



SMS in healthcare

White paper





Why SMS is so powerful

Whether you're running a care home, a private hospital, a veterinary clinic, a dental practice or any other healthcare facility, you will need to communicate with your staff and patients. SMS messages are a low cost, effective communication tool - it's therefore no surprise that many healthcare providers are using SMS as an integral part of their communications.

Planning staff shifts

When shifts need covering, ringing around all your staff or organising external cover can become very time consuming and expensive.

Using SMS is a perfect way to communicate with all staff members on rota at once and can cut a job that would usually take hours, down to one that takes just minutes. Also, by using two-way communication, you can receive confirmation from staff members that are able to cover the shift. Not only does this speed up the whole process, but it also increases the probability that a shift can be covered internally.

Missed appointments

An appointment made a few days or weeks in advance can often slip the mind, especially when the details are not written down or easily accessible. Missed appointments mean wasted opportunities to see other patients, resulting in an increase in costs and longer waiting times. It is likely the appointment will also have to be rescheduled.

Sending an SMS can help remind people about an appointment they have. This simple, inexpensive and time saving communication method can be the difference between someone showing up for their appointment or not.

Outpatient follow-ups

For some facilities, a courtesy follow-up call is often needed to make sure there are no issues with a patient after their appointment or stay, or to give them important information. When you are running a large facility with many patients coming in and out, this can become a very time consuming job.

When the follow-up call isn't feasible or suitable, an SMS can be sent to give outpatients the information they require. Because an SMS can be stored, added to a calendar or forwarded on without much effort, it is a more practical solution than being told over the phone. A two-way service can also be used to allow the outpatient to respond to the SMS.



Staff attendance

Training days, meetings, company get-togethers or any other events can be difficult to arrange, in particular, communicating the dates and times to all staff and ensuring they all attend. Sending out bulk SMS messages with details of such meetings will give each expected attendee recorded details of the information they need. Follow this up with a scheduled reminder the day before to improve attendance.

Test result updates

Considering the sheer volume of tests that are carried out it becomes near enough impossible to ring each patient when their results are available. Not only does it waste time and money making the call, the call may come at an inconvenient time for the patient. SMS can be sent instantly and read whenever suits the patient.

Use SMS either to deliver a patients results directly or to inform them of the availability of their results. This will be received instantly and saves time, reduces costs and improves efficiency.

Motivational messages

Send messages promoting healthy eating, road safety or stopping smoking direct to patients phones. The targeted, low cost and wide reach of SMS makes it a powerful tool to successfully deliver important messages. Sending a motivational text message to a smokers' phone is thought to double their likelihood of quitting (The Guardian). Promoting healthy lifestyles acts

as a tool to reduce future health problems thus, strain on healthcare providers.

Reduce waiting times

When collecting a prescription patients don't want to queue up when they are leading busy lives. Make the whole process more efficient and send automated text messages to patients when their prescription is available - they can pick it up at a time that suits them.

Medication reminders

Automated messages can be sent to patients reminding them to take their medication at the right time. This gives the medication a much higher chance of being successful and reduces the amount of follow-up appointments that will be needed.

Blood donors

SMS is a powerful tool to help increase blood donors. Send text messages inviting people to donate blood and build up a database of donors. From here, SMS messages can be sent immediately when a specific blood type is needed.



Customers in the healthcare industry

Here's how we've helped Bupa Care Services...

Bupa Care Services provide professional care and support for people of all ages. They use SMS for filling available shifts, organising staff meetings, sending out motivational messages and for other general communication purposes.

The admin staff have benefitted greatly from the introduction of SMS services, saying that they have saved numerous hours per day. They were also able to completely stop using agency nurses as they could now meet their staffing requirements internally. Shifts were also being filled by staff they wouldn't usually have called but did contact via SMS because it's easier and feels less intrusive.

A unique use, was to use SMS to send out motivational messages to their staff to encourage them to continue their good work.



"Using SMS has saved our staff time and effort which enables them to focus more time on caring for our residents."

A spokesperson, Bupa Care Service



"Our administrators, who work with a casual bank of over 100 workers, are now able to manage the service efficiently and effectively."

A spokesperson, Epilepsy Society

Here's how we've helped Epilepsy Society...

Epilepsy Society provide care for vulnerable adults 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They use SMS to communicate extremely quickly and cost effectively with carers on casual contracts. Before this, staff had to manually call huge numbers of carers to try and fill shifts, often at short notice.

They can now advertise all available shifts to the hundreds of carers on its books in a few minutes, at a fraction of the cost. Text messages can easily be targeted to groups of individuals, based on their skills and geographical locations.

Epilepsy Society has radically improved communication with carers, which has helped reduce reliance on agency staff. Significant cost savings have also been achieved by reducing the number of telephone calls needed to fill shifts.



Get in touch



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