



Exploring the
Fundamentals of
Patient Experience

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Leveraging Technology and Best Practices to Attract and Retain Patients

Competition amongst medical care and insurance providers has hit an all time high thanks in part to health care reform. With added options available to patients, the power has shifted to those seeking medical care, rather than those providing it. This shift has resulted in significantly altered patient expectations; patients once focused solely on obtaining quality medical treatment now expect a more robust and effective experience whenever dealing with a medical provider.

According to a wide range of studies and surveys, today's patients expect:

- That a medical provider knows them and their history
 - Their problems to be listened to and heard
 - A provider to be available at regular hours, through multiple channels
 - The ability to conduct limited business and find information without assistance
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- To be given clear advice regarding care options
- To be treated by staff who show care/concern/compassion and
- To be treated by staff who are professional in their work

Meeting these expectations requires a commitment to creating and maintaining effective patient experience. Without such a commitment, the modern health care provider faces an uphill battle to attract and retain patients.

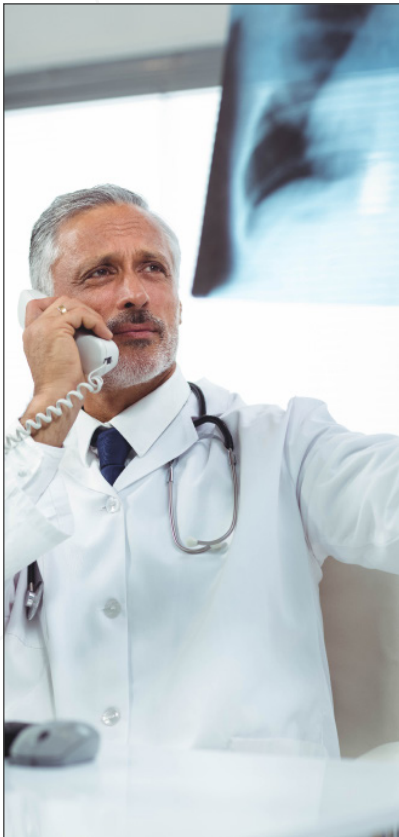
The Added Challenges of Providing Quality Experience in the HealthCare Field

While any organization that offers a service or product faces significant challenges in attracting and retaining customers, medical providers must contend with additional pressures, including:

- **Confidentiality concerns:**
Medical providers must maintain strict confidentiality and security policies whenever interacting with patients. Streamlining the patient experience while under pressure to protect patient information can be difficult.
- **Regulations:**
Few industries face the same regulatory pressures as the medical field. From The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to the Health

Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, medical providers must adhere to multiple regulations. Any and all patient experience technology or strategy must also adhere to these regulations.

- **Diverse patient requirements:**
The wide range of needs commonly addressed by medical care providers makes it difficult to predict a patient's needs and adds challenge to managing patient records and treatment plans.



Overcoming these challenges can be difficult, but a comprehensive approach can overcome these hurdles and create an appealing experience for each and every patient you serve.

Building a Comprehensive Approach to Patient Experience

Boiled down to their basest form, patient demands include that a provider know who they are, communicate efficiently, address their personal needs and maintain simple access to care documents and information. Addressing these demands requires a comprehensive approach. Building a 360-degree customer experience involves the implementation, optimization and integration of multiple technologies and best practices. Understanding your patients' demands, and the strategies for meeting them, is vital to the ongoing success of your practice or organization.

There are a number of key goals all medical providers should strive for when creating an effective patient experience, including:

- Maintain effective communications
- Know your patient
- Support patients in all stages of the selection and care process

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

As we've already seen, today's patient expects an unparalleled level of communication from their healthcare provider. This goes far beyond simply answering their phone calls or responding to emails. The modern patient expects a much deeper level of interaction with their provider, including:

- **Omni-channel communication:**
The modern patient communicates with their healthcare provider in many ways, including over the phone, online, through forums and in person. Despite the challenges of managing and maintaining peak effectiveness of each of

these channels, doing so should be a focus of any healthcare provider.

