Transforming the Healthcare Consumer Experience
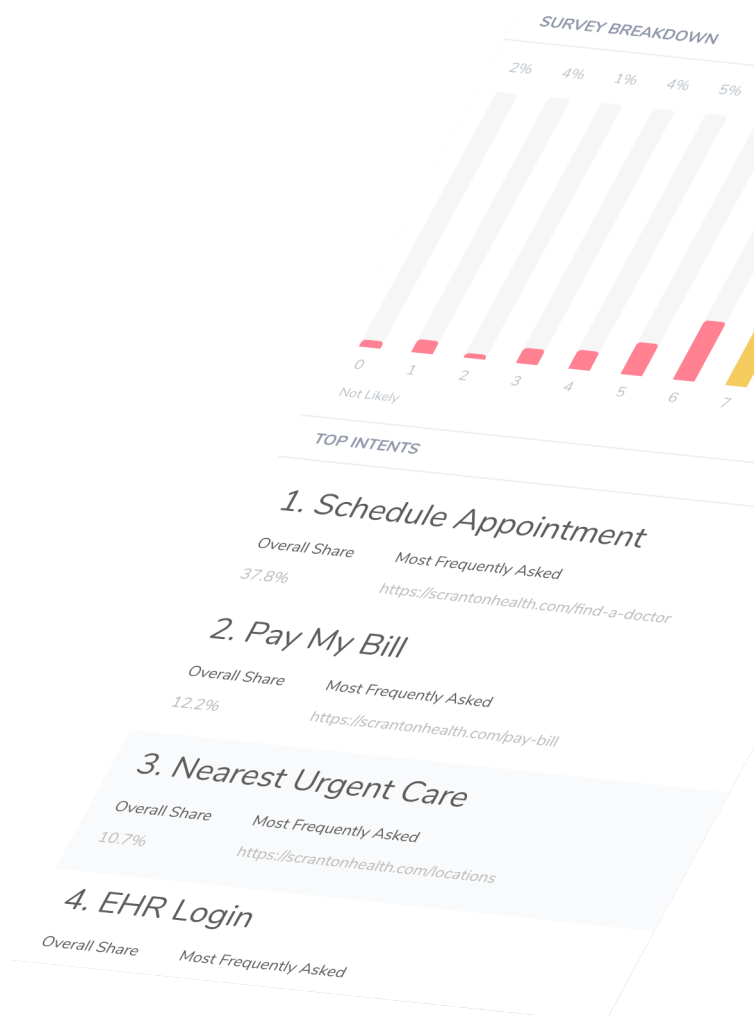
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This eBook is for healthcare providers and health system leaders, technology decision makers, and digital experts looking to transform the consumer experience

A central focus for healthcare providers today is improving the consumer experience. In fact, 94% of healthcare CEOs[1] are making technology investments to better the patient experience, and for good reason. According to a recent survey from Cedar, 41% of consumers[2] would stop going to their healthcare provider over a poor digital experience. Even more so, consuming-facing technologies outpaced provider-focused tools with $4.2B over 514 deals versus $3B over 264 deals.[3]

Which begs the question, with the amount of investment dollars and initiative from healthcare CEOs into transforming healthcare into a more consumer-centric experience, which consumer-focused technology solutions should be prioritized?

For healthcare providers, the focus should be to **implement solutions that address these five areas**:

