



Earning health care consumers' loyalty through data and experiences is more important now than ever.

Twenty-first century consumers are empowered and informed. Their expectations of service are increasing at an exponential pace. The future of health is being driven in large part by consumers' demand to create more personalized experiences for themselves and for those in their care that mirror interactions they have with other industries. Now more than ever, as we

respond and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, most consumers expect convenience, affordability, and quality at each stage of care. Providers and payers must improve their ability to deliver on these consumer needs. (For the purposes of this article, we will use the term "consumer" to refer to patients, members, and caregivers).

What's at stake? Why is creating better experiences for consumers so important? Among people who consider themselves brand-loyal, [76 percent say they've used the brand for more than four years](#). Also, consumers tend to mention a good brand experience to nine people but will talk about a bad one to 16!¹ This can have a massive negative effect on loyalty, retention, and

overall revenue. In an increasingly competitive environment, can you afford this risk?

For health plans, loyalty means recouping the investment made to acquire a consumer. For providers, this means a patient's relationship with the clinician and the system can translate into higher-quality outcomes.

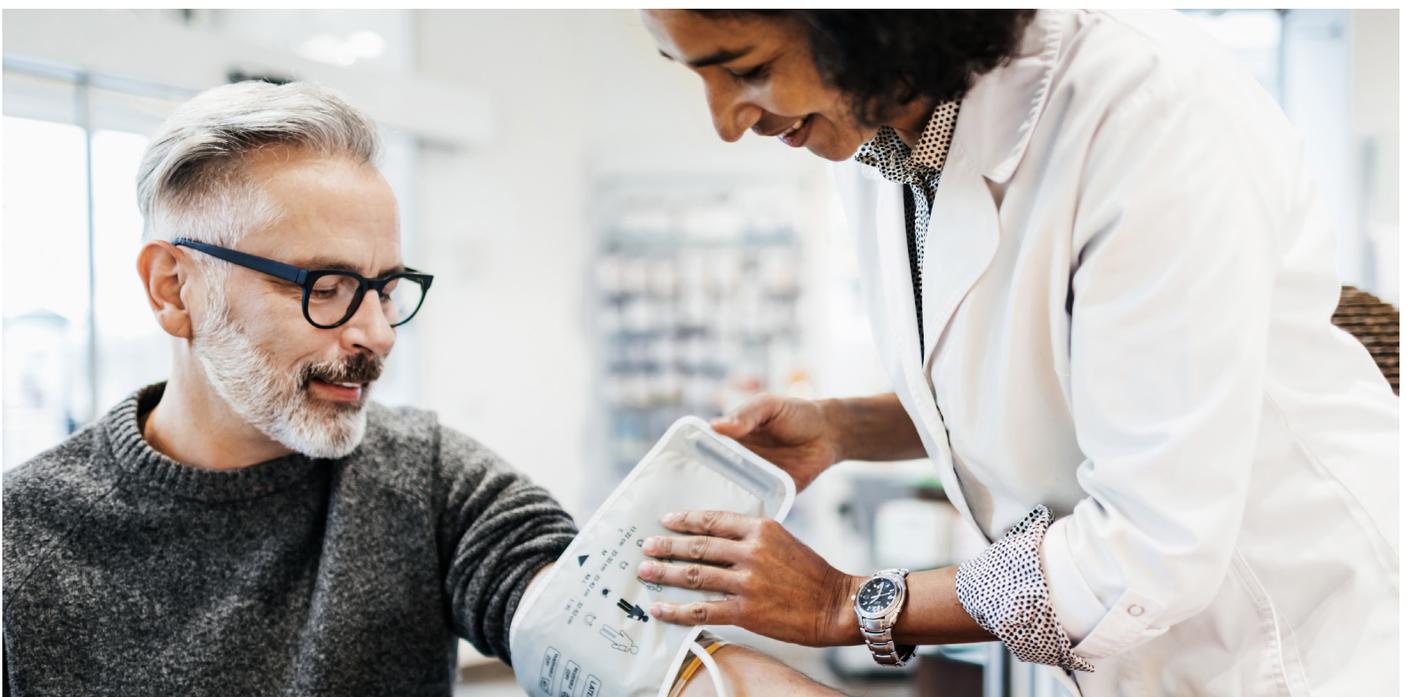
Consumers of health care services are vulnerable. They're often frightened by the thought of addressing their own health care needs. These heightened emotions can ultimately strengthen the importance of personalized engagement.

To deliver that personalized engagement, forward-thinking organizations are already reconsidering their conventional care models.

