the client's cleaning day, their team will arrive Monday. You may even be able to promise morning arrival, but we caution you to be cautious here, too, as you can see that if you have to backtrace to add time to your cleaning schedule, it can be a significant amount of time.
- If a client really insists on a specific time, you can calculate the extra travel time and include it in your cleaning price. In the example we used, we backtraced a few clients, who had an average labor cost of \$7.20 for that day.
- If you do have a specific client that impacts your schedule, you can calculate an alternate cleaning order time and price. The price to the client you're willing to accept should be the price that you need to markup the cost by 33% to cover the extra travel time.
- If you have a 15-minute travel time and there is another 15 minutes you have to charge the client (for a three-person team). If your cost factor is 33%, it would cost this client an extra \$7.20. It's not only fair.

Know Your Client's Schedule

From the example above we can see that Team Two is in this client's schedule on Wednesday. All five clients are weekly.

This means that if this is time in their schedule, the team could accommodate Johnston on either a weekly or biweekly basis on Thursday.

Next, you look at this team's Thursday time schedule.

You pull up Team Two's schedule for this day and you see that the team's total time out is 5 hours and 40 minutes, including 35 minutes of travel.

You know two things:

1. Client Seacraft is moving shortly and will no longer be on Team Two's cleaning schedule in another month.
2. The team is willing to take on one more client in this area on Thursday.

You're Now Prepared

- When you go to visit Mrs. Johnston tomorrow morning:
 - a. That you are already servicing her neighbor on Monday and Thursday, but Thursday could be the day to schedule for her if she chooses to go with you.
 - b. You do have an opening in your own cleaning schedule, so you may be able to accommodate that day.
 - c. All the other Thursday clients in your team are either could easily be accommodated on either Monday or biweekly. This would be so easily accomplished with Team One if they are in the area every other week.
 - d. That if you were to biweekly schedule you **may** also have the same day as the same day that Team One is in the area.

So, What's the First Call?

- When you go to visit Mrs. Johnston, you should check your schedule to determine if you'll need to accommodate her first-time cleaning. Remember that a first-time cleaning can take two to three times longer than a routine cleaning, if the house is already in good condition. Then again, it can sometimes consume less time than a routine cleaning.
- Under the circumstances of a cancellation on Team Two's Thursday schedule, they may be going to be able to fit Mrs. Johnston in for a first-time cleaning on that day. Even if a client does skip a regular Thursday cleaning or cancel their cleaning schedule altogether, with what's on the plate for Team Two it will make for a very long day.
- There are a few viable alternatives for accommodating a first-time client:

- Monday is often the day of the week that has the lightest cleaning schedule. Sometimes it's possible to shuffle one or more clients from one team onto another team's schedule that day. Just keep in mind that clients generally aren't all that comfortable with having different people in to clean their home. However, if it's OK with the clients, this can give Team Two an opportunity to devote a half day to cleaning Mrs. Johnston for the first time. Be sure to tell Mrs. Johnston that her regular cleaning day will be Thursday, but she'll be doing her first cleaning on Monday.
- Sometimes it's possible to shuffle one or more clients to another weekday, thereby making room for Mrs. Johnston's first-time cleaning. This won't necessarily be a Thursday. If we're just shuffling to accommodate Mrs. Johnston's first cleaning, however, don't get into the habit of doing this too often, as it can irritate the clients.
- You may have another team that has a day off and could fit a first-time cleaning into their day's schedule. Be sure to tell Mrs. Johnston that the team who will be doing her first-time cleaning isn't her regular team, but that it's OK.
- If you have employees who work on Saturdays, you may be able to do a big, first-time cleaning on Saturday. This is also OK with the client. This can be especially helpful if you have to make some extra money. It's always best to stick to the schedule during the week.
- In an event you don't have enough employees to work on Saturdays, you might be able to employ a team of people from two or more teams. Perhaps a kitchen person from team two, a bathroom person from team one, and a living room person from team three, for example.

