

EPISODE 156 PATIENT CONVERT PODCAST

THE FUTURE
OF PATIENT
ENGAGEMENT

with Bryan Oram
AVP OF SALES ENTERPRISE AT PODIUM

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The Future of Patient Engagement w/ Podium's Bryan Oram Ep 156

Please excuse any typo's this was transcribed using artificial intelligence

[00:00:07] Hello, and thank you so much for joining us for another episode of the patient converged podcast. So I have a very special guest with me today, Brian, please introduce yourself.

[00:00:18] Hey, thanks for having me. Yeah. Brian Oram, AVP of Health Care over here at podium.

[00:00:23] Yeah. And I'm really excited because Brian and I will be talking at an upcoming convention together. A lot about what we're talking about today in today's podcast. So Brian, I know we've kind of went over some slides and talked about this, but I really wanted my listeners, especially with podium involved in all the ways we can really integrate these new tools is patient engagement. I don't know what you, but since COVID patient engagement is on the rise more than ever, what do you think?

[00:00:50] Yeah, oh, absolutely. I mean, I think it's been one of the number one things that patients are looking for. I mean, and I think it was on the rise before COVID, right? But Koven really heightened the need right patients more than ever before are searching for their care. And what they're looking for is a convenient experience and one that's going to meet their needs, right? And really, they're demanding a convenient experience more than ever before. So yeah, their expectations are on the rise. I think the other thing that we're seeing is the digital expectations that patients are having is quite a bit different than it was, say, five years ago.

[00:01:26] And that's a really good point because with the COVID revolution, digital accessibility is has really taken over even for patients that maybe in the past, even as marketing, we would assume, probably wouldn't qualify in certain aspects of doing digital things. And now everyone's, you know, digital and everyone's kind of up to date with that. So when I talk patient engagement, I'm talking on all the ways that patients get to be in front of a physician. I mean, I'm sure you know this too. But when it comes to health care, you don't get a lot of time really in front of your physician, even when you're in the office. You know, it's very limited. And I feel like patient engagement is just another way for a practice a hospital system, a health care organization to add more value to the patient answering questions, pre qualifying scheduling appointments, payments, even communicating just through basic communication, fake patient questions. Or can I bring my son in? Or, you know, what are the restrictions? And I feel like that quick response that quick action and communicating can make or break where a patient goes, or they can even leave a practice they've been going to for a really long time for somewhere that's offering more available solutions to help them communicate and get answers. What are your thoughts on these patients going online and communicating and engaging with these practices?

[00:02:50] Well, yeah, it's number one, I would say. I think we have seen that massive shift to digital, and some health care providers were ready for it. Some weren't. But we're there now, right? And that's the world that we live in. And and yeah, that's that really is what patients are doing, right? They're going online, they're trying to book their care. But the entire patient journey, like you said, is something that needs to be thought through with a digital lens because let's say you book your appointment online, which kudos to the organizations that offer that right. But after that experience, there's so many different touchpoints that can be improved upon throughout the patient journey

like, for example, appointment confirmations or receiving your prescription and a reminder to go fill it or even a much easier way to to pay your bill, right? There's so many different ways to improve that experience, and the organizations that are improving that experience are the ones that are going to see the majority of patients coming to them, enjoying the care that they receive and ultimately enjoying that entire experience. Because, like you said, the experience with our provider is or with their actual physician or doctor. That's a short period in their journey with the organization. And so it is critical to optimize for,

[00:04:00] Well, for the physicians listening. We are talking about all the ways you can engage, right? We understand that we need to engaging with some of the health care organizations you guys work with. Are you seeing that with these new mediums of patient engagement that are digital or whether it's SMS texting? Are you seeing higher conversion rates or higher reviews? Are you seeing a difference in impressions in patients?

[00:04:23] We are, yes. So we work, and it may be just a bit of background. We work with some of the largest health systems in the world, and as part of that work, one of the things that we try to do is improve their communication strategy via SMS or other avenues of mobile communication with their patients. What we're seeing and in doing that right is one is we request feedback. Patients want to give their feedback, but they want to give their feedback in a way that's convenient, right? In a way that actually doesn't take maybe an hour of their time filling out a paper survey like they want to give something that's quick. It's in the moment and then they want to move on and go to soccer practice or whatever it is, right? So one of the things that we're seeing with these health systems that we support or, you know, dental organizations. Whatever the the health care organization that we support, we see we've seen a few things. One is a massive shift in the amount of patients searching on Google for the best care near them. But as we've worked with these organizations, we've seen just a massive uptick in the quantity of reviews that they receive, as well as the overall star rating, right? Because again, those patients that want to leave their feedback typically aren't leaving their feedback right now unless they're prompted via some sort of digital avenue to go do that, right? So as you see that rise, that's when you start to see in tandem an uptick in the amount of people viewing their listing, the amount of people clicking through to

their website, the amount of people engaging online and ultimately receiving care at those at those organizations.

