7 Ways Healthcare Organizations Can Innovate the Patient Experience

Industries and categories across the board have upgraded the customer experience, and it’s time for healthcare to catch up.
About Prophet

We believe there is a better way to grow and have created a next generation consultancy to deliver on that belief. So, what do we mean by “better”? Better is about unlocking growth and becoming better as an individual or as an organization. It means better customer experiences, better engagement, better design, and better answers on how to win.

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41% of those surveyed believe the healthcare system is more concerned about money than people’s well-being.

Introduction

Industries and categories across the board have upgraded the customer experience …and it is time for healthcare to catch up.

Today you can…
…browse real estate online, compare prices, and analyze lending rates in seconds
…book an entire vacation in minutes, and instantly download boarding passes to your phone
…track your pizza from order, to baking, to delivery (and who’s responsible at each step)

Yet, in healthcare you…
…have to decode insurance plans to determine the best one for you and your family
…wait days, weeks, and even months to have certain procedures done
…receive bills months after a visit, explaining what didn’t get covered

Prophet conducted a nationwide survey to better understand key needs in healthcare. We found:
35% feel “doctors largely provide an impersonal service and have no time for their patients.”
40% fear the lack of clarity and transparency in healthcare.
41% believe the healthcare system is more concerned about money than people’s well-being.

We found that the needs we see at a societal level are also felt deeply in the ever-changing healthcare industry. Healthcare, pharmaceutical and insurance companies can and should meet the needs of their patients by drawing inspiration from some of the most innovative companies in the world, both in and outside of the healthcare industry.

In this eBook, we will shine a spotlight on several brands that are doing just that. By understanding the deeper needs and pain points of their consumers — beyond the functional and physical — these brands are resonating with their consumers in powerful ways.
Brands no longer have any excuse to inconvenience their customers. Inaccessibility, lack of communication or delays in service have no place in a modern world. We’re incredibly connected. We operate in real time. And access to information is wildly abundant. Yet, unfortunately, due to the complications in the industry, inconveniences are all too common in healthcare.

Patients operate in a world of convenience. They live in a world of seamless systems and accessible knowledge. And yet they don’t see the healthcare industry as seamless or accessible at all. In a recent study, Prophet found 45% of patients surveyed believe “the healthcare system is broken.” That number isn’t all too surprising. Changing policies, lack of access and confusing prices make the industry anything but convenient.

But healthcare brands can still make a positive impact. By focusing on ways to make healthcare experiences more convenient, companies can change the landscape and bring the industry into the 21st century. And some companies are already doing this — when we look at brands both inside and outside the healthcare industry, we’re inspired.

We see businesses offering customers fluid ways to go from need to satisfaction. By taking a closer look at these organizations, we can find a way to bring what they do well into the healthcare space.

CONVENIENCE IN ACTION

We don’t have to look far to find the ultimate brand of convenience. References to Amazon are approaching cliché, but our expectation of the ease that Amazon delivers has been ingrained in our modern psyche. Amazon makes it easy for everyone, from full-time students to full-time moms, to get the things they need quickly and efficiently. Amazon Prime, a service that gives subscribers free 2-day shipping for $99/year, has shaped consumers’ buying habits. It allows people to buy an astonishing variety of products from Amazon without worrying about how it will be delivered to them. It also offers special perks for specific types of consumers. Amazon Mom provides mothers with a
20% discount off diapers in addition to all the benefits of Prime. Amazon Student grants college students Prime services for half the cost.

Convenience is now synonymous with the brand, and Amazon is becoming synonymous with growth. At the beginning of this year, the company reported $29.33 billion in sales. Their focus on convenience as a primary offer is enabling the brand to redefine what’s expected from everyone else.

In the world of healthcare, the future of convenience is in young companies. Pager is a mobile app that allows users to check out doctors nearby and request a home visit, then wait for a doctor to confirm. When they do, they arrive within two hours, thus enabling house calls at the tap of a button. NYC residents can skip the wait and hassle of emergency rooms and the busy doctor’s office and get care in the comfort of their home, office or hotel right away.

As young as it is, Pager has the potential to be a major disruptor in the healthcare convenience space. Currently only operating in New York, with 20 doctors in the service, they are no doubt in the experimental stages. However, there is hopeful precedent for the company. Uber, now valued at over $10 billion, in 2010 had 3 cars and only operated in New York. Shared between these two companies is a new kind of convenience in a frustrating market. Pager, if successful, stands to prove the possibilities Uber has within the taxi industry.