5 You're on a Grid

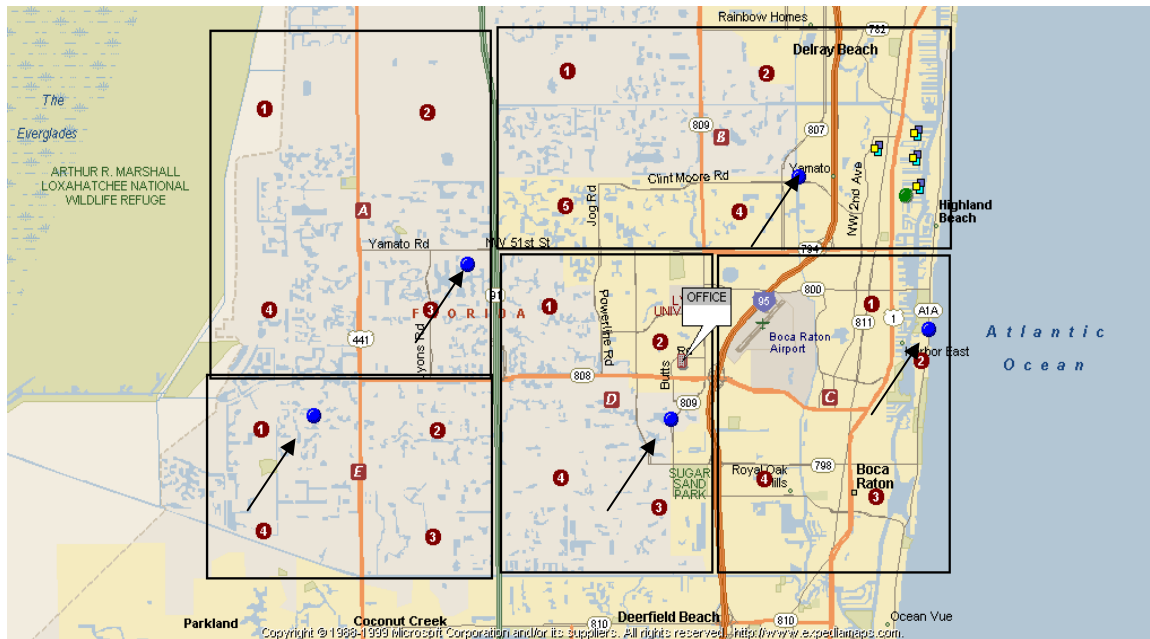
We have just finished cleaning in a specific neighborhood and how it is to be done in a relatively confined area.

When you're cleaning we've seen how much non-productive time can be incurred in a five day.

You see the following illustration just how horribly inefficient it would be to have a team clean a client in each of the 5 Grid Blocks (represented by blue) in the same day?

To do this in one day the team would travel a total of 31.8 miles over the course of the day.

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To visit these five points in a day on a single day would mean a total of 3 hours and 45 minutes in the car for a three-person team!

We'll be discussing this with you regarding your Advertising Options. However, you can't visit every point in every specific area makes more sense as a hot-gut idea. We may plan to eventually...

Depending on the density and demographics of the area surrounding your office, it would make sense to try to keep your marketing territories as close to your office as possible.

If you choose a desirable area in your community, such as Zone B (and...), seems to be in our example, then that's... your marketing efforts should initially be.

...the office in our example is located fairly central within the... intended to be served. The territory in this example covers an area 10 miles by 7 miles, or 70 square miles.

This... happens to have an affluent population of nearly 200,000 people... than most cleaning services could comfortably service. However, even smaller areas should be subdivided into grids.

SECRET

The location of your office within the territory you intend to serve should be as central as possible. When it comes right down to it, you may even decide to reduce the size of the area you wish to cover.

Other Considerations

- You may have already noticed that we did not include scheduled lunch breaks in our scheduled day. This is because that teams traditionally like to get their work over with as possible and get home, often because of school age children. Employees generally eat their lunch or take the car before the cleanings. However, if they do want to schedule a lunch you can schedule a time between cleanings and enter it into the schedule as another STOP.
- In terms of scheduling, we have primarily discussed electronic. We haven't talked about the traditional paper calendar where you log Microsoft's calendar into the future. While you can simply use an Appointment Book or a calendar from Microsoft Outlook. But when you set up an appointment you'll be required by purchasing software and spending on your knowledge of recurring service business.
- Microsoft Outlook has a "recurring appointments" function. You will find this in the "calendar" function of the program. Since we have not had the time to adapt this program to scheduling needs, we have not included it in the program, we won't be able to come by the length here.

For more information on scheduling software, please visit:
<http://www.housecleaningbiz101.com/Cleaning-Management-Software.htm>