- **Responsiveness:**
Patients expect swift responses to their questions and concerns. This means making a commitment to tracking patient communication and following up as quickly and effectively as possible.
- **24/7 access to information:**
The ongoing advancements in mobile and networking technology have led to an increase in patient expectations regarding 24/7 access to assistance. Maintaining availability around the clock ensures patient access and eliminates the frustrations of forcing patients to operate within standard hours.
- **Language flexibility:**
We live in a diverse society made up of speakers of countless languages. Providing support for your patients, regardless of their native language,

helps to put them at ease during a troubling or confusing point in their lives.

Creating and maintaining the wide range of communication channels and supporting technologies can be difficult. The effort is worth it, however, as the more options patients are given to access your services, the more likely they are to continue to remain loyal.

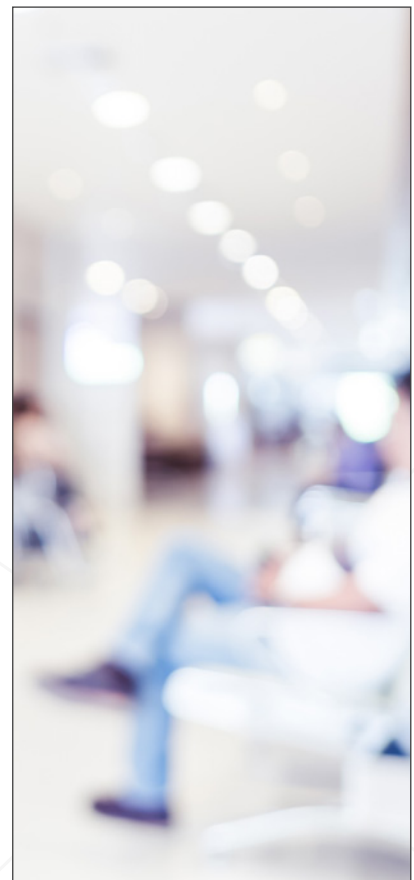
KNOW YOUR PATIENT

Effective communication is just the first expectation of today's patient. Modern patients also expect their provider to know who they are each and every time they interact with a representative. Today's medical providers are expected to:

- **Know their patients' history:**
The digitization of medical records has eased the challenge of tracking a patient's history. Maintaining detailed records of a patient's medical history, preferences and interactions with your organization is vital to

your ability to support the patient to the fullest.

- **Understand their patients' needs:**
In order to streamline the experience, medical providers should make an effort to understand and predict the communications, medical and support needs of patients. This includes understanding patient preferences, predicting changes in patient needs and planning strategies for managing the future requirements of current and potential patients.





- **Track current treatment plans:** No patient wants to have to explain their current treatment plan or medications to a care provider, especially when that provider is responsible for the treatment plan in question. Carefully tracking your patients' treatment plans is vital to the quality of care, and their overall experience with your organization.

Obtaining and leveraging patient information to its fullest is key to providing the effective experience your patients demand.

SUPPORT PATIENTS AT ALL STAGES

The most successful medical providers take great care to support patients at all stages in

their experience. Medical providers offer support to patients in a wide range of ways, including:

- **Self-service portals:** The rapid rise in mobile computing and internet access has led many patients to expect online access to their medical provider. From appointment scheduling to follow-up documentation, self-service portals play a key role in the interaction between providers and modern patients.
- **Mobile applications:** Smart phones and tablets have become the go-to tool for many patients seeking to access medical data or scheduling information. Many medical providers have seized the

opportunity offered by mobile devices by creating custom applications that give patients the ability to manage their own care on their own time.

- **Additional resources:** Medical providers that offer additional resources, such as support groups, informational resources, community forums and other outlets are able to eliminate much of the fear and confusion patients feel when facing health issues. This leads to a much better experience overall, and lessens the strain placed on patients and professionals throughout the treatment process.

By offering supportive programs and applications, your organization can



streamline the patient experience and instill a sense of loyalty that leads to repeat business.

Patient Experience Technologies and Best Practices

Understanding the demands of your patients is simply the first step in creating a holistic approach to meeting their needs. To create a truly effective patient experience, it is important to explore all available technologies, best practices and strategies across the healthcare industry and beyond. Only by utilizing the wide range of technology and strategy available can you

support patients to their expectations.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE TECHNOLOGIES

Medical providers have a wide range of technologies from which to choose when attempting to create an effective patient experience. Today's medical provider can build a patient experience on:

- **Contact center platforms:**
The modern contact center involves a great deal more than telephony, including chat capabilities, behavioral analytics and interactive voice response. Arming your employees with the technology and support they need to serve patients is vital to the quality of each and every interaction. It is important to choose

a platform that meets your needs and is flexible enough to evolve with your business.