[00:05:50] Well, and it's such a good point, like you said, patients searching near me. That's a huge search for a lot of specialists and a lot of that local search can be generated through things like you said, reviews and actively collecting reviews. I think a lot of physicians out there understand this, so we know reviews improve your reputation. Obviously, patients want to go somewhere that somewhere as good reviews. But reviews play a larger part in a lot of things. They can help local search. They can help you show up for conditions and treatments. A lot of physicians I talked to sometimes can struggle with the workflow process of a review, and we're talking about quick, you said quick, easy patient engagement, and that's the key. If it's not easy, they're not going to do it. So what are ways you guys are doing a podium to kind of either a collect reviews, but also the different mediums you're using for patient engagement?

[00:06:40] Yeah, that's a that's a great question, and it is critical. I would also just add, I think physicians, while they know it's important, they also are a bit they tend to be a bit apprehensive because it's their reputation on the line, right? Oh yeah. And sometimes you can have a disgruntled patient go online. And if you don't have enough happy patients going online, it can actually do some damage. So. So one of the ways to make it easy and simple for patients to leave their feedback, which ultimately is going to increase your overall rating, it's going to increase the keywords that are associated with you and your brand online, which is critical right for search and for specialty treatments. Anyway, so one of the things that we one of the ways that we do that is through text message. So what we do is we integrate with the electronic medical record system to automatically send a review invite out. Basically, what happens is the text goes out to the patient, asks them to leave a quick review. The patient clicks that link on their phone boom. They're authenticated into the to the Google page. They leave a review and 30 seconds later, they're in their car and they continue on a third day. So it's a critical moment, right? You've just had an interaction and it's likely the interaction that they actually wanted. They booked their treatment maybe a week ago, maybe a month ago, they made it into the office. They had their visit with their provider. And now you have a window, right? You've got about a 12 hour window where that's fresh on their mind. They had a good experience, most likely, right? And it's time to ask for a quick review. And if you can do that in an automated way, it's going to lift the burden on the physician,

on their staff. It's going to increase the amount of patients that are asked for review, and ultimately it's going to make it super convenient because it's on their cell phone, which it's super easy to click a link, hit a star rating and move on, right?

[00:08:24] So have you guys seen that text is the strongest way or do you think I know some organizations use email? Do you use both? Do you have a follow up program?

[00:08:33] That's a great question. Yes, so I think we've seen a lot, right? We've seen QR codes or one of my old, one of my old codes. Yeah, one of my old CTOs always called that robot bar, which I love. So we've seen a lot of things right pass along cards with QR codes or little tents on desks asking for review or email strategies. I think the one thing that is important to realize here is patients. Well, when they see the little tent or when they see the the QR code, they might have the intention of leaving a review. And once they get in their car and their day continues, it's your chance is kind of over, right? So email is probably the next best bet, right? Email email gets about a 20 percent open rate right now. Wow. Twenty twenty five ish. Yeah. So if you got, let's say, 100 hundred patients now, you've whittled it down to about twenty five that are actually going to see your request. And then from there, a much smaller percentage is actually going to click through leave that review. So when you compare that to text message, text message receives a ninety eight percent open rate.

[00:09:37] It's a no brainer, right?

[00:09:38] Yeah, yeah. It's like Hello. And the other crazy thing is seventy six percent of those messages get read within the hour. So like, you're just guaranteed nearly right that out of those 100 patients, ninety eight of those hundred patients are going to see it a large, large percentage direction and click through and then you're going to you're going to convert it a much higher rate. Those reviews which and again, I can't stress enough how important those reviews are, right? Because. Number one, you're getting solid engagement from a patient that just left your office, so you're getting really important feedback, it's in the moment. But the other thing is it's going to improve your overall rating online. It's going to improve your ranking on Google. It's going to improve your your keywords that are critical, right? When people are doing specialized searches, it's going to do all of that. And so when you're looking to engage future patients online, that's going to improve your ability to do so well.