1. Access and Convenience
2. Communication Portals
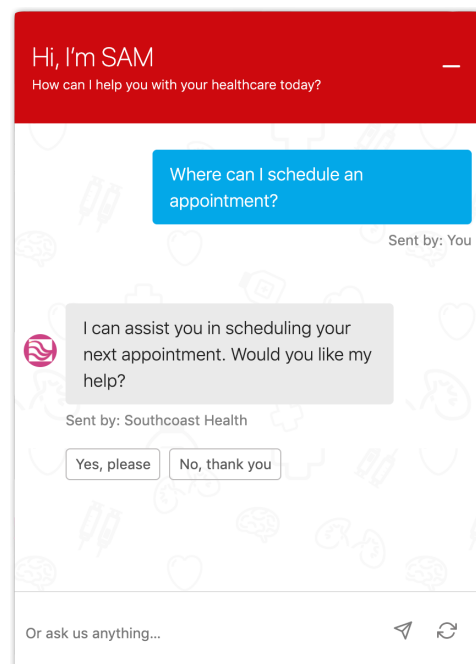3. Dynamic Provider Search
4. Transparency
5. Analytics

SURVEY BREAKDOWN

2%   4%   1%   4%   5%   8%   10%

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Not Likely

TOP INTENTS

1. Schedule Appointment
Overall Share   Most Frequently Asked
37.8%   https://scrantonhealth.com/find-a-doctor

2. Pay My Bill
Overall Share   Most Frequently Asked
12.2%   https://scrantonhealth.com/pay-bill

3. Nearest Urgent Care
Overall Share   Most Frequently Asked
10.7%   https://scrantonhealth.com/locations

4. EHR Login
Overall Share   Most Frequently Asked

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Access and Convenience

Consumers expect access and convenience and self-service options when it comes to scheduling appointments online. This option is no longer a "nice-to-have" on a health system website, it's a necessary feature that consumers expect. A survey by Accenture found that 70% of GenX and Millenials[4] stated the ability to book, change, or cancel appointments would increase their likelihood of choosing a provider.

Online appointment scheduling equates to large revenue opportunities for healthcare providers, with the revenue potential valued at nearly $3.2B.[5] Considering 43% of appointments are scheduled outside of business hours[6], 24/7 availability is an opportunity for additional revenue flow that a health system operating only during regular business hours will miss out on.

Provider websites need to include:

- Self-Service Access
- 24/7 Availability
- Online Scheduling Access
- Seamless Website Navigation

Hi, I'm SAM
How can I help you with your healthcare today?

Where can I schedule an appointment?

Sent by: You

I can assist you in scheduling your next appointment. Would you like my help?

Sent by: Southcoast Health

Yes, please   No, thank you

Or ask us anything...

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Traditional Access Points

If contact centers are the only available option for patients, abandonment rates due to wait times is undoubtedly an issue - and those times don't even have to be long. If the wait time is longer than a minute, 60% of consumers are likely to not wait for a live agent.[7] Providing alternatives to contact centers is proven to reduce hold times.

Piedmont Healthcare reduced wait times **85%** for customers using live chat versus customers using phone.[8]

Key Stats

70%

of GenX & Millennials state the ability to book, change, and cancel appointments online is important.

60%

of consumers are not willing to wait on hold for more than a minute.

43%

of appointments are scheduled outside of business hours.

While industries like retail and finance have embraced self-service options for consumers, healthcare providers need to prioritize accessible and convenient online scheduling solutions in order to provide a more consumer-centric experience.

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| **Communication Portals**

If health systems aren't providing a modern search experience and solutions for consumers to find immediate answers to their most pressing health questions, then health systems are not only negatively impacting the digital patient experience, but also their brand. Consumers are likely to abandon a website if they can't find what they need, and 68% of consumers who bounce back to search engines[9] because of a poor site search experience are likely to never return to that site.

If site search is the primary tool for website navigation, then health systems are not communicating the way consumers actually search. Considering 50% of search queries are 4 words or more[10], one solution that can address this shift in consumer search behavior is conversational AI solutions that can process natural language queries, like our chatbot, Guide.

