

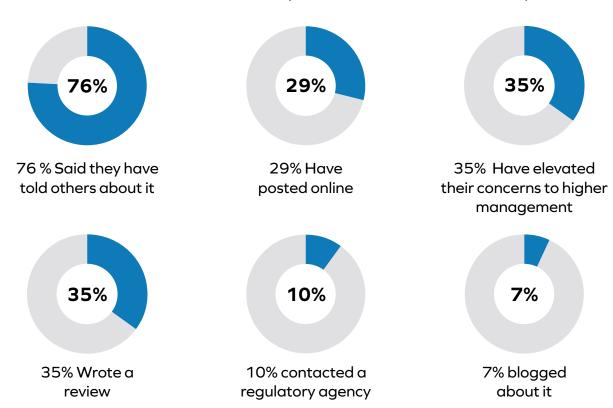
Introduction

Few things are as disheartening to a community pharmacist as having a customer leave the store feeling disappointed or undervalued. Most local pharmacists will take reports of poor customer service as personal failings, since serving others is the very reason most pursue the pharmacy profession. At a time when pharmacies face a decrease in profit margins and an increase in competition from box stores and online pharmacies, local pharmacies must prioritize good customer service as a way to build loyalty and ensure continued patronage.



Consider the high costs of poor customer service. According to research from New Voice Media, poor customer service costs U.S. businesses \$75 billion annually. However, poor service will not deter consumers from making purchases – they will just buy from a competitor. Their research also found that 44 percent of consumers had switched to a different business because of poor service, which is strong evidence that poor customer service comes at a hefty price.

Many unhappy customers do not leave quietly. Research by <u>PriceWaterhouse Coopers</u> asked customers about the actions they had taken after a bad service experience:



Critical to note is that most unhappy consumers may not even let you know. Research conducted by TARP Worldwide (now called <u>CX Solutions</u>) found roughly <u>four percent</u> of customers take the time to complain when they believe they have been ill-served. Of the 96 percent who do not complain, most simply stop buying from that business, but tell an average of 9 to 10 others about their poor experience. This causes a terrible word of mouth situation and the rise of customer dissatisfaction among a group of hard-to-identify customers and would-be customers.

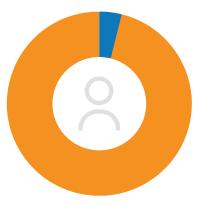
One other important consideration is the value of retaining a satisfied customer versus the cost of cultivating a new buyer. TARP founder John Goodman found businesses spend <u>five times</u> as much "winning" a new customer as keeping a current customer. There's a high price to be paid then, when a business – a pharmacy in particular – fails to listen to customers, or meet service expectations.

In many ways though, ensuring good customer service is a highly solvable problem. This is especially true for a pharmacy that has invested in a quality technology system such as PrimeRx. Technology makes it significantly easier for pharmacies to manage customer encounters and to proactively enhance a patient's pharmacy experience. Did you know, for example, that PrimeRx allows a pharmacy to create and manage a customer loyalty program from within the system, with all rewards automatically applied at point of sale?

The following is an overview of five essential capabilities available within PrimeRx that allow pharmacies to seamlessly provide quality customer service. As the discussion will make clear, good customer service doesn't have to be expensive, or require significant expenditures of staff time and resources. But good customer service matters, and your pharmacy patients will notice, and appreciate, all initiatives to offer improved, personalized services.

4%

take the time to complain when they believe they have been ill-served.



96%

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I. Nothing Says "I Care" Like a Medication Adherence Program



Prescription drug non-adherence continues to be a major health crisis in the United States, with an estimated two-thirds of Americans not taking their medications properly, adding almost \$300 billion to U.S. health care costs.

While there are many reasons for non-adherence, research by the <u>American Medical Association (AMA)</u> determined that "most non-adherence is intentional, with patients making a rational decision not to take their medication based on their knowledge, experience, and beliefs." The AMA cites several reasons for intentional non-adherence which include:

- Fear of potential side effects
- Cost
- Misunderstanding, which can occur when a patient does not understand the need for the medicine, the nature of the side effects, or the time required to see benefits from the medication
- Too many medications. The risk of non-adherence increases as the number of
 medications prescribed to a patient increases. This is especially relevant among
 seniors, a group in which polypharmacy the simultaneous use of five or more
 medications is common. The <u>American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)</u>
 estimates nearly half of adults between the ages of 70 and 79 take at least



five prescription drugs, with an additional 10 to 20 percent taking ten or more medications.

