



Happy patients, healthy growth: Experience marketing for healthcare



Lumen Healthcare: Palo Alto

How happy are you with your last visit?

Very dissatisfied Very satisfied

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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Introduction

Technological advances have enabled quick and seamless experiences for consumers across different industries. eCommerce sites now offer 1-click shopping and same-day delivery. Ride-hailing apps allow users to find reliable transport with just the click of a button. It's an age of quick and seamless experiences all around — with one exception: healthcare.

Studies show that [71% of patients](#) are “frustrated” with their healthcare experiences. How is it that an industry that is so pivotal to the well-being of consumers is not in step with patient expectations? What's holding the healthcare industry back? More importantly, how can practices improve their operations?

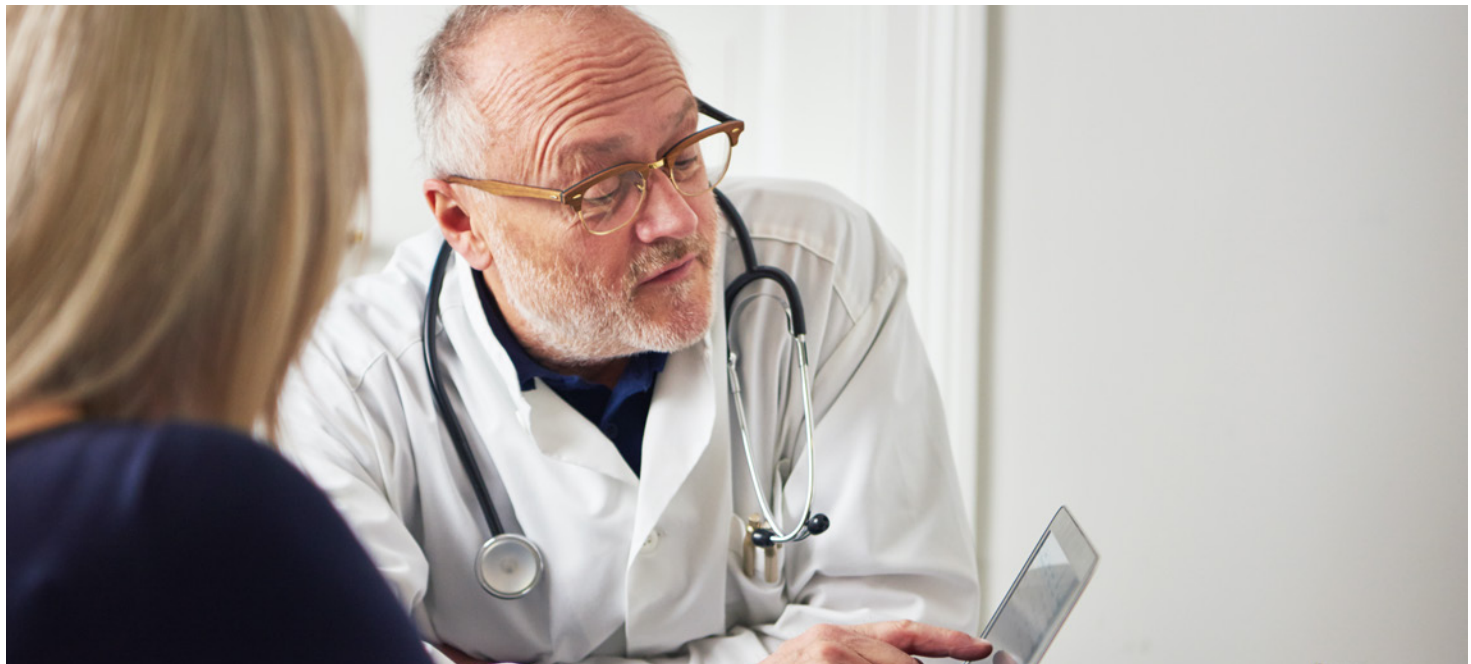
Consumers are accustomed to getting seamless experiences in most aspects of their lives, and have come to expect similar levels of service from their healthcare providers as well. When patients have great experiences with their service provider, it sets off a domino effect that results in repeat visits, great reviews, and more referrals. That in turn results in increased patient loyalty, greater retention, and higher new patient acquisition.