**WHY CONVENIENCE MATTERS**

**Convenience encourages trust.** When the basics are covered, people trust that you can deliver more. Convenience doesn’t mean making it easier for people to do things that are ordinarily difficult. Convenience is about making the most basic elements of a business easily understood, accessible and actionable. When brands put the essentials within reach, they gain the trust that is necessary to build relationships that move beyond the basics.

**Convenience is expected.** There is too much ease in the modern world to ask customers to work for your business. Like it or not, today’s world is all about access — to information, to support and to options. Brands that have customers expend extra effort for these basics only inspire frustration. Aligning to customers’ expectations tells them your healthcare brand lives in the 21st century.

**Convenience inspires loyalty.** When you make it easy for people to interact with your brand, they’ll do it again. Imagine how easy your last Amazon transaction was. When it comes to the things you need, wouldn’t you choose simple over complicated? When a brand offers convenience, they gain loyalty because of they’re accessible. Sometimes the path of least resistance is, in fact, the path most traveled.

Convenience is not a word synonymous with laziness. Convenience is the way of things. Bringing healthcare brands into the world of convenience not only enables ease, but also enables the opportunity for significant growth. Let’s bring healthcare into the 21st century. Let’s offer customers a little more convenience.
Health is personal. Whether it’s your genetics, eating habits or response to medication, your health is a collection of activities and behaviors that are anything but cookie-cutter. So why is it that so many healthcare solutions are one-size-fits-all? Apparently, everyone is supposed to eat a Mediterranean diet. Supposedly, all of us should hit the gym 3 times a week. And allegedly, everybody needs to take aspirin to prevent heart disease. Can these generalized healthcare recommendations possibly take into account all the nuance and complexity that make us who we are?

Tailored solutions that respect our individuality seem too few and far between, and professionals who take time to understand patients deeply are much too rare.

In a recent study conducted by Prophet, 35% of patients surveyed said that they feel “doctors largely provide an impersonal service and have no time for their patients.” Patients clearly desire personalized care, but struggle to find it. Customization of healthcare offers a clear way for brands to engage more deeply and effectively with the people they serve.

In order to understand how customization can be applied to healthcare in winning ways, it’s important to look at who’s doing it well — both inside and outside the industry.
CUSTOMIZATION IN ACTION

To observe how customization can lead to more effective solutions, we can take inspiration from a century-old delivery service. UPS’s My Choice home delivery service lets consumers choose when and where their packages are delivered, offering them greater transparency, control and customization. In the past, package delivery has been very inconvenient for customers, with inflexible timing and location options. UPS created My Choice to allow previously unseen customization to the delivery system. Flexible controls allow the customer to choose where and when the package is delivered, while transparent tracking and clear and proactive notifications via text, email, or phone allow greater convenience and awareness for the consumer.

The control, customization, and efficiency of My Choice is a central part of how UPS is growing. As of October of last year U.S. operating profit increased 7.8% to $1.3 billion, a direct result of increased productivity.

Recently, wearables have emerged as a customization approach celebrated by health-focused brands, like the Nike Fuel Band and the Fitbit. Yet, one company has taken these health trackers to a new level of personalization. Benecure harnesses the data from these wearables to customize programs that help users manage chronic conditions. Using the information captured by the wearable, Benecure evaluates how closely the user is following a physician’s recommended instructions. The more closely the user adheres to suggested activities, the closer they get to receiving rewards, like free gym sessions or fresh food deliveries. Linking day-to-day personal behaviors to pre-determined healthcare goals enables users to feel a sense of control through the customized application. Benecure goes a step beyond the basic wearable to deliver a clearer, more personalized path to wellness.

While Benecure is new to the healthcare innovation space, it shows significant potential for growth. In 2014 it was selected for a healthcare accelerator in its hometown of Chicago, enabling its continued success and funding. Additionally, Benecure has recently joined MATTER, a healthcare innovative hub through which it will expand its network and influence, establishing the brand in the industry it is actively a part of creating.
WHY CUSTOMIZATION MATTERS

There are three reasons we believe customizing healthcare solutions is a more meaningful way to engage with patients:

Customization is personal. When patients are a part of customizing their healthcare, whether it’s in sharing something personal to inform a procedure or being given options for medical intervention, patients feel their unique perspective is being taken into consideration. This makes people feel more comfortable and open to taking the necessary steps to improve their health.

