Seven Ways To Deliver Exceptional Healthcare CX
Accelerate Your Journey To Exceptional CX

Healthcare organizations are struggling to deliver exceptional customer experiences (CX). There are several factors contributing to less-than-stellar CX in healthcare, such as the industry’s complex ecosystem, lack of actionable customer understanding, and heightened customer expectations. These problems continue to inhibit payers, providers, and pharmacy benefit managers from aligning around their shared customers. But better CX can result in more loyal customers, improve care outcomes, and reduce costs.

Now is the time to start — or accelerate — your journey to exceptional CX.
The Healthcare CX Ecosystem Is Fragmented And Complex

As customers move through their healthcare journey, their experience can be extremely disjointed. Throughout any given journey, customers encounter a variety of parties: health insurers, healthcare providers, pharmacy benefits managers, durable medical equipment (DME) companies, and drug companies — all of which have difficulty working together and are burdened by stringent regulations and inflexible legacy systems. This complex ecosystem makes it difficult for healthcare firms to deliver the experiences their customers desire.

The Patient’s Healthcare Ecosystem
Healthcare Organizations Continue To Be Driven By Gut And Assumptions

Healthcare firms continue to miss the mark when it comes to delivering an experience that resonates with their customers.

For example, the health insurance provider industry ranked No. 15 out of 19 industries in Forrester’s US Customer Experience Index (CX Index™) for 2018.

This inability to deliver high-quality CX — whether physical or digital — creates barriers to customer engagement. Too often, healthcare firms:

**Have a limited understanding of customers’ wants, needs, and behaviors.** Healthcare firms have been slow to adopt and leverage voice-of-the-customer data. This makes it difficult for firms to understand customers, let alone create experiences that meet customer expectations.

**Focus on digital channels at the expense of overall customer experience.** Because of their emphasis on cost cutting, healthcare firms tend to invest in digital channels while neglecting investments in physical channels. That’s a mistake: Data from Forrester’s CX Index shows that “website and mobile app” was the least important driver category in determining a payer’s overall CX Index score.

**Do not control the end-to-end customer experience.** A complex ecosystem that includes many partners with disconnected systems means healthcare customer journeys are still quite fragmented. For example, many health insurers now offer telehealth options for urgent care and behavioral health needs. However, these options are not always embedded into the payer experience. Instead, they require customers to visit an additional website and register with another login and password, a process that is neither seamless nor easy.
Seven Ways Healthcare Firms Can Improve CX

Healthcare leaders can address barriers to delivering great customer experience with seven priority initiatives:

01

**Aggregate existing data and insights.**

Healthcare firms should inventory the data that’s scattered throughout their organizations and bring it all together for a holistic view of the customer. Even though the data will not be perfect, and collecting it is hard, this step is both necessary and possible.

02

**Adopt a prioritization framework.**

To make the most of limited resources, healthcare leaders should prioritize CX projects based on criteria that include customer impact, business impact, and feasibility. To identify these projects systematically, create a simple prioritization template and generate scores for each proposal. This formal process will guide firms to the optimal initiatives and replace the gut assumptions that healthcare firms often rely on.

03

**Incorporate insights and feedback into the design process.**

Digital health company ZappRx used insights gathered from a clinician survey to help demonstrate its value to clinicians. The insights showed that it can take 19 minutes just to complete the forms necessary to start the specialty pharmacy process. ZappRx focused its messaging on the reduction in time for clinicians — touting that it will only take a few minutes when using the platform — reducing administrative burden by streamlining and automating what is normally a lengthy and cumbersome process.
Make clear communication a priority.

To ensure that communications are clear, healthcare firms can adopt approaches like developing an enterprisewide clear communication campaign, leveraging tools such as Health Literacy Advisor, and looking to outside communications consultants who specialize in clear communication.

Personalize experiences based on deep insights.

Customer expectations for relevant, personal interactions are rising. Taking a person-first approach and understanding customer motives is the foundation for personalization. Healthcare leaders should showcase the strength of the more personal relationship by demonstrating the benefits to the business.

Lead Your Personalization Efforts In Human Terms, And Business Outcomes Will Follow
Marry the customer journey and supporting ecosystem.

As healthcare organizations continue to improve and expand their ecosystems, they must choose partners that fit with their strategic vision for CX. To determine how current partners perform — and identify gaps in the ecosystem — healthcare leaders must map the customer journey and ecosystem. Ecosystem maps represent the behind-the-scenes view of an experience. When used to complement a customer journey map, they present a holistic view that reflects not just what the customer experiences but what the organization does to make the experience possible. Ecosystem mapping can help identify weak-link partners that they should seek to put on notice or replace — or uncover experiential gaps that a partner or internal intervention may be able to fill.

Empower employees and clinicians with the right digital tools.

Healthcare leaders must look for ways to help employees and clinicians deliver better customer experiences. For example, the “prehab” and rehab app PeerWell was created when its founder saw the challenges that his father faced during his knee replacement journey. The app helps providers deliver better customer experiences and also improve patient outcomes. It enables patients to be more in control of their health, from pre-surgery through the post-surgery rehab experience. The app offers daily checklists, which include customized exercises and lessons, to take the confusion out of a diagnosis and help patients better prepare for surgery, as well as for what comes next.
Focus On The End-To-End Experience Of Your Customers

Healthcare organizations can deliver good customer experiences if they embrace an outside-in perspective. To improve the end-to-end customer experience:

Make journey and ecosystem mapping a regular activity. Customer demands change rapidly, so healthcare firms must continuously refresh their journey and ecosystem maps to keep up. Healthcare firms that are new to journey and ecosystem mapping should look for short-term wins that improve customer service to build an initial success story. Start by finding the top three reasons that customers engage with customer service — and implement solutions that minimize their impact or make them go away entirely. This approach allows you to both demonstrate value and quantify impact. And once you start to gain traction within your organization, iterate and expand on your mapping activities to build empathy and trust with your customers.

Drive action by listening to both customers and employees. When designing and iterating experiences, continuously listen to not only the voice of the customer but also the voice of the employee. Engaged employees provide valuable feedback as well as superior service. Gathering insights from a wider range of stakeholders helps firms detect a broader range of negative experiences and develop new types of projects to engage customers.

Seek outside assistance to fill knowledge gaps. Evolving to meet customer demands may require knowledge and skills that many healthcare organizations lack. Healthcare firms must take a hard look at internal capabilities to determine whether they have the right talent and knowledge to staff a CX program and to not be afraid to look to outside agencies to fill the gaps.
QUIZ
How mature is your CX program?
Great CX requires excellence in six competencies.

EVENTS
Attend Forrester’s Customer Experience Forums to meet with and learn from industry thought leaders.

PODCAST
Health insurers have an opportunity to redefine the member experience to boost satisfaction and engagement.

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