Understanding patient expectations, then delivering on those expectations is fundamental to creating happiness throughout the patient journey. Every patient interaction and touchpoint – from a review left online, to a webchat, to a survey response – becomes an opportunity to start or deepen a relationship and a way to extract valuable insights from the experience.

By taking steps to ensure that patients are receiving excellent experiences across all these touchpoints and are sharing their experiences on review sites and social media platforms, healthcare providers can gain more visibility online and attract more patients. We call this process **Experience Marketing**.

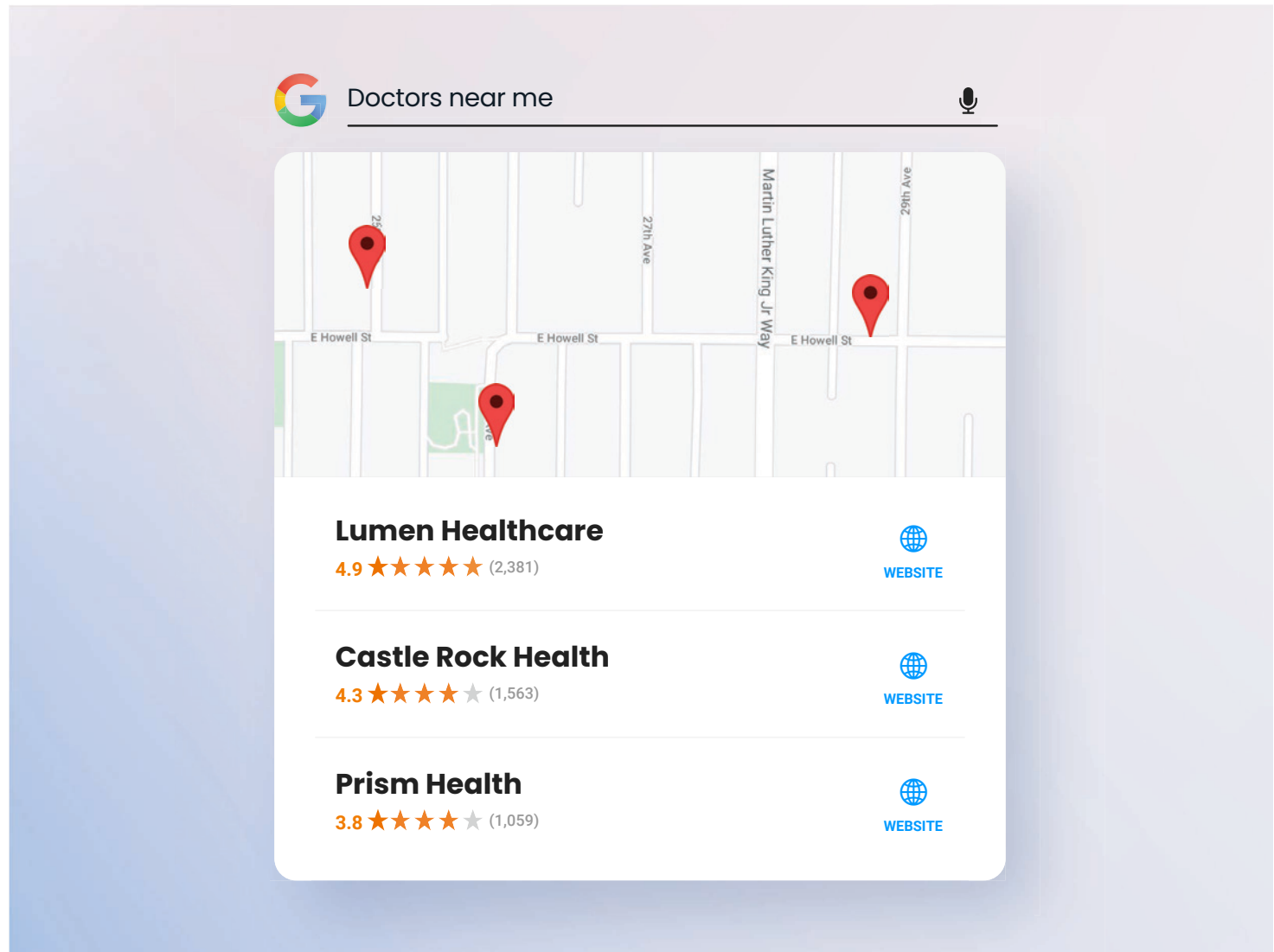
In this guide, we'll share a playbook to help your team better build a powerful Experience Marketing strategy. We'll break down key concepts and tactics to help you more effectively promote both individual providers and your overall brand.





