2021 Patient Communication & Engagement Survey Report

How better patient communication methods can help medical practices improve patient outcomes, operational productivity, and revenue growth

klara

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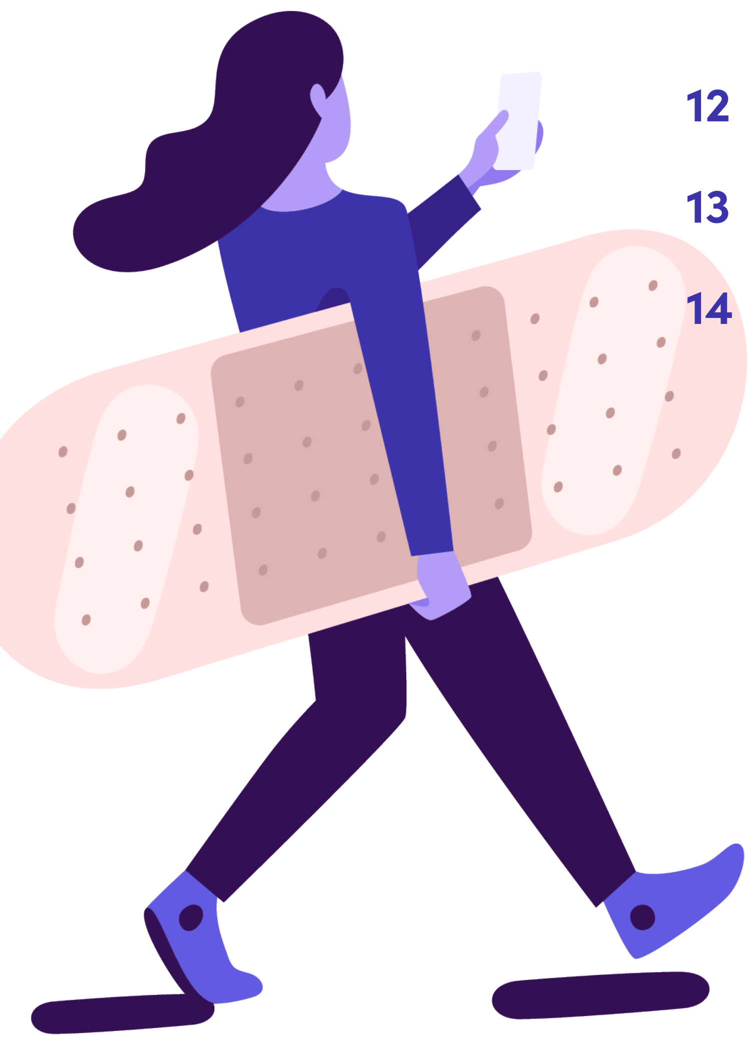


Executive Summary

The healthcare industry has been undergoing a digital transformation, embracing technology to streamline workflows, improve patient outcomes, and optimize patient care. But there is still work to be done. That's why Klara teamed up with a market-leading, independent market research firm to uncover the industry's pain points through the research analysis highlighted throughout this proprietary report. In fact, in the study we learned that 53% of the market continues to use manual processes to manage patient communication and engagement; and 64% of practices prefer to use the phone to communicate with patients. Yet, patients complain to their providers about wait times and ineffective communication.

In this report, you'll learn about the communication challenges and preferences that medical practices face. In particular, how they relate to their top three strategic priorities:

1. Improving quality of care
2. Improving operational productivity
3. Improving revenue growth

The survey results show that practices don't believe they have a problem with communication, but they do have a problem with efficiency. However, when probed with further questioning the same sample group revealed that to improve efficiency and reach their strategic goals, they need to focus on better communication options.

It's what patients want, after all.

A note From Klara

Communication is at the core of the doctor-patient relationship, but it's also the biggest problem. In fact, 96% of patient complaints are around communication, with only 4% on clinical care.[1]

Every day at Klara, we see that communication issues are directly linked to inefficient workflows and poor patient outcomes. Patient-centric user experiences are more important than ever — and so, too, is digitization.