Customization means control. For patients, the healthcare industry can feel uncomfortably polarized. On the one side, you have average people seeking healing. On the other, you have healthcare professionals who wield all the expertise and information that leads to it. Customization bridges this gap and brings the patient into the process of finding solutions for their health issues. When people feel in control of their care, they will also feel more confident and engaged.

Customization creates data. In order to customize a healthcare solution, you need to get personal. And you can learn a lot when a patient shares personal information. The better healthcare professionals understand their patients, the more knowledge they’ll have to inform patient relationships, medical recommendations and professional research. All of which enables better care.

Customization doesn’t just mean picking the color of your new iPhone. It’s a powerful tool for getting to know the patients you serve and adjusting to their unique situation. Customization in healthcare enables professionals to understand their patients and provide care that is more personal, effective and informative.
Ease

In a perfect world, finding a doctor would be easy. In a healthcare paradise, getting medication, knowing prices for procedures and sharing your medical history would be a seamless, streamlined process.

But it’s not.

Healthcare in America is complex, if not chaotic sometimes. In a recent survey conducted by Prophet, 40% of participants said they fear the lack of clarity and transparency in healthcare. From understanding networks to translating provider doublespeak, there is a demand and a downright necessity to simplify healthcare.

The simplicity movement is on the rise, whether it comes in the design of new online platforms or in the simplified language of brands choosing transparency over small print. New approaches both inside and outside the healthcare industry signal that simplification works.

As with healthcare’s empathy problem, in order to understand how we can solve the complexity problem, we must look both outside and inside the healthcare industry. Looking at innovations in simplification outside healthcare can inspire our thinking and help us to see the industry differently. And looking at those disrupting the system of complexity within the healthcare industry can show us how the tide is turning.
EASE IN ACTION

In the last decade, Turbo Tax, an Intuit company, has revolutionized the way Americans file their taxes. It’s upended the painful idea of doing taxes by providing an online platform as effective as an actual, human tax accountant. The TurboTax software simplifies a highly complex and overwhelming process by minimizing time spent filing taxes and maximizing tax returns. The design is simple, completed in easy to understand step-by-step instructions, with the ever-present option to contact customer service. TurboTax continues to iterate its accounting methods to streamline the process for consumers. By guaranteeing maximum tax returns and 100% accuracy, TurboTax effectively launched itself into a category of its own: convenience and ease in an industry traditionally defined by obstacles and struggle.

Combining simple instructions, clean design and accessible customer service has enabled Turbo Tax to grow consistently over the past decade. In 2014 they reported an additional 14% growth in online sales, contributing to overall Intuit growth of 13% in the same year.

What Turbo Tax is doing for taxes, Oscar is doing for health insurance. Oscar is an online healthcare search engine, available in New York City and New Jersey that allows people to enter their symptoms, shop for and talk to a doctor with the click of a button. It also track customer visits, prescriptions and lab work in an intuitive timeline located on the website. Oscar was founded in an attempt bring the efficiency, transparency and design of consumer Internet companies into the ugly, byzantine world of health insurance. The company’s mission is to use simple design, big data and transparency to improve customer experience and customer knowledge.

Oscar highlights an additional element of simplicity through their unique, humorous and approachable brand voice. In one of many ads plastered in MTA subway stations and on NJ transit cars, Oscar quips about the style of their service, “Health insurance that won’t make your head explode. And if it does, you’re covered.”

The approach seems to be working. The small company has expanded from New York to New Jersey and soon plans to open shop in Texas and California in late 2015. It now claims 10% market share for the health care exchange in New York.

WHY EASE MATTERS

There are three significant ways we believe “simple” makes an impact.

**Ease inspires confidence.** When healthcare organizations craft simple, easy to understand methods of interaction, patients feel empowered. Clearly seeing how they fit into the healthcare system enables patients to feel confident that they know where they stand. With confidence, patients are more willing to engage.

**Ease signals transparency.** Hiding behind complex small print and a labyrinth of network specifications creates confusion, leaving patients feeling intimidated. But enabling open communication through simple language and clear instructions gives patients a
sense that healthcare organizations are on their side. Transparency equals trust, and with trust organizations can attract more consumers.