The importance of “near me” searches

The patient’s first experience with your brand often doesn’t take place inside your practice — it takes place on Google. Patients find providers simply by going on search and typing in “doctors near me”.





How you appear on Google affects all your patient acquisition efforts. Even patients who come in from other marketing channels, like referrals or paid ads, are likely to do a Google search to ensure they'll be receiving the best experience possible.

There are two things that healthcare practices need to provide at this stage:



Social proof

Patients are looking for assurance that they are getting the best treatment. You can provide this assurance through reviews and testimonials from other happy patients.



Accurate contact information

Once the patients are comfortable moving ahead in the process, they'll need accurate contact information to get in touch with your team and book their first appointment.

To rank high on "near me" searches, there's one step that every healthcare practice needs to take: building a strong online presence.



Meet your patients where they are

The first step to ensuring that patients have a great experience from the moment they discover your practice is claiming your profile on the sites that they're using to find healthcare providers. Here are a few sites where every healthcare practice should claim their listings.



Google My Business

When it comes to business listings, Google is king. Your Google My Business profile is the first thing that potential patients will see when they search for your practice locations on Google search or Google Maps.



Facebook

Facebook is not only the largest social media network, it's also the second-biggest review site (right behind Google). While it's important to post regular updates to the community on your Facebook page, it's also a highly-visible platform to collect patient reviews.



Healthgrades

Healthgrades is an online database of healthcare providers. Many patients start their search on Healthgrades – insurance providers like United Healthcare even pull reviews from the site for their customers.



Vitals

Like Healthgrades, Vitals is an online database for healthcare providers. The site contains listings for local providers and educational guides on common health problems.



ZocDoc

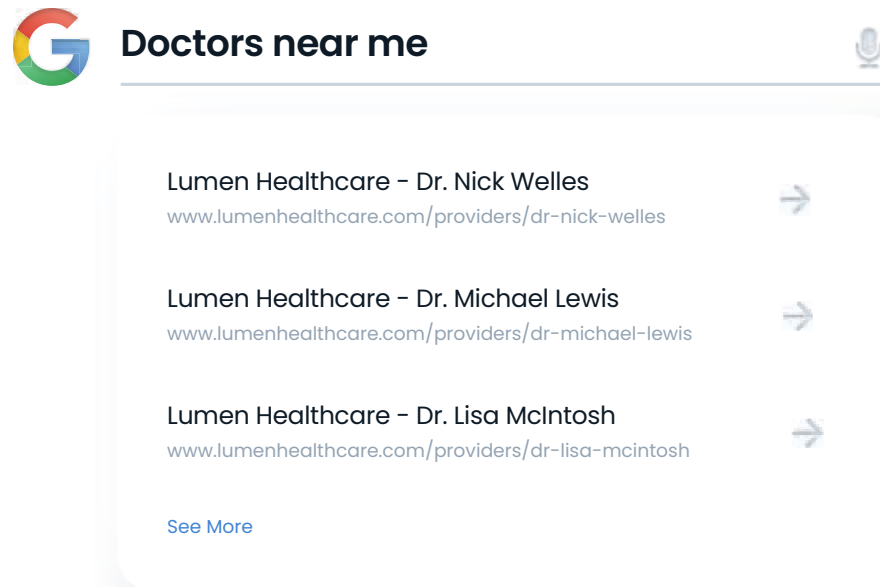
ZocDoc is a listing site that allows patients to post reviews and schedule appointments online within 24-72 hours. It's a great way to attract new leads and introduce your practice to new patients.

Remember, these listings should be comprehensive and provide detail about what kind of services your practice offers, such as whether you provide online care or whether walk-in appointments are available.



