

# Bringing Voice of the Customer to the Patient Experience



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We're now living in a world where nearly everything can be handled with the click of a button - paying your electric bills, making a dinner reservation, booking a flight, etc. We have a wealth of information and power, all at our fingertips, which make it easier to move about our day-to-day tasks. So, when an experience isn't seamless or easy, our frustration levels are higher than ever.

An industry where we see the highest levels of frustration is in healthcare. The journey of a patient isn't an easy one. In addition to the physical agony or the mental toll of health concerns, the bookends of the experience resemble a by-gone era. How frustrating is it to be on hold waiting for an appointment eight weeks out? Or receiving an indecipherable bill months after your procedure? It's time healthcare steps into the 21st century.

This is easy to say but hard to do... or is it? As with all change, it just takes a first step and then slowly but surely, momentum will build. The key to taking that first step is at the heart of the experience - the patients and the employees. It's not enough to think you know a patient's experience, you need to let them tell you their biggest points of frustration (small and large) and use their feedback and take action. Bringing in the customer's voice is the key to advancing forward.

A key question we often hear about starting this kind of gargantuan and daunting change is "where do I start?" We've broken down our '10-steps to success' for how to bring a Voice of the Customer program to life within healthcare, with the hopes of lessening the burden of that ask.

## Go outside of healthcare for inspiration.

Don't reinvent the wheel! Healthcare is far behind the curve when it comes to customer experience. This means nearly every other industry has already tackled the beast, tested approaches, and found the best way forward. Learn from approaches taken in retail, banking, and e-commerce and adapt for the patient.

## Agree on "early indicator" metrics.

Ground your team in what you're striving toward. Whether it be ease, satisfaction, or something that better suits your organization, having a guiding light will let you know if you're on the right track as you begin to build and act on insights. Push for metrics that will be your hint that there is too much effort at a touchpoint, which creates baggage and diminishes trust.

## Just start, test, and learn.

Don't overthink it! Pick an area to explore and dive in. Learning from your customer is not a one-time thing. Evolve as you put in new programs, processes, and technology and see how your patients react.

## Close the loop from the beginning.

Knowing your patient's pain points are only useful if you can help solve them. Offering (near) in-moment support to resolve 1:1 issues are crucial to a positive patient experience.

## Recognize and reward.

Support the efforts of your team as they test, learn, and improve. This will not be an overnight fix or change. It takes time to build a movement and we all need encouragement along the way.

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### Identify what you know and don't.

We always think we know everything, don't we? Sometimes, we only think we know. Pinpoint exactly where you have questions or are missing a clear picture of the experience. This will let you know where you need to do some research, run your first studies, etc.

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### Map the TOTAL journey.

Being a patient doesn't start when you sign into your doctor's appointment or check into the ER. How did your patients find your physician or make an appointment? What about after they left the office? A patient may love their physician but the billing process is so arduous they look elsewhere for help. Understanding every step is crucial to optimizing the total experience.

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### Pick one data platform.

Technology is key, but keep it simple. Having all of your data under "one roof" allows you to quickly compare, digest, and interpret.

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### Co-create with employees.

Don't forget your most valuable assets - your employees. Their firsthand knowledge is essential to ask the right questions and know the patient voice.

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### Immerse leaders - empathy.

Reading about something is great, but living it is transformative. We highly encourage leaders to live the frontline experience and see how things work in reality vs. the processes created behind the scenes. The added benefit is that it allows employees to see leaders as humans.

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Patients have more choice than ever before. We have high expectations of our experience and want our providers to step up.