[00:10:29] And it's true you just said the importance of it to you. One thing I like that you said about the text, I mean, those statistics are obviously dominate. So I mean, if you're out there thinking, like, how do I need to get in touch with my patients to do this? That's exactly why we're doing text messaging. I mean, those statistics are so high. The other point is, I think that whatever age group you're in, you're probably getting text messages. You know, sometimes they struggle with getting in front of their computer. Emails aren't always read. So I love that text has become such a dominant way of collecting this feedback immediately. But working in a workflow that's not going to ask one more person in the office to do one more thing and and try to collect this. But yeah, reviews are everything online. I know that I'm in health care marketing. We work with podium and our physicians to build reviews and reputation, so I even know how it works, and I will not see a doctor that doesn't have high reviews and multiple of them. So if I see it says like 10 positive reviews, that's not really good reviews for me because that's only 10 reviews. I think it's gotten more competitive even in the review process game. So you can still have a five star review that's 15 reviews, but then your competitor that is right above you has two hundred and thirty six reviews and a four and a half star or even five star. That, to me, ranks higher personally as a patient than a five star review with only 17 reviews.

[00:11:50] Absolutely. I mean, if you just look at consumer behavior, right? And consumer behavior has infiltrated the way that patients choose and receive their care. So so we have to put on consumer lenses a bit here. And when you look at consumer behavior, I mean, just check out Amazon. The last time you bought something on Amazon, what was filtered to the top was the top rated and had thousands of reviews like that's what you're looking for as a consumer, and it's no different. Like my wife and I, we recently moved out to a suburb of Salt Lake City, and one of the first things we did was we started our search for our health care provider, right? What we ended up choosing was the highest rated with the most reviews, and I do this for a living. And still, that was like one of the main things that we looked at was the overall rating because it is just so it's obviously critical, but it's also just the way that consumers think.

[00:12:39] And it's true. Like you said, it's the way we kind of consumer rising health care, but we do this for a living. Like you said, I do this for a living. I'm all about working with the largest health care organizations, gaining reviews and reputation. But you do it

too, because you know the authenticity behind it. It's all about Google identifying who's the most credible source, and I feel like that's why reviews are so important. You can't buy reviews like we can't. I mean, you can if illegally, if you wanted to do something like that. But the idea behind this is you're just asking patients, right? I mean, isn't that the number one key to all this is just simply asking, right?

[00:13:14] Yeah, it absolutely is. And the other side of this is there's a ton of valuable information as you collect these reviews right now. All of a sudden you're armed with just tons more patient sentiment than you were before. So now you can improve your practice based on some of the sentiment in these reviews, right? Whether it's, hey, we need to reduce our wait times because that's where we're getting rated lower. Or maybe it's about people love our staff, like let's make sure that we appreciate the staff that are being mentioned in these reviews. Whatever it is, you now have way more sentiment to go off of in that medical office.

[00:13:45] Oh, absolutely. And if you ask someone in person in front of you, they may not always give you such a candid response. So getting those reviews and feedback? Well, talking about SMS texting with some of the organizations you've worked with. Have you seen more payment processing happening through these patient engagement mediums like SMS or email or how or podium helping with ways like that?

[00:14:07] Yeah, absolutely. It's that one's an interesting one in health care because the way that we pay for our care is so outdated and it's so complicated. You get like eight different invoices in the mail. Two of them are repeat invoices. Four of them are like for the department that you visited for, like 30 seconds. It's kind of, yeah, it's crazy. So we are. Yeah, that's one of our biggest goals at podium is to revolutionize the way that patients, number one, find their care, but to interact and pay for their care like that is an absolutely critical thing for us because again, what we're seeing is when a patient can actually understand their bill, receive clear communication in a medium they'd actually prefer, which again via digital on their phone. The likelihood of receiving that payment in a timely manner skyrockets like we're talking major multiple, higher so and in the stats are actually pretty crazy. Let's just say it's health care collection, so let's say it. I don't know, I'd say it's a DSO we're working with on a thousand location DSO, right? And they have in their dental organization, they've got, I don't know, two million outstanding, maybe it's 10 million outstanding. Typically, what that'll do is in 90 days, they send it to

collections and they're going to collect on 20, 30 percent of that right? And it's going to cost a lot of money. And instead, what they could do is actually send out a text, collect that via mobile. They're going to see number one, they're going to see about a 40 to 50 percent return. And it's going to be within the next two days of sending that text, which is absolutely insane. But it just goes to show like number one patients, they tend to actually want to pay for their care, but they want to pay for it when they understand it. And in a way that's convenient.

[00:15:48] Like they said, the way they understand it, that's true. I mean, convenience is obviously a no brainer, but it is confusing. It's complicated. So I'm interested. Keep us posted on kind of how that goes. I know that's a big challenge for health care across the board. What do you predict in the rest of the year? Twenty twenty one, but mainly twenty twenty two on how patient engagement might change, evolve or step back?