Practices that embrace digital communication methods will simultaneously reduce administrative burdens, save time, and finally be able to focus on delivering the best possible patient care.

> **Communication is at the core of the doctor-patient relationship, but it's also the biggest problem.**

The good news is, more practices are striving to improve their efficiency and offer better patient experiences, which starts by digitizing workflows. Before the pandemic, for example, things like digital forms, video visits, or texting were nice-to-haves. Now, they are a must.

All this to say, the connection between patient communication, efficiency, and practice growth can no longer be denied.

To achieve sustainable growth — and improve quality of care, revenue, and operational productivity — practices must embrace modern communication methods. They're the key to seeing and keeping more patients.


Simon Bolz and Simon Lorenz, PhD
Klara Co-founders and Co-CEOs

Key Findings

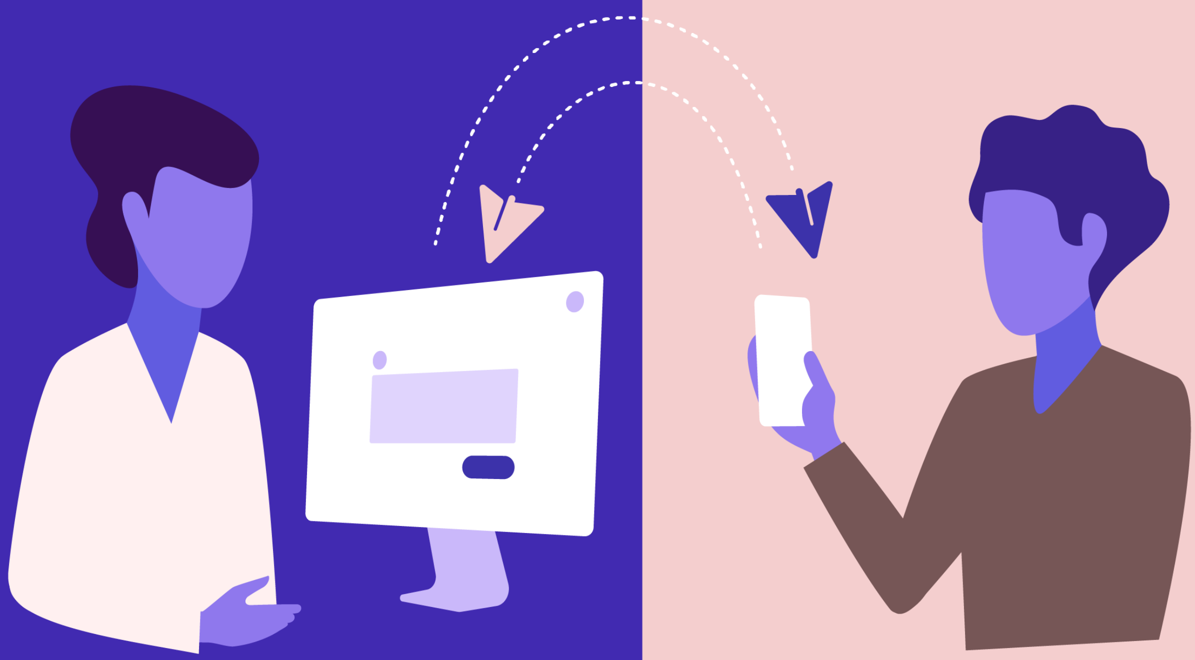
Practices continue — and even prefer — manual communication methods even though they struggle with patient complaints around convenience and communication.

Most practices today still use manual communication methods

Even though 81% of Americans text regularly, with 78% wishing they could text with a business[2] — medical practices are behind the curve when it comes to adopting digital communication solutions.