Ease is inviting. When patients feeling they can approach healthcare organizations, they’re comforted. A wall of complex rules, restrictions and medical jargon leaves patients feeling frustrated. When organizations open the door of communication through simplicity, they allow consumers to feel cared for and protected.

Whether through design, brand voice or just an honest acknowledgment of the healthcare hoops, providers must find a way to maintain growth and offer patients a respite from the exhausting struggle to seek quality healthcare.

There’s growth in simplicity.

Connectivity

Healthy relationships are essential to a healthy life. When we’re able to maintain our most important connections, we feel the support we need to get through difficult times. Yet, in the healthcare industry — where connection is vital — disconnection is common. Disconnection between doctors and their patients. Disconnection between patients and their families. Disconnection between healthcare institutions.

Patients crave connection. Both in their personal lives and in the care they receive. In a recent survey, Prophet found 44% of patients surveyed believe they “don’t get the feeling that doctors collaborate and work together; many tests are carried out two or three times, particularly when it comes to chronic illnesses.” If doctors aren’t talking to one another, what gives patients confidence that connectivity is possible? What keeps them from thinking that disconnection is the norm in the industry?

Fortunately, connectivity is possible: between doctors and patients, between patients and their loved ones, and across institutions. Looking at organizations that make purposeful connections — both inside and outside of healthcare — helps us see how the industry can increase connectivity and offer the kind of support that is the foundation for healthier lives.

CONNECTIVITY IN ACTION

People with shared interests build connections that last a lifetime. And companies that can manage to establish connections between customers stand a chance to win hearts and minds over the long haul. One such company is Meetup. Now in its 13th year, Meetup is an online service that helps groups of people with shared interests plan events and facilitate offline group meetings in various localities around the world. While most online services for meeting people are focusing on dating and romance, Meetup was one of the first to bring people together with common interests to simply plan and enjoy fun activities.
together. Users can search for existing activities by location and interest, or create their own for people to join. Meetup establishes an ongoing relationship with its users by facilitating their ongoing relationships with one another.

Meetup’s approach is not only validated by its longevity, but the platform continues to grow. The site now hosts over 20 million members and has grown to 130 employees. The success of Meetup inspires us to think about the ways in which patients with chronic conditions may find comfort in being connected to one another.

A connection between doctors and patients is important. But when a family member is undergoing surgery or confined to an extended hospital stay, the connection between patients and families is equally important. MyCareText is a messaging tool for connecting patients and their family members with their healthcare providers throughout the entire cycle of care. It is a cloud-based, messaging platform that works with your EHR to send texts and email to family and friends to inform them of the patient’s progress, to help with organizing tasks, and to provide information in real time in order to keep key support people in the loop. Its simplicity of function encourages participation of the family in a team effort to reduce stress, to speed up recovery, and to help ensure successful outcomes.

The platform is new, but it’s gaining attention. In fact, it was selected for the Healthbox healthcare accelerator in Chicago, and was recently adopted into 5 new hospitals in the
St. Louis area. MyCareText proves that connectivity for everyone in a patient's life can make all the difference.

WHY CONNECTIVITY MATTERS

There are three reasons why we believe connectivity is primary to growing healthcare brands.

Connectivity is human. Building connections is what makes us who we are. Without consistent connection we can feel isolated and ignored. Not only do these negative emotions lead to poorer health outcomes, they hinder openness and transparency between doctor and patient. Enabling connection means empowering people to be themselves.

Connectivity inspires hope. When patients feel connected to the professionals who provide care and their support systems that provide encouragement, it leads to hope. When they see how all the pieces are working together, there's a sense of understanding, a sense that they're involved in the process and the outcomes are within their control. And confidence can help patients persevere.

Connectivity challenges convention. In a digital age connectivity is all but a guarantee. Yet, connectivity within healthcare is still an open territory. Brands that emerge with real, convincing and useful ways to connect every player in the healthcare story will differentiate themselves considerably. Even today, patients expect disconnection; brands that change that are brands that will grow.

Whether it's connecting people through common struggles or providing access to information for a patient's support system, connectivity enables providers to offer better care with more compassion. Healthy relationships are all about connection, and when connections are strong so too is the support that enables health.
Connecting with customers enables growth in any industry. But where many brands go wrong is in thinking that social media “likes” equal connection. It’s not about “likes” — it’s about understanding. Only through understanding can companies create meaningful connections with their customers, or in the healthcare industry, their patients. So what does that look like?