- Lack of Symptoms, as patients who believe they no longer need a medication stop taking prescribed dosages before completing a treatment regime.
- Mistrust, as news reports highlighting instances of pharmaceutical companies attempting to influence physician's prescribing practices have caused patients to become suspicious about doctors' motives in prescribing certain medications.
- Worry among patients concerned about becoming dependent on a medication.
- Depression, as patients who are depressed are less likely to take their medications as prescribed.

Pharmacists have long understood they have a role to play in helping patients become more adherent in taking prescribed medications as directed. The <u>2019 NCPA Digest</u>, sponsored by the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) and Cardinal Health, found more than 90 percent of independent community pharmacies have implemented comprehensive adherence programs. Within that group, almost 80 percent offer medication synchronization services, which Cardinal Health defines as "the process of aligning all of a patient's medications to refill on the same day of each month, in addition to an appointment with the pharmacist."

In considering *how* to help patients become more adherent to their medications, it's necessary to understand not only why they choose not to take their medications, but *the many different forms* of non-adherence. According to the <u>NCPA</u>, top non-compliant behaviors include:



Missed dosages



Patient forgot if a dose was taken.



Failure to refill a medication.



Patient takes a lower dose than what is prescribed.



Failure to fill a new prescription.



While it's possible to identify categories of non-adherence, it's essential to note that each patient will have his or her own reasons for becoming non-adherent. This means a pharmacist will need to delve into a patient's history to help identify and address reasons for non-adherence.

This need for access to comprehensive patient histories is why PrimeRx is an especially beneficial tool in addressing medication non-adherence. PrimeRx allows pharmacists to capture and store detailed information that captures a patient's entire history, not just prescription records. This includes the ability to record and store notes and observations from interactions that could help a pharmacist prevent a patient from becoming non-adherent. For example, a note about a patient "not liking the way a certain medication makes them feel," could result in a request to the prescriber's office for an alternative. Aside from the ability to customize each patient's record, PrimeRx offers additional adherence-related capabilities that include:

Access to Medication-Related Information, and Videos



Through direct integration with <u>VUCA Health LLC</u>, PrimeRx users have access to an expansive digital library via text and video from which to obtain information about their medications. The digital library is called MedsOnCue and gives patients immediate access to medications through a bar code printed on a prescription label. Patients can easily access medication information such as:

- The purpose of the medication
- Why it's important to take the medication as directed
- How to take the medication
- Potential side effects
- How to obtain the maximum benefit from the medication

Packaging Facilitation



PrimeRx allows for direct integration with leading packaging solution providers including <u>Parata</u>, <u>TCGRx</u>, <u>RapidPakRx</u>, and <u>Omnicell</u> for packaging options that make it easier for patients to understand their medication protocols. Capabilities offered by these solution providers include:

- Easy-to-read label instructions.
- The ability to split pills for easier ingestion.
- Blister-packaging which allows a patient to bundle pills into separate "dosage packs," thereby eliminating the need to manage multiple bottles.
- Easy-to-read dosage instructions.
- Photos of each drug.
- Use of easy-off caps.

Medication Adherence Indicators



PrimeRx automatically alerts the pharmacist if a patient has become non-adherent with a prescribed medication regime, or appears at risk of becoming non-adherent. In addition, a pharmacy can use the system to identify patients afflicted with illnesses most susceptible to non-adherence – diabetes, hypertension, and cholesterol – and develop "adherence plans" for each affected patient to help improve the likelihood of adherence.



Medication Synchronization



Pharmacists can quickly set up medication synchronization schedules within PrimeRx whereby all medication refills are scheduled for the same day, with a pharmacist visit also scheduled for that day.

Conflicting Medication Alerts



Patients prescribed multiple medications can be at risk of an adverse reaction. PrimeRx automatically alerts pharmacy staff about all potential medication conflicts, minimizing the risk of a potentially life-threatening medication interaction.

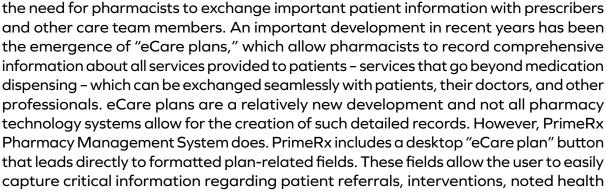
Automated Communication Processes

Proactive refill reminders and "prescription ready for pickup" alerts are not only a convenience but can also be an important tool in helping address non-adherence. PrimeRx allows pharmacies to generate automated emails and SMS text messages to patients on a wide range of issues. Pharmacies can remind patients when a refill is due, let them know when a medication is ready for pickup, send alerts about flu clinics and other in-store events, or simply check-in with a "Happy Birthday" greeting.