- **Customer Relationship Management platforms:**
Obtaining, managing and utilizing patient data is key to their overall experience with your organization. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools, such as Microsoft Dynamics CRM, make the task of compiling and using patient data much more manageable. Tracking patient medical history, past communications and their preferences streamlines future interactions and provides a more enjoyable experience.
- **Custom access portals:**
The modern patient expects the ability to access personalized

information via a customized web portal on your website. Offering patients the opportunity to make or change appointments, view test results or contact a provider via a web portal encourages interactions and promotes self-service. As your access portal becomes more robust, patients are offered a deeper level of engagement – the more tasks a patient can accomplish on their own, the less strain is placed on your contact center.

- **Mobile applications:** The creation of custom mobile applications has become an affordable and manageable prospect for many medical providers. Arming patients with mobile access to your practice offers yet another opportunity for engagement. By creating a robust mobile app, you can arm your patients and prospective patients with the information they need to make treatment decisions, schedule

appointments, track test results and much more.

By selecting one or a combination of these technologies, medical providers may be able to create an experience that attracts and retains loyal patients.

PATIENT EXPERIENCE BEST PRACTICES

Technology is but one part of the overall patient experience. In order to truly serve patients, medical providers should understand the industry's best practices, including:

- **Plan carefully:** Creating and maintaining effective patient experience requires a good deal of foresight and planning. Without planning, your efforts may be wasted, or the results of your investments may be less than optimal. Create a roadmap for your patient experience efforts, considering both short and long term goals.
- **Measure results:** There are a number of data points to consider when measuring the effectiveness of your



patient experience efforts. Patient satisfaction, employee morale, call times and more should all be carefully tracked and compared to gauge the impact of new strategies and plan for future efforts.

- **Integrate technologies:** Combining the power and functionality of multiple patient experience platforms increases their overall effectiveness exponentially. For example, integrating your contact center



and CRM platforms streamlines agent access to customer data, thereby improving their ability to serve patients during every interaction. The more integration you can create between your experience technology platforms, the better they will work to serve you and your patients.

- **Remain current:** Patient demands are continually evolving. So too are the technologies and best practices designed to meet these demands. In order to maintain an effective experience, you must commit to evolving with your patients, the industry and the technologies available to you.

- **Be innovative:** When even a minute improvement in your patient experience can attract customers, it is important to explore every available option for development. Always remain open to new and changing opportunities, and keep an open mind as to which technologies and best practices are right for your organization and your patients.

By taking steps to implement these best practices, the modern medical provider is positioned to offer the most effective patient experience.

Summary and Review

Overcoming the many challenges of creating an effective experience for customers or patients can be difficult in even the best of situations. When dealing with the added pressures of the healthcare field, creating an experience that attracts and retains patients can seem impossible. Fortunately, through a mix of innovative technologies and proven best practices, medical providers can create a comprehensive patient experience that meets the stringent demands of the modern consumer.



Contact Center Platforms

The modern healthcare contact center involves a great deal more than telephony, including chat, patient portal integration, behavioral analytics and natural language voice response. It is important to choose a platform, such as Interactive Intelligence CIC, that meets your needs and is flexible enough to evolve with your business.



Customer Intelligence

Obtaining, managing and utilizing patient data is key to their overall experience with your organization. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools, such as Microsoft Dynamics CRM, make the task of compiling and using patient data much more manageable.

Patient Experience



Patient Access Portals

The modern patient expects the ability to access personalized information via a customized web portal on your website. Offering patients the opportunity to make or change appointments, view test results or contact a provider via a web portal encourages interactions and promotes self-service.