Our research indicates that healthcare consumers use between **5-13 words** when they communicate with a chatbot. Enhancing the digital patient experience requires communicating how healthcare consumers communicate, and providing a modern search solution that utilizes conversational AI will enhance the overall digital patient experience.[11]

Vertical: Number of Conversations
Horizontal: Word Count

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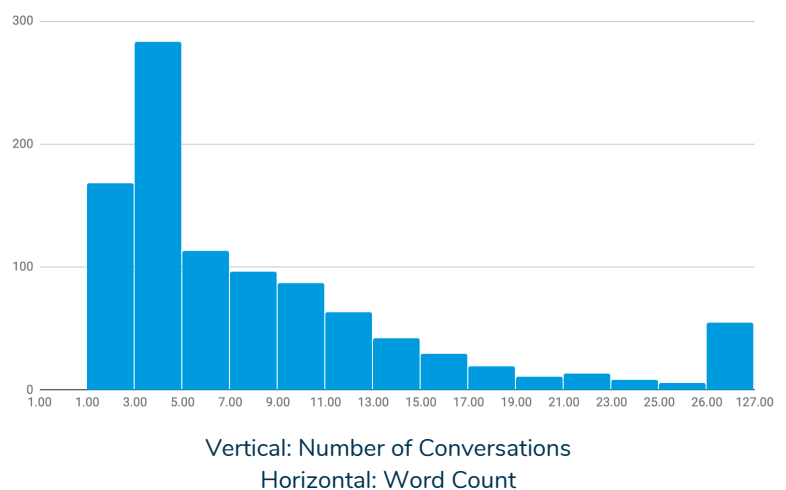
Dynamic Provider Search

Consumers today expect to find what they need anytime they want. In retail, finding the perfect pair of shoes requires a simple search and the results align with the consumer's needs. For healthcare consumers, that means finding the right provider, at the right time with a dynamic provider search solution.

If a health system relies on simple keyword matching for their provider search results, then consumers who don't use the exact keywords are left with inaccurate results and without the right provider.

Connecting with the right provider requires a robust taxonomy library (collection of related healthcare keywords) and connecting that taxonomy with related entities like provider location, accepted insurance, and a physician's availability. When provider search combines all of these factors in their results it ensures patients find the physician they need at the time they need it.

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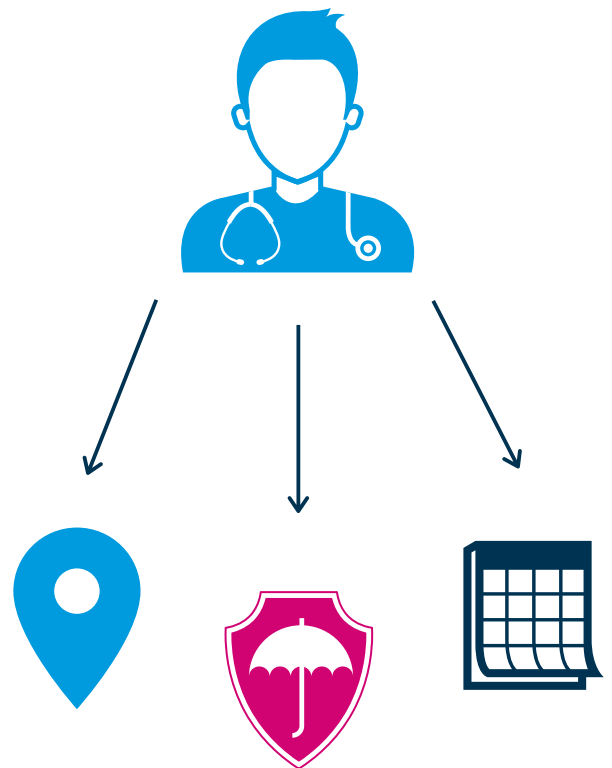
Transparency and Insight

Consumers rely on reviews to influence purchasing decisions like what clothes to buy and which restaurants to frequent. Healthcare providers need to provide that same level of transparency. After all, patients are trusting physicians with their health, and consumer feedback and reviews allow patients to make informed healthcare decisions.