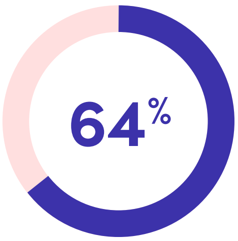
53% of medical practices use manual processes to manage patient communication and engagement

Over **90%** of the market does not use an independent third-party vendor for patient communication, care team collaboration, or external collaboration

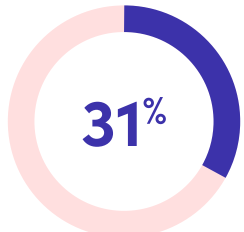


Practices identify specific challenges when it comes to patient communication

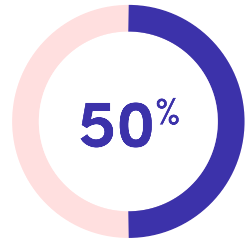
While the majority of practices prefer using the phone for communication with internal and external parties, patient communication remains a challenge.



of practices reported that the phone is their preferred mode of communication with patients



of practices reported that the phone is their preferred mode of communication with internal care team members



of practices reported that the phone is their preferred mode of communication with external stakeholders

This is especially evident when it comes to managing both inbound and outbound messages, intake, appointments, and no-shows.

Outbound messages

58% struggle with getting messages to patients about their care

Intake

49% struggle with efficient and effective patient intake before a visit

No-shows

40% struggle with reaching out to patients who no-show

Inbound messages

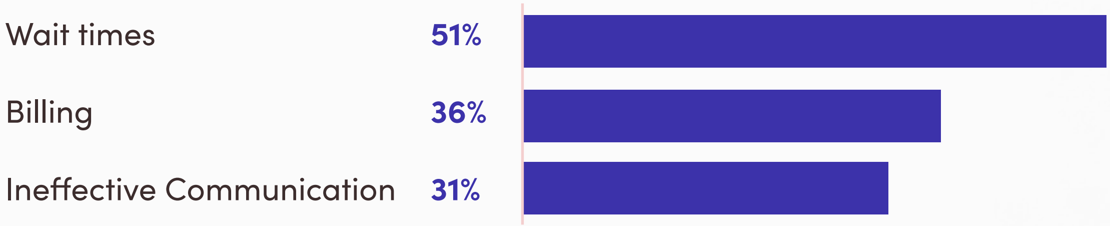
55% struggle with receiving and replying to inbound patient messages

Appointments

48% struggle with appointment scheduling and reminders

Patients complain about wait times, billing, and ineffective communication

The top three patient complaints center around communication and convenience issues, specifically as they relate to wait times, billing, and ineffective communication.



Strategic priorities

Practices align on these top three strategic priorities: improving patient outcomes, improving revenue growth, and improving operational productivity.

Improved communication is a necessary tool to drive results

Medical practices understand that improved patient communication will help them achieve their care, revenue, and productivity goals.

Practices consider patient communication very important or extremely important to achieving:

improved patient satisfaction

95%

improved revenue growth

79%

improved quality of care

89%

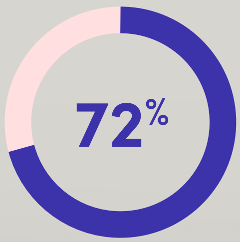
improved operational productivity

75%

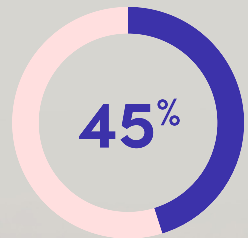
Strategic Priority #1: Improving quality of care with better patient communication

Streamlining patient communication improves patient satisfaction and allows physicians to focus on what's most important: delivering the best possible care.

Most practices believe their patients would like to interact in a more digital fashion:



for managing appointment scheduling, cancellations, and rescheduling



for texting with physicians

Strategic Priority #2: Improving operational productivity

Medical practices understand that a lot of their operational productivity depends on available EHR integrations as well as how they manage appointments.

