

9 Ways Managers Can Change Healthcare in 2011



Healthcare is changing. It is changing to eliminate waste of money, time and resources. It is changing to make more care available with less providers. It is changing to empower patients to participate in their own care. How are you changing with the times in 2011? Here are 9 ideas.

1. Make your website **interactive**, clean-looking, **interactive**, friendly and **interactive**. Think of your website as your digital receptionist to your practice. If all your patients can do on your website is look up your phone number, you're wasting everyone's time. Patients want to register, make appointments, pay their bill, get their test results, chat online with a staff member, access their personal health record (PHR), watch videos and listen to podcasts you make or recommend. They do not want to wander around your phone tree or wait on hold.
2. Give your patients **information**, information, information. According to a MedTera study conducted in September 2010, 95% surveyed indicated that they are looking for more comprehensive information about disease management, and 77% said they hadn't received any written information about their illness or medications directly from the physician. See more details about what patients want **here**.
3. Understand that people have different types of learning styles and **offer your practice and medical information in different ways**. Offer information via written and digital documents, videos, and podcasts. Offer support groups and group education for the newly diagnosed. Help

patients build communities around your practice.

4. **Take down all those signs** asking people to turn off their cell phones. Cell phones are going to revolutionize healthcare so go ahead and bite the bullet and embrace them. For all you know the person on the cellphone when you walk in the exam room is texting “gr8 visit til now, wil i <3 doc?” (Great visit until now, will I love the doctor?)
5. **Eliminate the Wait.** Patients have much better things to do than wait in your practice. It doesn’t matter why the provider’s late – you’re cutting into the patient’s ability to make money and get things done. Text them to let them know the provider is running late. Text them to let them know an earlier appointment is available. Give patients an appointment range (between 10am and 12N), then text them when their appointment is 20 minutes away.
6. Use a **patient portal** to take credit cards, keeping them securely on file and stop sending patients statements. Use the portal to deliver results and chat and email patients.
7. Stop fighting the tide and **let your staff use social media at work** – for work. Involve everyone in Facebook, Twitter and your website and blog. Using social media for communication and marketing is not a one-person job.
8. Form a **patient advisory board** and listen to what specifics your patients want from you. If people don’t have time to attend a face-to-face meeting, **Skype** them in.
9. Think about **alternate service delivery models**, both in-person (group visits, home visits) and digitally (email, texting, Skyping, avatar coaches, home monitoring systems.) **Emotional technology** studies show that people can improve their health by accepting and utilizing technology in healthcare.

What do patients want in 2011? They want **information**,

communication and a real connection with you. Use social media and technology innovations to make it happen.

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