

WHITEPAPER

Why Healthcare Is Moving to the Cloud

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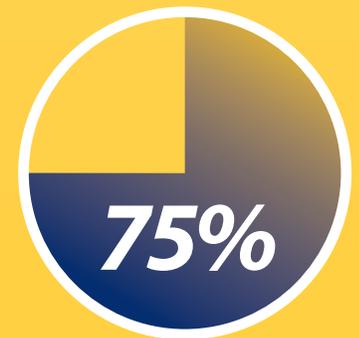
When you think of healthcare, you may not automatically think contact center. Yet most healthcare providers use contact centers to improve patient care, streamline processes and enhance patient relationships. With the advancements in healthcare technology, both patients and providers are struggling to stay relevant. Technology can seem to put distance between providers and patients, but contact centers can actually strengthen relationships between patients and providers, and enhance overall patient care.

In a 2015 global contact center survey, 70% of health plans surveyed believe contact centers play a primary role in customer retention, while 75% of healthcare providers surveyed view customer experience provided through the contact center as the competitive differentiator.

So how are contact centers enhancing overall patient care? By leveraging the most advanced technologies available to address the growing demands of patient care and the need for operational efficiency. Contact centers understand that today's consumers are savvy when it comes to technology and managing their own health. Using this knowledge, contact centers have developed automated tools such as click-to-call, self-setting appointments, and virtual agents.

When WebMD launched in 1996 it was considered a novelty and received criticism from the medical profession. As of February 2016, WebMD has recorded an average of 206 million unique users per month, and 4 billion page views per quarter. Its accessibility, usability and expert advice make it the premium health site for consumers and providers.

WebMD is just one example of healthcare technology and self-service trends patients are seeking. With the increased popularity of wearable devices that track our caloric intake, BMI and blood pressure, it's no wonder healthcare providers are struggling to keep up with the demands of patient expectations for their care. Patients are bringing this technology and knowledge to their providers, expecting them to connect these channels as part of their care. This is where contact centers can make the difference and with new technologies and cloud platforms, contact centers no longer need to let service trump cost.



Contact centers are a competitive differentiator:

*75% of healthcare providers surveyed view customer experience provided through the contact center as the competitive differentiator**

What Customer Care Groups Are Doing for Healthcare

Customer Care Groups (contact centers) are the ambassadors between healthcare providers and patients. In today's high-tech environment, Customer Care Groups have expanded beyond the traditional single-call platform and well beyond mere scheduling. Healthcare practices are challenged with providing immediate and round-the-clock services that extend to post-treatment, medication support and triage.

Customer Care Groups focus on creating a holistic model for patient care and are pivotal in improving timely customer experience and reducing not only costs, but also patient readmissions. Readmissions totaled **\$41 billion in spending in 2014** and can represent an increased cost and inconvenience for both the provider and the patient. In one study,

Customer Care Groups were shown to **reduce hospitalization by 45% and costs of care by 27%**, simply by providing patients with access to post-treatment follow-up and nurse triage.

This is a small list of what customer care groups can do for a healthcare provider.

- Proactive patient care
- Centralized scheduling
- 24/7 call intake
- Nurse triage
- Pharmaceutical
- Multi-lingual support
- Pre and post-treatment support
- Multi-channel support

SAMPLE CASE STUDY



Diane is a 37-year-old who was just released from the hospital after shoulder surgery. The next day, Diane receives a call from the healthcare provider's Customer Care Group asking how she is feeling and if she has any questions or concerns regarding her release orders.

Diane does have a concern. She states that she is experiencing nausea from her pain medication. The agent asks some detailed questions, makes a note on Diane's profile and tells her that her Primary Care Physician will be notified. The Primary Care Physician reviews Diane's symptoms and adjusts her medication. He updates her profile, sends a new script to her pharmacy and notifies the Customer Care Group of the changes.

The Customer Care Group agent calls Diane to inform her that her physician has called in a different pain medication and that she can pick it up at her pharmacy. Diane thanks the agent and picks up her new medication that does not nauseate her. Her care was enhanced by a collaborative effort organized by the Customer Care Group and cloud technology, and she avoided going to Urgent Care or having to make an appointment with her physician's office. Her needs were met in a matter of hours from the comfort of her own home and at the cost of a Customer Care transaction versus an on-site visit.

Through the power of cloud technology, the above case study could be further developed to allow Diane to establish her choice of how that post surgery communication came in. Instead of a phone call as follow-up to her modified prescription, cloud technology can allow Diane the choice of notifications via SMS, email or mobile application integration all with further customization to Diane to improve her experience.

An Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Can Enhance Patient Experience

Too many companies view IVR solely in terms of inbound calls. In practice, the technology already enables many patients to self-service with bill pay, prescription renewals and appointment confirmation. It also allows companies to provide proactive support and personalized notifications to their patients by individual preference (text or voice). Click-to-call technology and virtual agent are only a few of the compliments to an IVR to enhance patient care.

When a patient needs assistance beyond the IVR, their information is seamlessly passed to an available agent, who easily identifies the caller on a desktop application. The caller's full profile is instantly relayed to the agent through Computer Telephony Integration and there is no need to re-authenticate. The agent can even know what the caller did in the IVR and why they were passed to an agent, thus creating a more meaningful relationship. If the patient is calling from a mobile device, they may even choose a video call and see the agent to whom they are conversing.

SAMPLE CASE STUDY



John is a 65-year-old retiree. He recently received a new prescription that must be renewed every 30 days. John receives a notice via email that his prescription is due for renewal, it also contains a contact number for easy self-service.