In a word: Empathy.

As author and researcher Brene Brown puts it, “Empathy is feeling with people.” The act of feeling with people couldn’t be more important than in healthcare. Patients are not just numbers or collections of symptoms. Patients are people.

In a recent study conducted by Prophet, 41% of 1,000 U.S. citizens said they believed the healthcare system is more concerned about money than people’s well-being. Unfortunately, in an industry that focuses on care, patients feel abandoned. They believe no one is feeling with them. It is a worrisome reality that can lead to less trust in the system and create barriers to a healthier populace.
But some organizations are turning the tide when it comes to empathetic care. Both inside and outside the healthcare system, businesses are showing customers what it’s like when an organization feels with them. The results have growth written all over them.

**EMPATHY IN ACTION**

CarMax takes empathy seriously by providing a simple, hassle-free car shopping experience. It provides a large selection of high-quality, previously-owned cars at low, fixed prices, and completely removes negotiation from the buying process. Its approach makes the process of buying a used car less unpleasant and stressful by focusing on making customer satisfaction the goal of the transaction, not the salesperson and his pursuit for commission. Employees are trained to deliver high-touch service through an in-depth understanding of the customer and his or her specific auto needs and requests. CarMax even removes some of the anxiety associated with buying a car by offering the ability to return the car within five days of purchase, helping potential customers see the practicality in buying used cars. With less pressure to commit, customers can rest assured that they have the time and options to find something they like.

Through their customer-centric, understanding approach the business has grown steadily over the years. In 2014 the brand saw 9.6% growth, increasing their revenue to $10.96 billion. Additionally, profit for the brand saw a jump of 5%.

CarMax inserted empathy into the car purchasing process, and inserting empathy into healthcare also starts with understanding the customer. GE Healthcare provides the perfect example of feeling with patients through their Adventure Series, a specially designed imaging system to be more inviting for pediatric patients. GE found that MRIs and other imaging services tend to be scary for children and difficult to sit through, often resulting in repeat visits. So they looked at the problem empathetically through the eyes of the children. Through themed imaging rooms, the Adventure Series leverages fun characters, lush visuals and hands-on activities to enhance the imaging experience for the children and their families. With the new imaging, children feel more comfortable participating in screenings that could potentially save their lives.

Employing the system enabled significant savings for healthcare providers. In fact, in the first two years of implementation the number of sedations for pediatric CT procedures fell by 99 percent — from 354 cases to just 4.

**WHY EMPATHY MATTERS**

**Empathy creates understanding.** Fighting confusion and misinformation within healthcare can be difficult. Through empathy, both providers and patients can find understanding, allowing for more trust and clarity on both sides of the healthcare coin.

**Empathy opens doors.** Caring is a two-way street. When organizations make real connections with customers they are more willing to share information about themselves and their conditions. When patients feel safe, when they feel they are treated like
people, they open doors to their lives, enabling providers to make more informed decisions about treatments and remedies.

**Empathy builds relationships.** Patients that feel connected to brands reciprocate that connection through their loyalty. Feeling understood drives a feeling of trust and comfort that few other things can. With that comfort, meaningful connections are established and long-term relationships flourish.

Creating a meaningful connection with patients takes time, energy and creativity. But, as an organization, showing that you can feel with people makes a dramatic difference. Whether through a focus on service or technology, putting the position of the patient first enables the truest path to growth.

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**Motivation**

Oftentimes, people know exactly what they need to do, but they don’t do it. Sometimes it’s not a knowledge gap, but a motivation gap. Most of us can admit — to ourselves, if not our healthcare providers — that we’d prefer to stay on the couch, binge-watch Netflix and eat delicious junk food that will clog our arteries.

Being proactive about our health takes effort. And the key to that motivation is positive reinforcement.

The literature defines positive reinforcement as: “the addition of a reinforcing stimulus following a behavior that makes it more likely that the behavior will occur again in the future.” Essentially, when our personal trainer tells you you’re an athletic goddess for finishing a set of pull-ups, that’s positive reinforcement. And it works. When people are properly motivated to do things they intrinsically do not want to do, behavior can change, new habits can develop and people can make themselves healthier.