Pro tip:

While your team should claim profiles for each one of your individual practice locations, it's also important to claim profiles for each individual healthcare provider (e.g. Doctors). This will maximize the reach of your practice and crowd out competitors in relevant search results.



Once you've claimed your listings, it's time to start collecting social proof from your patients.



Build social proof across the Internet

Reviews are a reflection of the authentic experiences of your existing patients, which is why potential patients see them as valuable social proof. They also can help provide a valuable boost to your SEO. According to Moz, reviews are the **3rd-largest factor** determining your search ranking. Here are a few tips to collect more reviews for all your practice locations and all your providers.



Send review requests via email and text

Asking for reviews in-person is not an effective strategy. Your patients, being busy people, will likely not remember the request once the appointment is over. Instead, send review requests that link directly to sites like Google, Facebook, and Healthgrades so they can leave a review with just a few clicks.

How was your experience?

Hi Garrett! Please leave us a review by clicking one of the links below:



Review us on Google



Review us on Facebook



Review us on Healthgrades



Send timely review requests

Be sure to send review requests to your patients on the same day as their appointment. Patients are more likely to leave a review when the experience is fresh in their minds.



Send review requests to all patients

For the best results, be sure to send review requests to all of your patients. More reviews mean more social proof and higher search ranking. While it's likely that your practice locations (or doctors) will end up with a few negative reviews, that's okay — as long as you have the right strategy for dealing with them (more on this later).



Find a platform that integrates with your PMS/EMR

It's incredibly difficult for a marketing team responsible for multiple practice locations to manually send review requests to every patient. To simplify the process, find a review software that integrates with your PMS and sends review requests automatically.



Pro tip:

Set the right parameters. Some patients may come to your practice repeatedly for treatments. In cases like these, you should not send review requests for every appointment. Instead, find review software that allows you to set parameters such as limiting review requests to once every 180 days.

Send customer experience requests

Send **1** request to **customers from all locations**
when **customer is added from** **past 4-6 months**



The story isn't over when you get a review from a patient. Remember, reviews are valuable pieces of feedback from patients and they need to be managed accordingly.



Managing patient reviews

Even the best practices will occasionally have patients who feel that they've had a bad experience and will leave a negative review. If these are left unmanaged, they can cause real damage to your reputation and hurt your Experience Marketing efforts. However, the right strategy can help you mitigate this damage. Here are three tips to help you effectively manage patient reviews.

1

Respond to every review in a timely manner

Responding to both positive and negative reviews is a great way to show appreciation for happy patients and fix issues before they escalate. Still, it's important to keep in mind that patients typically expect a response within 24-48 hours.



Bill Smith

Terrible experience.

➔ Response posted to Google

Hi Bill, we have no record of you being a patient. Did you leave your review for the right practice? We're happy to clear up any confusion, please give us a call at 555-555-5555.



2

Pay close attention to trends across locations

A dip in overall star rating for an individual location may be a sign of a bigger patient experience issue. Regularly monitor review ratings for individual practice locations and build a process to take action when issues arise.