Mobile Applications

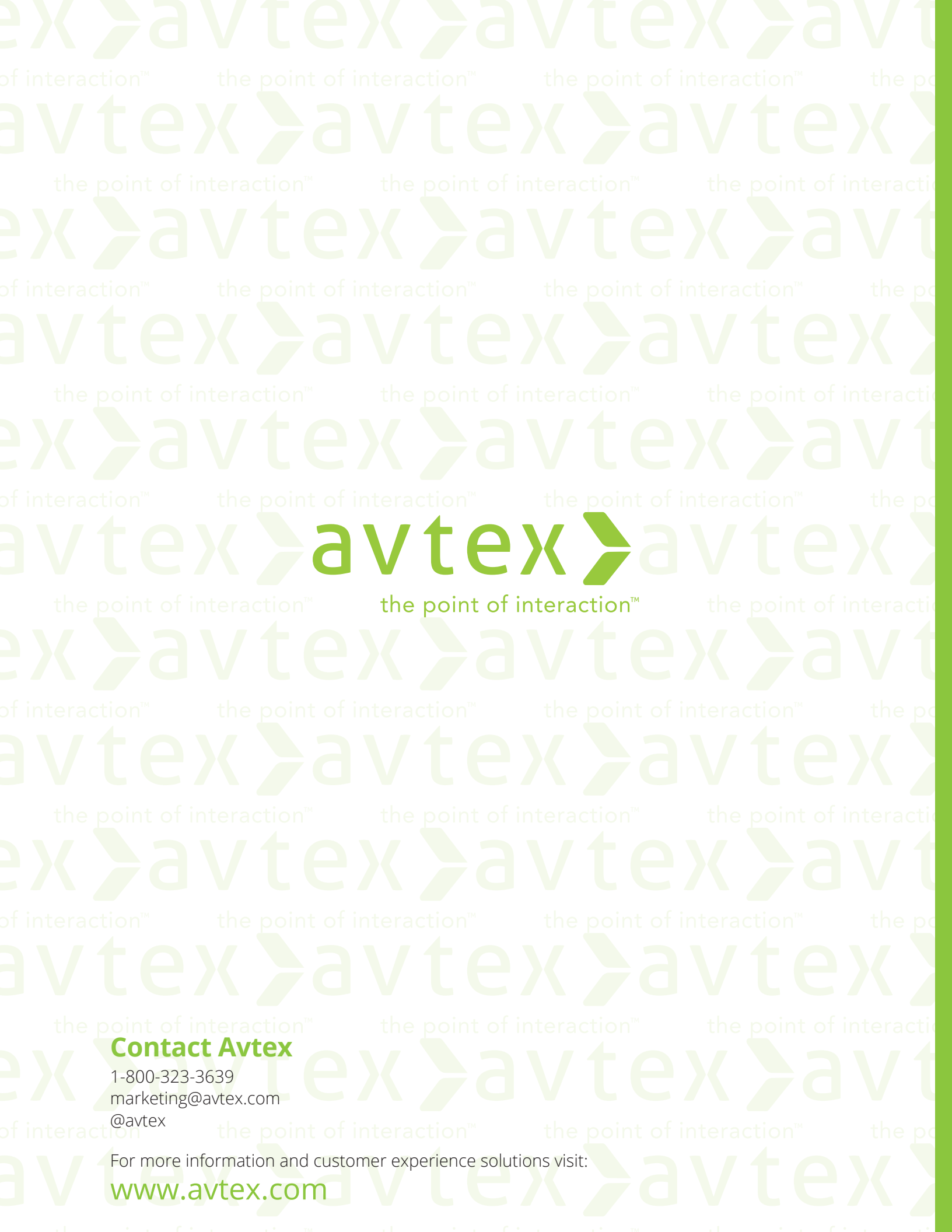
By creating a robust mobile app, you can arm your patients and prospective patients with the information they need to make treatment decisions, schedule appointments, track test results, manage wellness and even assess illness.

About Avtex

Avtex is an end-to-end CX technology deployment partner that provides professional services and solutions. Our customers receive unique CX technology deployment delivered with accuracy, consistency and vision specific to their organization to ensure an integrated customer experience for every point of interaction.

Avtex has helped healthcare companies create experience strategies, integrate technologies and develop IP. Our innovations in healthCare include PatientView EMR integration middleware, visual physician, mobile behavioral health assessment, nurse triage, and more.

Driven by technology know-how and passionate about customer experience, Avtex is uniquely qualified to help clients deliver exceptional experiences to their customers.



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the point of interaction™

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For more information and customer experience solutions visit:

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