EHR Integration:

86%

consider integration with EHR/PM system important or very important to improving operational productivity

76%

consider patient syncing to/from EHR and PM systems is important or very important to improving operational productivity

Managing appointments:

73%

consider no-show engagement and rescheduling important or very important to improving operational productivity

81%

consider advanced appointment reminders important or very important to improving operational productivity

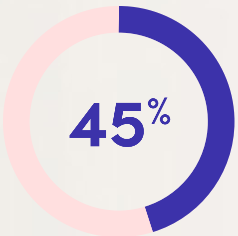
63%

consider self-service online scheduling important or very important to improving operational productivity

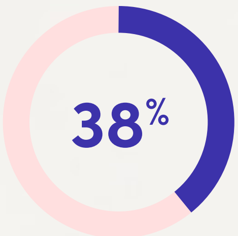
Strategic Priority #3: Improving revenue growth

Improved patient communications and interactions can directly increase patient access, reduce no-shows, and ensure open appointment slots are filled timely.

Top levers for revenue growth are:



New patient acquisition



Increasing revenue per patient

Conclusion

Over 90% of medical practices do not use an independent third-party vendor for patient communication, care team collaboration, or external collaboration. But they know they should. In fact, nearly half of the practices surveyed feel a sense of urgency to adopt a solution in the next 12 months or less.w

There's no denying that better communication methods will drive results — including improved quality of care, revenue growth, and operational productivity. What's more, other studies show that patients expect convenience, and that means NOT having to rely on the phone to communicate with their providers:

50%

Patients say that a bad digital experience with a healthcare provider ruins their overall patient experience and makes them unlikely to come back.[4]

57%

Patients would switch providers for the ability to book appointments online.[5]

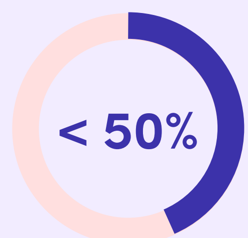
80%

Patients choose providers based on convenience factors alone.[3]

96%

Patient complaints are around customer service and communication issues.[1]

Close to 2/3 of millennials and over half of Gen Xers prefer to book online.[5]



Less than half of patients booking appointments by phone were able to book on the first try.[5]

Needless to say, the sooner medical practices adopt digital patient communication methods, the sooner they can reach their goals and grow.

About Klara

Klara is an all-in-one patient communication platform that enables medical teams to streamline workflows, automate routine patient communication, and provide patients with a convenient, personalized experience across the entire care journey. By integrating with more than 50 EHR and PM systems, Klara lets you keep all patient information centralized and synchronized.

While many healthcare softwares are a tradeoff between the patient experience and staff efficiency, Klara is the best of both worlds. Klara allows your practice to improve patient outcomes by giving patients the modern, convenient experience they demand. Klara will also save your staff hours per day by decreasing phone volume, hold times and lost calls — ultimately allowing your practice to increase revenue and focus on the patient experience.

To learn more about how Klara's all-in-one patient communication platform can help your practice grow — schedule a demo today.

Methodology

Using a market-leading, independent market research firm, Klara conducted a nationwide survey of 33,748 primarily independent medical practices in May 2021. Responses were obtained using qualitative and quantitative research methods, including in-depth market interviews and online surveys. Respondents represented a variety of practice types, sizes, and roles:

- Practice Types: primary care (23%), multi-specialty (15%), ophthalmology (8%), behavioral health (7%), orthopedics (6%), OBGYN (4%), cardiology (2%), pediatrics (2%), dermatology (2%), radiology (1%), and others (28%)

- Health System Affiliation: independent (88%), affiliated (12%)

- Number of Providers: 1-5 (29%), 6-10 (20%), 11-25 (22%), 26-50 (16%), 51-100 (9%), 101-500 (4%), over 500 (1%)

- Number of Patient Visits: 0-500 (26%), 501-1,000 (12%), 1,001-2,500 (19%), 2,501-5,000 (20%), 5,001-10,000 (10%), 10,001-50,000 (10%), over 50,000 (3%)

- Respondent Roles: owner (17%), CEO (16%), director (12%), practice admin (11%), COO (10%), executive director (8%), CMO (7%), president (7%), vice president (4%), CFO (3%), CIO (2%), Manager (2%), CMIO (1%)

Percentages were rounded so totals may not add up to 100%.

Additional sources

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