3

Use reviews to coach providers

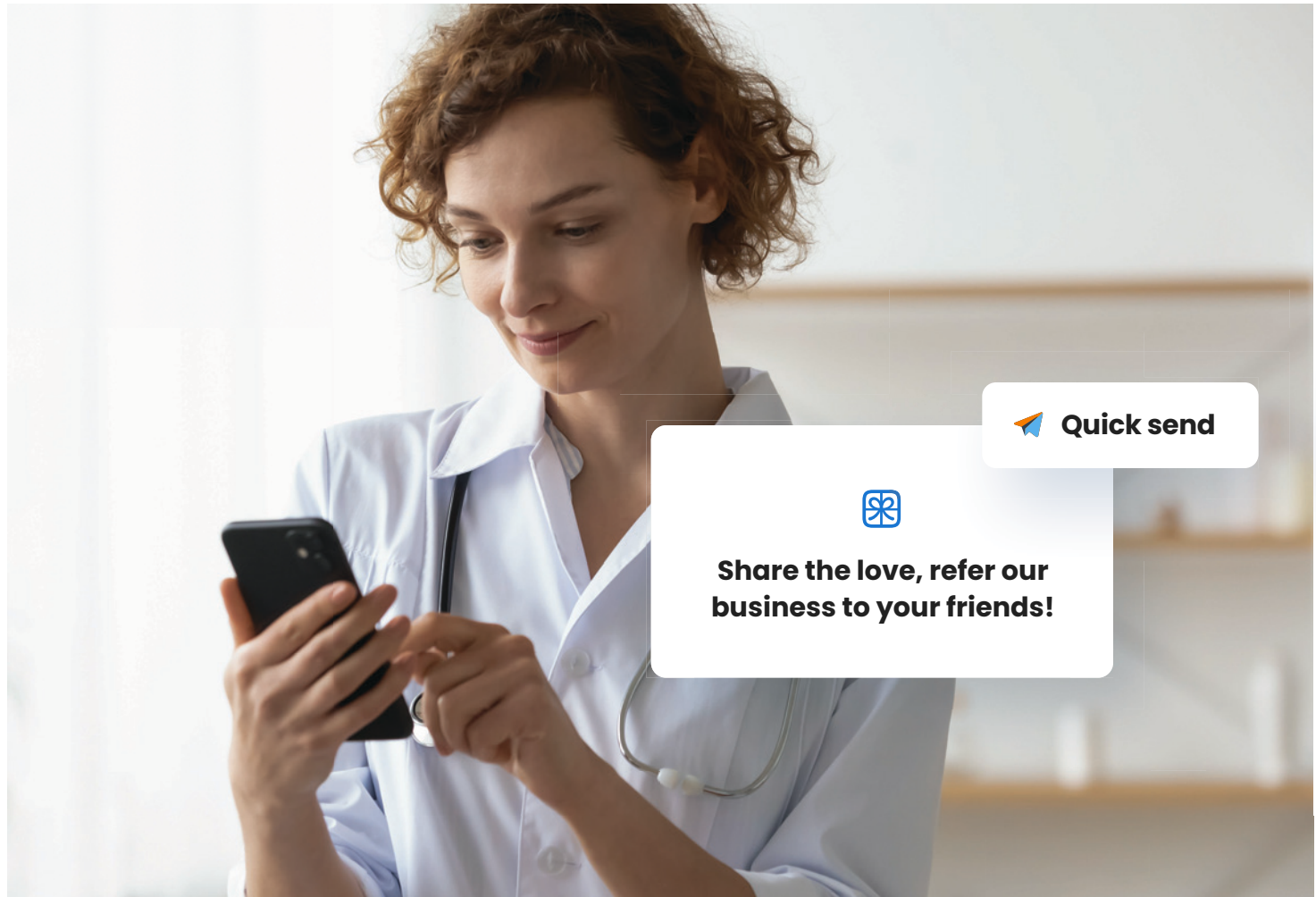
Reviews can help providers improve their bedside manner. Send them regular reports on what patients are saying in review feedback so they can deliver even better patient experiences in the future.

Reviews aren't the only way your team can enable patients to share their experiences. You should also consider investing in a patient-to-patient referral program.



Collect patient-to-patient referrals

Studies show that patients are **90% more likely** to trust a practice that's been recommended by a friend or family member. That means it means it's important to enable your happy patients to spread the word about their experiences to their personal networks. Here are a few tips for building a patient-to-patient referral program.



 Quick send



**Share the love, refer our
business to your friends!**



Show appreciation for your loyal patients

The more you nurture your relationship with your existing patients, the more likely they are to spread the word about your practice. To start, try sending a birthday card to your patients every year.



Get started with a digital program

We recommend that every healthcare provider get started sending referrals digitally. This is a win-win for both you and your patients. With the right platform, you'll be able to see at a glance how many referrals you're collecting. Meanwhile, your patients will be able to spread the word about your practice with just a few clicks.



Say thank you

Showing gratitude to patients who give referrals can motivate them to tell even more friends and family members about your practice. When one of your patients gives a referral, send them a quick thank-you note via text or email.



Pro tip:

The [Anti-Kickback Statute](#) makes it illegal for providers to give incentives to promote items and services payable by Federal health programs like Medicare and Medicaid. Of course, incentives are not needed to create a successful referral program.

