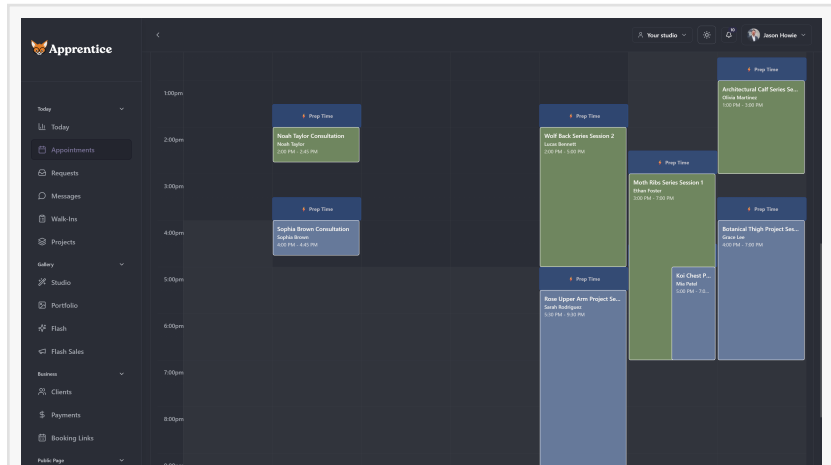


Apprentice Publishes 2026 Tattoo Shop Management Software Comparison for Artists and Shops

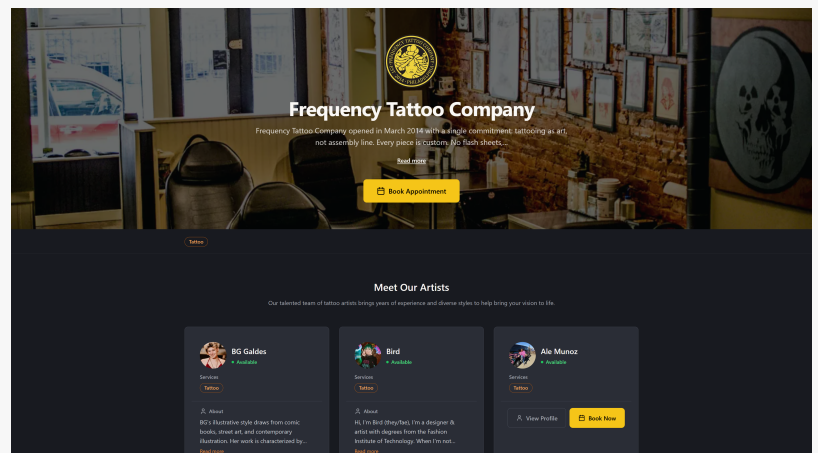
The Philadelphia-inspired booking app breaks down how tattoo shop management tools compare on deposits, waivers, plans, and who really pays the processing fee.

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, August 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Apprentice, a booking and tattoo shop management app built for tattoo artists and studios, has published an updated 2026 comparison of the software artists use to run their books. The guide is free to read and covers deposits, digital consent, free plans, and the pricing models that quietly take more money from artists as they get busier.

Most tattoo shop management still runs on a paper book, a group chat, and a folder of Instagram DMs. It works until it doesn't. A deposit gets missed. Two clients get booked into the same chair. An artist spends the first hour of the day answering messages instead of tattooing.



Apprentice's appointment calendar automatically builds prep time into every booking, so artists walk into each session ready to work.