Some organizations are expanding into virtual care and telemedicine, as well as increasing digital engagement with consumers through various channels to inform, diagnose, treat and connect throughout their journey.

These types of services allow individuals to engage on their terms via their preferred channels when it is convenient for them.

However, organizations can't simply stand up these services or offerings and expect consumers to adopt and engage with them. At the core of all this transformation lies a foundational need to enhance consumer data capabilities, create a consistent view of the consumer across all channels, and offer touchpoint systems to deliver the right message to the right person at the right time. Without these enhancements, dollars can go wasted and consumer behavior can go unchanged.



Is your consumer data working for you?

Beyond their ability to provide quality care and support to individuals, health care organizations' most important asset is their consumer data. Yet in most health care organizations, data remains siloed. In some cases it's handed over to a third party to manage in a black box. These 'data fiefdoms' have been caused by expansion, mergers, and in some cases misalignment within the organization as to how best to engage the consumer.

Ask yourself this: Is your organization aligned on a consumer engagement strategy and consumer data

approach? You'll likely answer, "No." The lack of consistency and data stewardship often leaves organizations struggling to deliver valuable predictive insights, interoperable data, and a clear journey for consumers.

The good news is that many organizations have some of the foundational technology they need already in place, but their focus needs to shift from data collection toward data unification—from basic reporting to insights and decisioning, from single channel delivery to journey orchestration. This shift in focus

will help to identify and enhance engagement so interactions with consumers can be more relevant and personalized. Consumer engagement goes beyond the fundamental question of "How can I spend my marketing dollars in the most effective channels?" When applied through the lens of the consumer, a personalized outreach approach can be a powerful mechanism that proactively guides consumers to access the right care at the right time.

Data and analytics can help health care organizations improve the consumer experience in a number of ways.

A few examples:



Identifying gaps in care:

Proactively identifying gaps in care and the most effective engagement channels to address them



Onboarding:

Developing personalized, engaging, and simple member onboarding processes



Real-time guidance:

Giving consumers real-time guidance to help them conveniently access high-value care sites (physical or digital) based on their specific needs, preferences, and location, all aligned with the organization's ability to serve



Disease management:

Driving personalized disease management interventions and behavioral alerts



Customer service:

Empowering customer service agents to identify the next-best actions to retain members, personalize experience, and offer best-fit plan options



Predicting needs:

Predicting behavioral health needs and episodes

What to do about it?

The time to act is now. The impact you can have at your health care organization depends on you and your colleagues' ability to deliver on a consumer-centric promise and elevate the human experience.

Here are four key steps we recommend to make progress, regardless of where you're starting from:

1

(Re)commit to the importance of consumer-centricity and clarify ownership. If your organization cannot align on the importance of the individual, you will likely struggle to succeed. Most failures occur because of lack of organizational alignment and ownership. Be the champion—or make sure another senior leader is.

2

Unify data. Like most organizations, yours likely has all the data you need to get started and drive results. The issue isn't the amount of data, but where it sits. If your consumers are your most important asset, you need to protect and manage their data in their best interest. You must unify the data across all channels (online, offline, contact center, etc.) needed to deliver more personalized engagement in one system. Create a single view of the consumer so that you have a clear picture of people's interactions across the entire organization.

3

Centralize insights. Make the data available to all groups within your organization that touch the consumer—such as marketing, call center, and finance—so everyone is working with the same information (observing privacy considerations, of course). Use a reporting platform that uses the data to tell the story. Also, leverage analytics (traditional and/or machine

learning) to help derive deeper insights and decisions from the data in an intelligent and consistent manner. Let the data drive the decisions that help determine the next best message or action to be delivered.

4

Re-think and adjust engagement. Using technology and consumer insights, you can start to deliver more personalized engagement in every touchpoint. This means leveraging technology investments, from the web to the contact center, to identify individuals at the moments that matter, digitally and in person. Then orchestrate the delivery of the right messages to them at the right time. To be effective, this will require taking a hard look at the content, delivery systems, and potential organizational change of existing engagement processes and people.

Be the champion.

Consumers' expectations of their health care experience are only increasing. And the gap between their expectations and their health care experience will likely keep widening, unless organizations start acting differently in their relationship with consumers.

Be the champion in your organization, shine a light on the black box of your consumer data, and actively build the capabilities and tools necessary to provide a truly valuable, engaging experience for your consumers. In return, you'll have loyal consumers thanking you—and quite possibly, even more of them as a result.

Get in touch

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SOURCES

1. LRA by Deloitte Global Benchmarking Study, 2018; Note this study leverages data across multiple industries.