John calls the toll-free number and is put through a voice active IVR. He authenticates using his voice print and tells the IVR he needs to renew a prescription, the IVR accesses John's account. If John has more than one prescription to renew, the IVR will list choices of each prescription available for renewal. John easily renews his prescription, which is automatically sent to his pharmacy.

But John needs to speak to customer care representative about a bill that he received from his primary care provider. John says,

"I need to speak to Customer Service."

"Okay, I hear you need to speak to Customer Service. Tell me what you need help with."

"I have a bill that I don't understand."

"I can help you with that."

Based on what John asked for, the IVR routes John's call to a dedicated skill in the Customer Care Group. The skill has representatives who specialize in the accounting area. John's profile is automatically passed to the representative who answers the call.

"Good morning, John. My name is Kathy. How can I help you?"

The representative has all the information she needs to answer John's questions, including a full history of his account, his latest bills, his plan and any other notes associated with his account. John is able to have his questions answered in a single call.

Moving into the Cloud

Cloud technology is taking contact centers to the next level.



*By 2020, global healthcare cloud computing is expected to reach \$9.48 billion.**

When you consider all that cloud technology does for healthcare, you can understand why most predictors are pointing to the cloud as the future of healthcare. As our lifestyles become more global, the need for a more global, flexible platform for our healthcare becomes more urgent. Cloud technology allows for:

- Physicians to access medical records remotely
- Patients to gain 24/7 access to medical records
- Collaboration between providers
- Healthcare apps that help patient engage in their treatments

And that's just the beginning. As millennials enter the market, they are driving healthcare changes.



71% of millennials want doctors to provide a mobile app to actively manage their health, and 63% are interested in passing on data from wearables to their doctor.†

Mobile applications are all about patient engagement. Patients can receive alerts on their mobile device that let them know lab results are in, medications that are up for renewal or if an appointment should be scheduled. Physicians can monitor medication adherence, patient vitals or post-treatment care. Mobile apps give patients more control over their treatment and a greater connection to their healthcare provider by creating a network of resources for the patient.

* <http://www.marketsandmarkets.com/PressReleases/cloud-computing-healthcare.asp>

† <http://www.salesforce.com/industries/healthcare/health-cloud/>

The Rewards and Risks of Cloud Services

With all the benefits of moving to cloud technologies, you may be asking why every healthcare provider isn't jumping into the cloud. It's noteworthy to point out that the healthcare industry is a decade behind in technology. Electronic Medical Records (EMR) only recently entered the scene and it's estimated that **a little more than 80% of licensed physicians are compliant with EMR.**



When it comes to customer experience, financial institutions have far surpassed the healthcare profession in technological advancement. In the past five years, financial institutions have given us voice biometrics, virtual agents and mobile banking, while healthcare has struggled to convert medical records and integrate basic systems.

But as the search for the perfect medical provider grows, healthcare providers are going to need to step up if they don't want to be left behind. Cloud technology is the future and the rewards outweigh the risks.

REWARDS

- ☑ Workforce optimization improving productivity, staffing and quality control
- ☑ Secure deployments and management with real time security patches, updates and expert, outside management
- ☑ Enhanced scalability and flexibility with omni-channel connectivity, immediate access to new features and real-time service management
- ☑ Cloud file management for Electronic Medical Records (EMR), data storage, and collaboration
- ☑ Improved insights through real-time dashboards and historical reports
- ☑ Increased reliability and redundancy
- ☑ Multi-location support directing calls and activities to the proper facility
- ☑ Easy integrations across companies, locations, and applications

RISKS

- ☑ Regulatory Compliance
- ☑ Contractual Breaches
- ☑ Data Breaches

The future of healthcare lives in the cloud. With wearable devices and mobile technology, more patients are seeking flexible healthcare options that meet their global lifestyle. If they live in Nebraska and get sick in New York, they expect their healthcare provider to have access to their medical records and for the physicians to collaborate.

Cloud technology allows for greater data storage, a more robust collaboration and stronger security of patient records. By in large, cloud providers do a better job of managing infrastructure and Operating System patches than on-premise IT. And when it comes to multiple locations, having your operations in the cloud allows for directing calls and activities to the proper facility when a contact center is unavailable. It's the ultimate Business Continuation Plan (BCP).



Next Phase: Customer Experience and Healthcare

In all of this cloud technology evaluation and strategy, do not overlook the value of a great customer experience. Technology takes us into the future with conveniences, mobility, flexibility and interconnectedness. But consider technology as a tool to enhance customer experience. They do not compete with one another, but rather complement each other.



Customers of every industry are driving the need for integrated systems and immediate response rates. They expect companies to respond to social media comments in 8 hours, to answer their calls in less than 20 seconds and to have first call resolution.

Healthcare is only now realizing the necessity to create outstanding customer experiences to retain patients. The healthcare providers that understand customer experience is the differentiating factor patients use to decide which healthcare provider they use are the ones who are successful and will thrive in the future. And the cloud is the key to great customer experience.

Healthcare is being recommended to evaluate cloud technology integrations and create a path that incorporates the right balance of people, process and technology to move into the future of great healthcare operations.

When it costs 6-7 times more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing customer, can organizations really afford to skimp on service? Customer Experience encompasses every customer touch point. Customer Care Groups are one touch point, but still remains the single most deciding factor in customer satisfaction.

The future of healthcare is cloud technology. To be current with existing and future patient demands, healthcare needs to move to this technology or jeopardize being left behind.

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