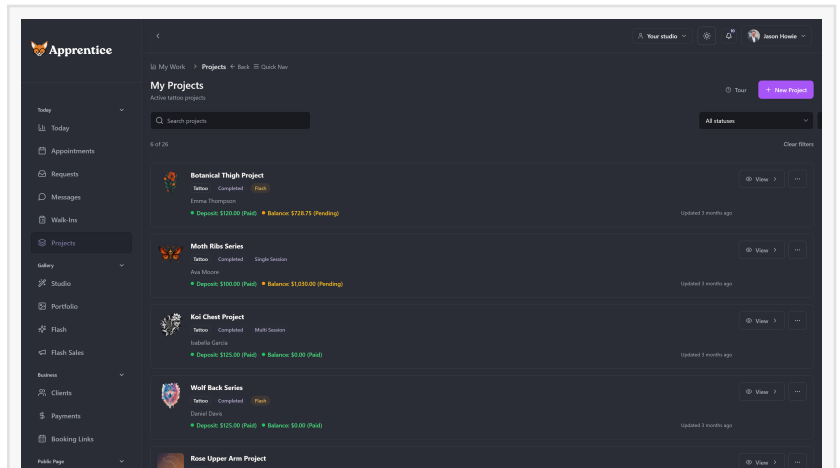
Frequency Tattoo Booking Page

"Nobody teaches you the business side during an apprenticeship," said Jason Howie, founder of Apprentice. "You learn to tattoo. Then one day you have forty conversations going and no idea which ones are actually booked. We wrote this comparison because artists kept asking me which app to use, and I didn't want to just say ours."

The guide compares tattoo-specific software including InkBook, Porter, Venue Ink, TattooGenda, and Tattoo Studio Pro, alongside the general schedulers artists already use like Square Appointments, Acuity, and Vagaro. It lists which tools have a real free plan versus a trial, and shows what a percentage-based booking fee costs on a \$500 tattoo.

Full guide:

<https://useapprentice.com/blog/top-tattoo-artist-scheduling-apps-to-streamline-your-business-bbafa>



The My Projects dashboard gives artists a single view of every active tattoo project, with deposits and outstanding balances tracked alongside each piece.

The fee nobody reads until it's too late

Booking apps split into two camps. Some charge a flat monthly price. Others take a cut of every appointment, which sounds fair when the calendar is slow and starts to sting the month an artist finally fills it.

Apprentice charges a flat monthly price plus a 2% fee on payments taken through the app, on top of Stripe's standard card rate. Who pays that 2% is a setting. The shop or artist can absorb it, or add it to the client's total. On a \$500 tattoo, that fee is \$10. Some apps that advertise a free plan take closer to 10% from the client and give the shop no say in it.

"Read the fee page before you read the feature list," Howie said. "An artist doing ten pieces a month at \$500 is moving \$5,000 through somebody's system. The difference between 2% and 10% is a rent payment."

What tattoo shop management software should actually do

Apprentice handles the parts of tattoo shop management that generic scheduling tools were never built for:

Clients request a time, artists approve it. The calendar stays under the artist's control.

Deposits are collected before the appointment, tied to the specific tattoo.

Consent and prep instructions are captured digitally before the client arrives.

Each tattoo lives as a project, with its references, drafts, messages, and sessions in one place.

Automatic reminders go out 24 hours and 2 hours before the appointment.

A front desk board shows every artist, walk-in, and appointment for the day.

Clients pay by card, Apple Pay, or Affirm.

Booking covers piercing, permanent makeup, and tooth gems, with implants available for shops that offer them.

Apprentice also runs an assistant called Your Apprentice, available to every artist on the app. It reads connected email, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook messages, sorts the real booking requests from the noise, and writes a suggested reply. The artist reads it and decides. Nothing sends on its own.

"The tools that exist mostly treat a tattoo like a haircut," Howie said. "It isn't. It's a consult, a drawing, a deposit, maybe four sessions, and a healing conversation six weeks later. If your software can't hold that, you end up holding it in your head."

Built out of a Philadelphia shop

Apprentice started with one shop's problem. Howie's brother, John Howie, has owned Frequency Tattoo Company in East Falls, Philadelphia, for more than ten years. Watching that front desk is what led to the app.

"I've run this shop a long time, and the admin never gets easier; it just gets bigger," said John Howie, owner of Frequency Tattoo Company. "Anything that gets my artists back to tattooing is worth looking at."

Apprentice is bootstrapped. It is not venture-funded.

Availability and pricing

Apprentice is available on iOS, Android, and the web. The free plan covers artists up to 50 clients and shops up to three artists and 100 clients. Artist Pro is \$24.99 per month. Studio Pro is \$59.99 per month and includes three artist accounts.

Start free at <https://useapprentice.com>

About Apprentice

Apprentice is booking and tattoo shop management software for tattoo artists, piercers, and studios. It handles appointments, deposits, digital consent forms, client records, walk-ins, and client messages in one app, along with design tools that help artists and clients agree on a piece before the needle comes out. Apprentice was inspired by Frequency Tattoo Company in Philadelphia and is available on iOS, Android, and the web. Learn more at <https://useapprentice.com>

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This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/937387684>

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