As the pharmacist's role in patient care continues to evolve and expand, so too has

Patient e-Care Plans

records and stores all updates.



concerns and patient goals. Once the new information has been added, the system







Mobile Apps Allow Patients to Access the Pharmacy at Their Convenience

With almost two million apps available for download on the Apple App Store and almost three million available on the Google Play Store, is it any wonder that consumers increasingly expect their local retailers, including their pharmacy, to offer the convenience and flexibility of this important new technology?

The ascendancy of apps in the global marketplace is nothing short of spectacular. A few notable statistics include:

- Mobile apps are expected to generate more than <u>\$935 billion</u> in revenue by 2023.
- Almost half of app users open at least <u>11</u> apps each day.
- The average smartphone uses 10 apps per day, and 30 apps each month.
- The average American <u>checks their phone</u> every 12 minutes, with 10 percent of people checking their phone once every four minutes.
- At the pharmacy level, the use of app technology <u>skyrocketed during the pandemic</u>, as consumers sought opportunities to minimize in-store visits, and pharmacy chains announced COVID-19 vaccine appointments would be scheduled through their apps. CVS, for example, saw a 68 percent increase in app downloads from February



As the experience with COVID-19 vaccination scheduling demonstrated, mobile apps allow pharmacies a unique way to interact with patients, and patients are willing to engage! PrimeRx brings this service to pharmacies with the FillMyRefills app, which was updated in early 2021 for expanded capabilities. Through FillMyRefills, pharmacies can provide patients 24/7 pharmacy access, while seamlessly managing prescription histories and workflows within PrimeRx.

Key FillMyRefills benefits include:

- **Customized dashboard** that allows "at a glance" daily overviews of scheduled medications and pending refills.
- Monthly calendar view with patient's medication schedule and refill status autofilled.
- "My Prescriptions" function lists all active prescriptions, with one-click option for refill ordering
- "Scan to Refill" function activates camera for bar code scanning, for an even easier reordering process.
- "Order in Progress" notification alerts patient that a refill has been added to the pharmacy's queue.
- Each requested refill is added to the patient's cart. During checkout, patient can specify their preferred pickup/delivery option:
 - Delivery to the patient's preferred address on a specific date.
 - In-store pickup at a time/date specified by the patient.
- **History tab** provides a comprehensive overview of each patient's prescription history. Where available, photos of the medication are included with each drug listing.
- Patient has the option of setting a notification alert either set to their phone's text alert chime, or via a banner notification – letting them know when it's time to take a specific medication.

Pharmacies that offer mobile apps provide an important and increasingly expected opportunity for customer engagement. But beyond an important customer service connection, pharmacies enhance their online positioning, thereby increasing the likelihood of additional traffic generated from search engine results. Offering a mobile app is a win-win for pharmacies and patients, with the FillMyRefills app available to help facilitate the process.





Loyalty Programs Reward Customers for Repeat Business



Rewards programs are a popular way for pharmacies and other retailers to show gratitude to their long-term customers and are increasingly an expectation among customers. According to <u>Forbes</u>, loyalty programs have become expectations among consumers, with the average American participating in nearly a dozen rewards programs.

While the case could easily be made that pharmacists demonstrate loyalty to patients every day, as became especially clear during the long months of the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacies understand the need to counter the lower prices and enhanced inventories of Amazon, Walmart, and other mega-stores. For many pharmacies, loyalty programs can be a relatively easy way to help patients save on health care products, while ensuring their repeat-and-sustained business.

More specifically, key opportunities for pharmacies that offer loyalty programs, include:

Establishing your pharmacy as an "option of first resort" for OTC products
 As noted by PBA Health/Elements, rewards incentivize patients to keep all their
 purchases at your pharmacy as a way to maximize savings. As patients come
 to recognize their local pharmacy as a legitimate source of OTC products and
 household supplies, they will be more inclined to shop first at their local pharmacy.



Increasing Sales to Current Patients

When West Virginia-based <u>Fruth Pharmacy</u> decided to commemorate Mother's Day by hosting "Ladies Night" celebrations at each of its 25 stores, attendees were treated to a range of events and services including massage therapists, cosmetologists and nail technicians. To cap off the event, the chain rolled out a new benefit to its loyalty program where customers could gain rewards for cosmetic purchases. With this simple gesture, the pharmacy was able to build tremendous goodwill among customers, while also promoting its cosmetics inventory. As a result, customers who may have never considered purchasing cosmetics at the pharmacy before suddenly had an economic incentive to do so.

As this example makes clear, a rewards program offers an excellent platform for marketing certain products and services to targeted groups of patients.