The healthcare industry could use more positive reinforcement of healthy behavior. Healthcare brands that motivate patients through positive reinforcement can gain more engagement, more recommendation and contribute to a healthy populace. It’s not about holding people to unreasonable expectations regarding their health; it’s about acknowledging the reality of our negative behaviors.
and positively encouraging people to change them. The “care” in healthcare implies we understand others. Luckily there are some notable brands that have taken this understanding and used it to improve the lives of the people they serve.

At Prophet, we believe looking at how motivation and positive reinforcement are used inside and outside the healthcare industry can teach us how best to change patients’ behavior for the better.

**MOTIVATION IN ACTION**

CrossFit is a fitness brand started in 2000. With a focus on strength and conditioning, CrossFit consists of several fitness techniques, from gymnastics to weightlifting, aerobics to calisthenics. CrossFit takes a fresh approach to the typical gym environment packed with machines and individual exercising. What truly differentiates CrossFit is their community approach to fitness. CrossFit thrives on motivation. CrossFit gyms are hubs of encouragement, support and positivity. Motivation doesn’t just come in the form of cheering one another on; CrossFitters hold each other accountable to their goals, and look out for everyone both physically and emotionally. It is this environment that creates the infectious culture of CrossFit. The brand has taken the very individualized form of exercise and expanded its appeal through creating a community of motivation.

Having grown from 13 CrossFit affiliate gyms to 10,000 in the last 10 years CrossFit has seen incredible growth. In 2007 the CrossFit games were created. The games have grown from a simple backyard event to a major spectator sport sponsored by ESPN and Reebok. The CrossFit organization is now a 40 million Dollar enterprise proving that creating motivation among customers is a great way to grow.

One place we can feel the least motivated to adopt healthy behaviors is in the workplace. This was the insight gathered by the Adam Bosworth, co-founder of Keas, an employee health and wellness program. Keas combines social media and online games to create happier, healthier workforces. Keas is a website that employees use in the workplace. The participants get points, badges and achievements for completing tasks and support their coworkers in achieving their goals. Keas believes that to successfully change behavior, people need to be effectively engaged around common, meaningful goals. It uses gaming mechanics, social interaction, and small groups to motivate people to exercise. Gaming mechanics, also called “positive reinforcement”, gets participants acknowledgments, points, and status within their group. The social feed allows them to share what they have done and ask for advice.

This kind of motivation has been received extremely well by consumers. This year Keas reported enjoying 300% growth in 2014. It’s a clear indication that when motivation is in short supply, healthcare brands can step in and make a big difference.

**WHY MOTIVATION MATTERS**

There are three reasons we believe motivation and positive reinforcement matter so much.
**Motivation inspires.** Changing behavior is hard. But when we’re properly motivated, we can actually do it. It’s a celebration. And as behavior changes, people see their progress and are inspired to keep pushing forward. This inspiration equals growth and loyalty to brands who can offer it.

**Motivation is contagious.** When you see your friend or family changing their behavior for the better, it’s a contagious feeling. There it is being proven to you. Undoubtedly, people believe they too can be motivated to move forward. As more become motivated, more are inspired and therefore more join the movement.

**Motivation evolves.** Positive reinforcement demands that brands are constantly offering new tools and products to suit the changing motivations experienced at each stage of one’s healthcare journey. This requirement allows brands an incentive towards growth that, in itself, is a motivation to motivate others.

Whether through gamification or creating a culture of encouragement, positive reinforcement and motivation can turn reactive healthcare costs into proactive healthcare savings. Healthcare brands are in a unique position to help patients save time, money and sanity by motivating them to practice more health behaviors through simple motivation techniques. There’s growth written all over it.

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**Empowerment**

These days, we are a Google search away from anything we want to know. This access to information gives us the power to learn new things, make more informed decisions and challenge our preconceived notions. Yet, we are still under-informed about something that shapes our everyday lives: our health.

Whether it’s finding the right diet or determining the most effective medicine for a chronic condition, finding clear, trustworthy information to make healthcare choices is hard to do. People want to be empowered by their choices, as seen from the popularity of wearables that monitor movement. In fact, 60% of adults say they track their weight, diet or exercise routine in some form. 33% say they track health indicators like blood pressure, blood sugar, headaches or sleep patterns.

There is a desire for knowledge, but it can be hard to find. Healthcare organizations have every incentive to share knowledge with customers, but it’s difficult to determine how and where to do it.