Reviews also have the added benefit of improving organic search rankings on Google, which is critical to driving new patient acquisition since 77% of patients use online reviews as the first step in finding a doctor (per Software Advice). In fact, Columbus Regional Health experienced a **94% increase in new users** and a **88% increase in organic search results** after implementing Loyal's data publishing platform, Empower.[12]

If health systems want to align their consumer experience with how new patients search and evaluate healthcare decisions, then providing a transparency platform that increases online searchability and posts patient reviews is imperative.

Consumers Expect

Patient Reviews

Verified patient reviews allows potential consumers insight into physicians

Physician Star Ratings

Star ratings increase patient visibility into previous patient experiences

Reviews Provide

- Increased organic search results

- Increased new patient acquisition

- Deeper insights for consumers

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| # Analytics Platform

Intent marketing is redefining how healthcare markets target and personalize the digital patient journey. But understanding consumer intent requires more than just website analytics and analyzing search queries. An analytics platform that can provide actionable insights from complex conversational data and online consumer behavior is critical to understanding how patients arrived on a health system website and the steps in between that led to a conversion.

To deliver content and personalization to consumers at the precise time, health systems need to leverage data for actionable insights from sources like:

Conversational AI platforms

Website analytics

Google keyword queries

Health systems can use the data to then improve the online journey by identifying content gaps on the website and locations where consumers drop off.

Track Website Conversions

If there are certain pages where consumers continuously search for downloadable forms like pre-appointment forms, health systems can incorporate dynamic workflows in their chatbot platform. Each conversion translates to consumers finding what they need, and health systems understanding the consumer's intention for visiting the website.

Transforming the Healthcare Consumer Experience

Transforming the healthcare consumer experience doesn't boil down to a single solution - it requires a **variety of solutions coalescing**. However, to get the maximum effect out of all of these solutions, the foundation that manages all of these technologies and the data that powers them needs to be centralized, structured, and able to manage information at scale.

Aggregating and enriching your health system data, like with Loyal's data platform Connect, ensures that all of these related solutions operate together to transform the healthcare consumer experience.
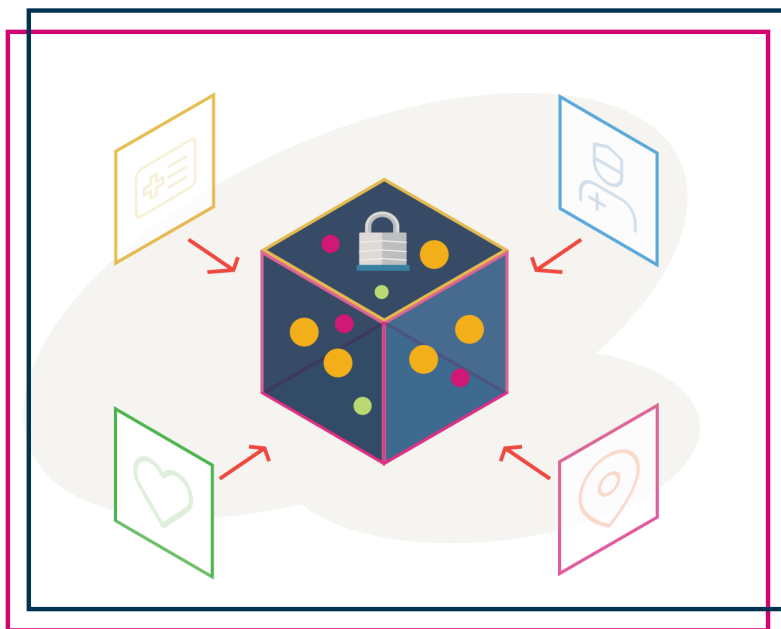
Influencing consumer behavior and gaining patient loyalty cannot be achieved with siloed solutions. It requires a complete healthcare consumer platform with structured data and solutions that work together to enhance the consumer experience starting from the initial search, to scheduling an appointment online, to publishing patient feedback, all the way to actionable insights and analytics for the healthcare provider.

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