To further underscore the importance of a well-maintained customer loyalty program, consider that the CVS ExtraCare program currently has <u>80 million active</u> <u>members</u>, and that one in four U.S. households is an active ExtraCare user. The top 30 percent of those ExtraCare members account for 75 percent of the drugstore chain's overall margins.

Attracting New Customers

As reported by <u>PBA Health/Elements</u>, 75 percent of consumers say they favor companies that offer rewards programs. "Plus," the analysis notes, "patients satisfied with your pharmacy's rewards program are likely to tell their friends and family about your pharmacy."

of consumers say they favor companies that offer rewards programs.

PrimeRx allows pharmacies to build and maintain a loyalty program directly within the core operating system. This loyalty program capability was developed in conjunction with pharmacists, who offered insight about critical program attributes and suggestions for program functionality. The following is a brief overview of some core PrimeRx capabilities:

Seamless and Direct Point-of-Sale Integration



The ability to accrue and redeem benefits at point-of-sale is essential to any rewards programs. This means the ability for the pharmacy's POS system to intuitively know which products trigger a certain benefit, the value of rewards earned with each transaction, and the ability to redeem earned benefits. As critical as this function is, only PrimeRx comes equipped with internal pharmacy loyalty program capability. Other software programs require the pharmacy to use a standalone program that must be integrated into the pharmacy's overall management system.



With PrimeRx, the loyalty program capability exists within the PrimePOS point-of-sale module. There are no extra steps involved and the loyalty program automatically syncs patients' purchases to their rewards account.



Comprehensive Loyalty Program Capabilities

Within PrimePOS, loyalty program capabilities include:

- Membership Sign-Up Prompts: A pharmacy can set a prompt on register displays
 to remind employees to ask patients if they would like to enroll in the pharmacy's
 rewards program. From there, a simple click of the button allows pharmacy staff to
 easily enroll a new program member, with the patient's account seamlessly updated
 to reflect the program membership.
- Account Identifiers. A unique identification number is automatically assigned to each program member. In addition, a patient's phone number can be linked to the rewards program as a secondary method of accessing their account.
- Application of benefits. PrimePOS automatically applies earned benefits at POS, and accrues benefits based on eligibility. In addition, the system can generate personalized incentives, based on a patient's buying history.
- **Account management.** PrimePOS automatically updates each patient's rewards account, which can be easily accessed through the main PrimeRx home screen.

App-based Mobile Access



The FillMyRefills app allows patients to access their pharmacy's refill process from the convenience of their mobile device. A patient who logs into FillMyRefills can easily access their loyalty program account, including their bar-coded membership "card." This eliminates the need for program members to carry a card in their wallet and gives pharmacies the option to forego the expense of issuing physical cards.

Records Management and Reporting



Pharmacy managers can request detailed reporting about their rewards programs and have those reports delivered to their mobile device or desktop on a daily, weekly, monthly, or any other preferred frequency. The sky is truly the limit with regard to the type of reporting PrimeRx can generate. A pharmacy can request customized reports on everything from total value of points issued, to value of outstanding points, to sales per "top" tier of customers, to best-selling products.

Customization and Flexibility



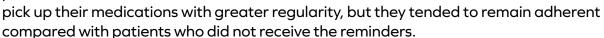
Pharmacy managers know their patients best and must have the flexibility to design a loyalty program that will be appealing and highlight products patients are most likely to prefer. A patient who regularly purchases a specific brand of facial moisturizer, for example, would likely be thrilled to receive a coupon for future purchases, while a patient with an infant would be grateful for any cost savings on diapers or formula. PrimeRx allows a pharmacy to customize a benefits program for each patient based on purchase history, with predictions about additional products that might be appealing.



IV.

Good Communication is Everything!

A few years ago, researchers working on behalf of Walgreens <u>presented results</u> from a study conducted to determine what, if any, impact reminder emails had on improving the rate at which patients picked up their prescription refills. The findings revealed that in fact, the reminder emails did make a difference. Not only did patients who received email reminders



These findings are consistent with findings of <u>additional research</u> conducted among Medicare Part D patients who "exhibited nonadherent behavior by not refilling a maintenance medication three days from an expected refill date.

"Patients were randomly assigned to either a control group or to a group that received phone calls reminding them about their pending refills. The results? Patients who received reminders were "significantly more adherent compared to the control group."

It's clear then that good communication can have a positive effect in improving medication adherence which leads to better patient outcomes. In addition, a pharmacy that takes the time to engage with patients' builds better overall relationships and strengthens patients' attitudes about the pharmacist's role as an important health care team member.

For PrimeRx pharmacies, establishing good communication with patients can be automatic and seamless. PrimeRx features a communication module called PrimeCOMM that allows pharmacies to easily communicate with patients via secure, two-way outbound calling, SMS/TXT or email.



