



PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Improving patient experience helps boost your bottom line.

Regardless of the population your clinic serves, happy patients are the lifeblood of a successful practice. Without them, you can expect mediocre growth, regular cancellations, and a feeling of just staying afloat. Here are a few ways to improve patient experience and leverage that to help boost your clinic's revenue:

1. Make patient experience THE number one priority.

You may already know this: but one of the biggest reasons consumers take their business elsewhere is because they feel taken for granted. In this rapidly changing healthcare environment, with higher out-of-pocket expenses, patients are beginning to act more like consumers in the way they seek out healthcare services. Gone are the days where patients just go to the first place they get referred to. They are shopping around for their healthcare services and comparing providers through personal recommendations, online reviews, convenience, cost, and many other factors. This means that now, more than ever, ensuring that every patient that comes into your clinic has an outstanding experience should be the number one goal of your clinic or practice.

This means making patient experience a corner-stone of your clinic's culture and training. All staff, not just the clinicians, need to understand the importance of providing superior customer service. Train your staff on their roles and responsibilities as it pertains to patient experience and what they can do to make patients feel appreciated and welcomed in your clinic. Look at what you can do to cut down on unnecessary or redundant paperwork or procedures. Anything you can do to make your patients' experience pleasant, convenient, and valuable will pay great dividends down the road.



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2. Improve the way you & your staff communicate with patients.

One of the best ways to improve your patient's experience in your clinic is to take a hard look at how you and your staff communicate with patients. Good communication can boost your patients' perception of the quality of care received, increase compliance with their plan of care, and lead to them referring you to their friends & family. Patients want to be heard, listened to, understood, and respected. Anything you and your staff can do to make that a reality for your patients will drastically improve their experience in your clinics. Aside from interpersonal communication, look at the big picture: What are your clinic's website, social media pages, and marketing materials communicating to patients and potential patients? Is your waiting area and clinic setup to provide an atmosphere of empathy, care, and safety, or is it setup like a factory warehouse where you pump patients in and out like an assembly line? Every piece of communication between your clinic and patients & potential patients needs to show that you and your staff care about them and their concerns and are going to do everything you can to help them meet their goals.

3. Prioritize patient feedback.

What can your practice do better? How can it improve patient experience? Better yet, how do you even go about figuring that out? The answer is right below your nose: your patients. Getting feedback from your patients not only helps you understand how you can improve patient experience, but it also makes your patients feel listened to. In today's world of online reviews and "rate my doctor" websites, you can be sure that your patients are going to tell someone about their experience at your clinic. Might as well make it you. You will make them feel appreciated and leave them with the impression that you are committed to improving their experience. And that always go a long way.

4. Get your patients to spread the word about you.

Nothing beats word-of-mouth advertising. Patients are more likely to take the recommendation of a friend, or even online reviews, than your word as a clinician. Nailing your patient's experience in your clinic can turn them into mini-megaphones that will shout out to the world how great you are. Encourage them to leave online referrals and reviews as well as ask for testimonials for your site.



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5. Improve patient retention

Sometimes, clinics take for granted the patients currently receiving services. But does that make sense? What would happen if 15% of your clinic's patients decided not to show up for their appointments this month? The results would be devastating. On top of that, it usually costs more to acquire new patients than it does not retain the ones you currently have. While seeking out referral sources and marketing to potential patients is important, do not overlook the value of patients on your current caseload. While you are working on #3 and prioritizing patient feedback, make an effort to understand why patients self-discharge from your clinic or seek out other providers. This information will be very valuable in helping you make changes to your clinic to improve patient experience and retain more patients.

6. Be clear about patients' financial obligations.

The healthcare landscape is dramatically changing. Patients are paying more out of pocket for healthcare services due to increasing premiums, higher deductibles, & higher co-pays. A little Economics 101: when the price of a good or service goes up, consumers (patients) begin to scrutinize services more, and they begin to be more selective in who they choose to provide those services. Patients want to know how much they are going to have to pay at the onset so that they can plan and budget for it. They will also try and judge whether or not the value you provide them is worth the cost they will pay. This is why steps 1-5 are so important: You want potential patients to *know* that your clinic provides the best care for the cost, with the most convenience, while providing an outstanding experience. If you can communicate that message (and then deliver on that promise), you'll be well on your way to a thriving practice.

Learn how we can help your clinic grow, improve patient outcomes & experience, and increase revenue:

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