There's no way around it: the better your patient experience, the better return you'll see on referrals and your other Experience Marketing efforts. Offering exceptional experience starts with offering quick communication from the very first touchpoint.



Allow patients to get in touch instantly

These days, patients are used to seamless experiences in their everyday interactions with businesses. Unfortunately, many healthcare businesses haven't been able to adapt. Patients who try to get in contact with providers often face long wait times. Practices may even require calls to be transferred to different practice locations or different departments, which only serves to increase patient frustration. Here are a few tips to offer seamless communication to patients.

1

Enable website chat

With a website chat widget, patients can get in contact with your practice in an instant. There's no need for them to wait on hold — they can get connected with a team member to schedule appointments within minutes.

2

Leverage chatbot

If you're not able to offer support for live chat on a 24/7 basis, that's perfectly okay. A chatbot can be programmed to offer responses to frequently asked questions and provide answers at any time.



3

Offer the ability to connect with different departments

Instead of needing to transfer patients to different departments, offer the ability to get in contact with the relevant team upfront.

4

Get started with a Unified Inbox

Potential patients may reach out to you via multiple mediums like text, email, Google messaging or Facebook Messenger. With a [Unified Inbox](#), you can ensure that none of these messages slip through the cracks.

Communication is a two-way street. It's important to enable patients to easily reach out to your team, but it's equally important to stay in regular communication with your patients.

Hi there!

Questions? We're here to help!
Send us a message below.

Harrison Phillips

(872) 917-9835

Chat with:



General

Billing

Appointments





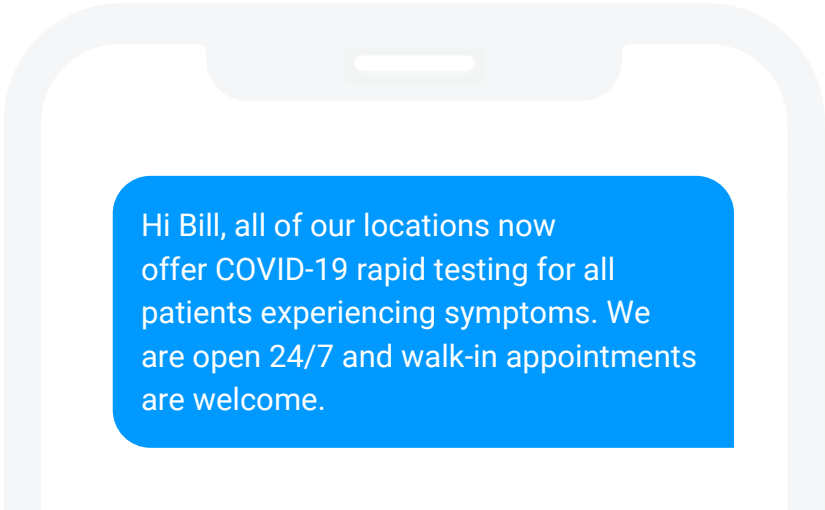
The importance of communicating via text message

Great experiences require great communication, and text messaging is the easiest way to get in contact with your patient base. Studies show that [89% of Americans](#) say that text messaging is their preferred method of communication. In addition, text messages have a stunning 98% open rate compared to just [21% for emails](#). Here are a few ways your practice can leverage text messaging.



Spread news about your practice

Mass texting is a valuable tool for practices to spread the word about changes in operations. During the pandemic, practices regularly texted patients about the availability of testing kits and the steps they were taking to limit the spread of the virus.



Hi Bill, all of our locations now offer COVID-19 rapid testing for all patients experiencing symptoms. We are open 24/7 and walk-in appointments are welcome.



Prevent missed appointments

Many missed appointments occur simply because of patient forgetfulness. A text message a few hours before can serve as a helpful reminder.



Help patients understand billing

Unfortunately, many patients are confused about how much money they owe to your practice vs. how much their insurance is covering. A text message reminder about unpaid bills can help. [80% of patients](#) want their doctors to help them manage financial responsibilities through clear communication.