The PrimeCOMM solution integrates seamlessly with a pharmacy's daily workflow with capabilities that include:

- Pre-programmed outbound emails, texts, and phone calls to patients
- Ability to receive inbound text and email messages from patients

Messages can include a broad scope of important information:

- Personalized Messages:
 - Prescription refill reminders.
 - "Ready for pickup" reminders.
 - Notification that a prescription has been received.
 - Dosage/Adherence reminders.
 - Happy Birthday greetings.
- Group Messages:
 - Updates about revised store hours.
 - Reminders about home delivery services.
 - Links to important health-related updates from state and local agencies.
 - Notifications about flu shots, vaccines, smoking cessation clinics, wellness classes, and other events planned for the pharmacy.

A key learning from the pandemic was the critical need for patients to feel connected to their pharmacies, with assurances of uninterrupted access to their medications and updates about pharmacy services. While COVID-19 will eventually be behind us, the need for timely and accurate communication will persist. Pharmacies can rely on PrimeRx to seamlessly provide patients with the information they need, often with just a few clicks on the mouse!







Beyond PrimeRx – Easy Integration with Industry's Top Customer Service Interfaces

As helpful as PrimeRx is in helping pharmacies provide exceptional customer service, several third-party solutions have come to market in recent years that enhance those service opportunities. Because of PrimeRx' ongoing engagement with innovators in the pharmacy technology field, several of these third-party solutions are now available to PrimeRx users.

A partial list of PrimeRx partner interfaces includes:



Adherence

- <u>Prescribe Wellness</u> Helps community pharmacies expand their role and provide enhanced services to improve patient medication adherence, loyalty, and health outcomes.
- <u>ConnectiveRx</u> Integrated solutions that facilitate medication adherence strategies and help remove barriers to access and adherence.



Affordability

Real-Time Prescription Benefit by Surescripts – Allows the pharmacist real-time
access to a patient's plan benefits to determine whether a prescribed drug is covered,
the patient's out-of-pocket costs, and the availability of lower-cost alternatives.



Delivery Services

 <u>ScriptDrop</u> - Seamlessly connects pharmacies to a network of trained, professional couriers.



Digital Patient Education

• <u>VUCA Health</u> - Access to world's largest medication video library to educate patients about their medications, thereby improving adherence.



OTC Product Availability

Pointy by Google - Many consumers are pleasantly surprised to learn their local pharmacy stocks many of the household items they regularly buy. In many instances, a quick trip to a local pharmacy can avoid a longer, more complicated trip to a grocery store or a big-box retailer. Pointy by Google provides an easy way for pharmacies to highlight their OTC product inventories online, so the pharmacy appears at the top of nearby consumers' web searches. With Pointy by Google, consumers have a local option for purchasing supplies and pharmacies have an opportunity to expand their customer bases, and sales of OTC products.

For access to a complete listing of current PrimeRx third party interfaces, please visit www.primerx.io.

Conclusion

In a 2018 Pharmacy Today interview, California-based pharmacist Larry Selkow was asked if he had any advice for "pharmacists who struggle with customer service or are new to the retail industry?" Selkow's response seemed to reflect the role of pharmacists can have in helping patients better understand their medications. "Make sure to throw in a few pointers when handing over medication to a patient, like 'take this with food' or 'this may make you dizzy,'" he said. Further, Selkow added,

"Make sure they understand their medication. Don't assume they will read the instructions or already know. It's very likely if you ask outright if they have questions, you'll get a 'no' answer, so you have to offer up information."

This short but thoughtful reply demonstrates the high regard pharmacists have for their patients, and their desire to improve patient health and wellbeing. Providing good, thoughtful customer service is an integral part of the pharmacist's job, and a critical part of the pharmacist/patient relationship.

As community pharmacies face increased pressure from online pharmacies and big-box retailers, customer service will remain a competitive differentiator. With innovative technology systems such as PrimeRx at their side, pharmacies will find the tools they need to keep the lines of communication open.





PrimeRx "A Solution For Every Pharmacy"

We are a market leader in the pharmacy software industry with pharmacy management systems installed in pharmacies nationwide.

With almost 30 years of experience, we understand the changing dynamics of the pharmacy system industry better than our competitors, and the critical role of technology in adapting to those changes.

Our company motto, "A solution for every pharmacy" is testament to our commitment to continual improvement and innovation. Your pharmacy's technology system is only as good as its next upgrade. Our customers trust us to provide the technology pharmacy solutions that meet their unique pharmacy software needs. And our customers know they can rely on our superior customer service to provide immediate assistance when needed.



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