There is a solution. It’s just a matter of learning the best approach.
EMPOWERMENT IN ACTION

Empowering customers through information is something many brands have tried to do, but few have done it successfully. Nest broke through the pack. Before Nest, thermostats had remained unchanged for decades, with inflexible settings and high fluctuation cost. Nest changed that by providing a customizable, smart thermostat system that learns the users’ needs and coordinates an entire system to their schedule, saving them both energy and money. It automatically recognizes an empty house, adjusts to weather and manages temperature. Users can make direct changes through a smartphone app, even if they are miles away from home. Nest makes it easy for users to understand their habits and preferences through visual tracking updates, as well as give suggestions on how they can optimize their home, money and energy.

By empowering customers with information, Nest enables their users to make the right decisions for their living conditions. And the system works. In 2014, Google purchased Nest for $3.2 billion, enabling Nest to access the resources of a large company while retaining the independence of a category disrupting organization. Through selling the company, they ensured growth of the business.

In the healthcare space, empowerment may sound difficult. But brands like Healow, an eClinicalWorks company, are making it easy. Healow is an online platform that lets users communicate with their doctors to access appointments, lab results, vitals and medications for themselves and their family members all within one app. By tracking their numbers
regularly to watch the trends evolve, doctors can share instant feedback and keep patients up to date on their health stats. This helps make patients feel more empowered to make healthy choices overall.

Enabling patients to make choices within their healthcare program through Healow has driven significant growth for its master brand. It has contributed heavily to eClinicalWorks’ $320 million revenue in 2014, and it expects 15-20% growth on its top and bottom line in 2015.

WHY EMPOWERMENT MATTERS

Knowledge is power. Knowing where they stand enables patients to make smarter decisions about their healthcare. They feel more in control of their healthcare and more ready to engage with brands that will empower them further. Through transparency, healthcare brands can empower patients with the opportunity to choose what’s right for them.

Seeing is believing. By knowing more about the status of their health, patients can see progress when they make better choices. When their successes are made tangible, they’re motivated to keep pushing forward. When a brand offers access to information, patients are encouraged to believe that brand is an ally and not a hindrance.

Change is constant. Change can be scary for many patients, but with information people can face change with confidence. As many healthcare organizations know, moving through life stages can be strange and difficult work for patients. By providing them more information, they can ease transition and empower their ability to navigate change.

Whether through new access to information or enabling easier communication, empowering patients to make more informed decisions about their healthcare enables brands to be allies in wellness. As the source of empowerment, any healthcare brand can play a more intimate and meaningful role in the mind of the customer.
Conclusion

Healthcare, like all industries, must innovate to respond to deep consumer needs.

Healthcare brands and organizations must remember:

1: Patients are people, not objects with conditions and associated reimbursement rates.

2: The healthcare industry knows how to solve consumers' physical needs. Now is the time to look to their deeper human needs.

3: Healthcare organizations must constantly innovate to respond to a rapidly changing regulatory and competitive environment.

4: The healthcare industry must draw inspiration from the most innovative companies in the world, both in and out of category.

What is your organization doing to provide…

- Convenience
- Customization
- Ease
- Connectivity
- Empathy
- Motivation
- Empowerment
Interested in forging stronger bonds through a better patient experience?

Contact Paul for a deeper dive on how to create great experiences that will satisfy your consumers.

Or visit our website to see how we help our clients use patient experience to grow better businesses. By bridging the gap between strategy and execution, Prophet helps organizations grow better.

About the Author

Paul Schrimpf is an Associate Partner in Prophet’s Chicago office and co-leader of Prophet’s Healthcare Vertical. He specializes in developing and implementing marketing and brand strategies, rooted in his deep expertise in analytics and blending it with strategic interpretation and application. With extensive experience in developing successful marketing programs, managing complex projects to address pressing brand and marketing challenges, Paul is well versed in tackling any issue through a plethora of fact-driven approaches.

About Prophet

Prophet fuses insights, strategy, creativity, and imagination to help clients create better ways to grow. We uncover deeper customer insights, build stronger brand relevance, and deliver better customer experiences for some of the world’s most successful companies such as BMW, Cisco, Electrolux, GE, Johnson & Johnson, McDonald’s, Siemens, UBS and Zurich Financial. Our 300+ experts in marketing, innovation, digital, and design help companies bridge the gap between strategy and execution to drive real market impact.