No matter what steps you're taking to keep patients informed, some experience issues are inevitable. What separates the top-performing practices is how quickly they can identify these issues and take the right steps to prevent them from happening again. To accomplish this, practices need to collect in-depth feedback from their patients.



Collect patient feedback

Collecting in-depth survey feedback from your patients is a great way to stay on top of potential experience issues. Your team can fix these problems immediately before the problem escalates and a patient decides to write an angry online post about your practice.

Of course, there's an additional benefit. If you're currently getting annual reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid, you'll know that you'll need a high score on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) in order to qualify. Collecting your own feedback ensures that your team can resolve issues immediately, increasing the practice's chances of reimbursement.

Here are a few tips for collecting in-depth survey feedback.

1

Tell patients why they should fill out a survey

Patients are more likely to fill out a survey when you give them a compelling reason to complete it. Let them know upfront that taking the survey will help your practice provide better service in the future.

Your feedback helps our team provide better service to patients like you in the future!

 **NPS survey**

 **Overall score: 9**



2

Keep your surveys short and sweet

The longer your surveys, the less likely patients are to complete them. We've found that the "sweet spot" for surveys is [around 7-10 questions](#).

3

Avoid paper surveys

Do not send patients paper surveys. Not only is it harder to track results, it's less convenient for a patient compared with completing it on a smartphone.

4

Find a platform that supports reviews & surveys

We strongly recommend finding a platform that allows you to collect both reviews and surveys. There's two benefits: it will both save time for your team and allow you to track all of your patient feedback in one place.

We've discussed how practices can build an end-to-end Experience Marketing process. Now, let's look at an example of a real practice that's used patient feedback to deliver fantastic experience and attract more patients.



Experience Marketing Case study: Complete Care

[Complete Care](#) is an urgent-care practice with 16 practice locations in Colorado and Texas. For years, the practice struggled with little to no social proof online and limited visibility on search engines. Then, the practice used Birdeye to kickstart its Experience Marketing program.

HAPPY PATIENTS, HEALTHY GROWTH: EXPERIENCE MARKETING FOR HEALTHCARE





More reviews, higher search ranking

Using Birdeye's Experience Marketing platform, Complete Care set up an automated drip campaign to send review requests every 48 hours. Now, the practice has more than 17,000 reviews with an average 4.8 star rating. These reviews provide an SEO boost as well – Complete Care now ranks in the top 5 for each one of its target keywords on Google search.



Quick action on negative feedback

Complete Care takes quick action on any negative feedback that it receives on review sites. All negative reviews are routed through the Birdeye platform to a Service Excellence Coach, who makes sure that the review is responded to within 48 hours. In addition, providers are contacted with constructive feedback on how they improve their care in the future.



Easy communication with mass texting

In addition to managing patient feedback, Complete Care uses the Birdeye platform to send mass text messages to its patient base. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the team sent regular updates to the community detailing changes in operations.



Being able to handle all their Experience Marketing needs on one platform has benefited Complete Care's team immensely. Team members do not need to waste time flipping between different software systems. More importantly, they're able to see a complete view of the patient's journey, giving them a better understanding of where exactly they can improve services in the future.

RESULTS



3000%

increase in reviews



50%

open-to-conversion rate
on review request texts



4.8

star rating across 16 locations



17,000+

total reviews



Get started with the #1 Experience Marketing platform

Looking to get started with Experience Marketing? **Try Birdeye.** Birdeye is the only comprehensive, HIPAA-compliant Experience Marketing solution on the market which enables patients to manage listings, reviews, referrals, interactions, and surveys in one place.

Birdeye is committed to providing excellent service to every partner business. We give all of our partners the support they need to get the most value out of our platform. When you get started with Birdeye, we'll pair you with an Implementation Manager who can help you get the platform set up across all of your practice locations within weeks. After set-up, one of our Customer Success Managers will meet with you regularly to ensure that your team is getting the results you're looking for.

Want to join the thousands of other healthcare businesses leveraging Birdeye?

Schedule some time to speak to one of our Experience Marketing Specialists and learn why more than 60,000 businesses trust Birdeye. Send us an email at sales@birdeye.com, call us at **1-800-561-3357** or visit us at birdeye.com.