[00:16:12] That's a good question. Telehealth is not going anywhere. Yeah, so I would say that I would say look like I think there were a lot of needed Band-Aids in health care last year, right during COVID, where I mean, even for a time, HIPA was something that we could kind of avoid during COVID, which was pretty crazy, right during the pandemic, but even

[00:16:34] Were like halted for a while.

[00:16:36] Google halted reviews because they were worried about the impact it was going to have during the craziness. So yeah, there was just a lot that went on, but telehealth adoption just absolutely blew up overnight. And the interesting thing is that patients loved it. Patients really appreciated the ability to conveniently meet with their health care provider in a way that they wanted, and then probably a little bit more timely manner than maybe an in-person meeting would have. So I would say the first thing, I guess it's not much of a prediction. Cat's kind of out of the bag on that one. But yeah, it's telehealth isn't going anywhere. But I would just say that the improvements on telehealth are coming. So one of the things that that we look at a lot is the way that patients are communicating with their health care provider throughout the entire journey, throughout the entire experience. You can have a great telehealth visit and then receiving your prescription, going and filling it, understanding what the next steps were. All of that gets kind of lost, and often maybe it requires multiple visits to understand. So

that's the other thing is effective communication pre and post visits is going to become even more important and more digital than ever before.

[00:17:49] That's an interesting point you bring up because it's so true because when telehealth hit like it was Zoom, it was all these other applications that we could get in as quick as possible. Not really necessarily structured around the entire process, like you said, from beginning to end more just about the actual appointment. And so I think it would be interesting to see how they evolve that to more of like an in-person experience from you interact before and after. It's interesting. So working with some of the largest health care organizations in the world, that's absolutely crazy. You must meet all different types of personality. What do you think is kind of a standing theme in health care now post-COVID, with them taking on telehealth and trying to get more patient engagement? What are some of their frustrations and what are ways that you are seeing that they're doing really well, succeeding?

[00:18:34] Yeah, that's a oh my gosh, that's a loaded question. Yeah, definitely. But but I would say this like, I think themes, right? One of the main themes coming out of COVID and what health care leaders around the globe really have been focusing on is creating a frictionless experience. I have heard that word out of the mouth of executive teams more than any other word, right? Like creating even more than robust. Yeah, like it's the word so frictionless has really been just the absolute goal of these organizations, right? Because again, COVID and introduced just a ton of nuances and friction to the process that maybe they didn't realize was there. And now it's front of mind like, OK, if we're going to really provide a better patient experience and one that is digital, it has to be there has to be less friction in this process. And so getting help from their EMR to do this, getting help from software providers, getting help from staff like that has been the overall goal. So I would say that's probably the main thing that that I've seen kind of the overall theme in terms of what they're frustrated with. That's an interesting one. So I think there's a few things, but probably the main thing that has been a bit frustrating has just been that competing in an online digital age in health care, and I hate to use the word competing, but organizations do compete for patients, right? That's just how it is.

[00:20:01] And obviously they want to. They want to. Yeah, we wouldn't, so they want to provide the best care and they want to prove that they're providing the best care, I think it's been a bit frustrating for organizations to wrap their head around competing in a

digital age because the way that patients find and choose their care has just completely changed over the last five years and last year accelerated it to to new heights. And I think that organizations all over the place feel like they're behind the eight ball. They feel like, yeah, and look, I mean, that's while it's a challenge that they're going through. It's also a major opportunity for health care organizations to go digital and to create efficient, frictionless experience, because at that point, you're going to win, you're going to win patients, you're going to improve their experience, you're going to win patients for life. So that's really the goal. And I think, you know, it's been fun to see some organizations really take that to heart and challenge each other and make it happen. And then it's been interesting to see some kind of struggle with it.

[00:20:56] Yeah, I can see that idea of feeling behind even on some of the things we've done with some of these organizations. They're all just trying to communicate and catch up, I guess. But I mean, it seems to be a theme across the board. Then like at least you're not alone in it, right? So why did you choose health care?

[00:21:14] Oh my gosh, that's a great question. So I've been in software sales for years, and the reason I chose health care was, and especially at podium, like the opportunity to revolutionize an industry. I think health care is there. Health care is ready to completely, completely revolutionize the way that it offers care to patients. I don't see that in many other industries as much as this one, and I want to be a part of it. I think it's pretty exciting.

[00:21:40] Well, it's interesting. What would you say was in your role like now you're in your leadership role in health care was one of your biggest challenges on your journey, like as an independent in software sales, you said, like where you made these big decisions. What really challenged you on your journey to where you are now and what advice do you have for others?

[00:21:59] Yeah. For others that are maybe looking to for a similar journey as mine? That's a good question. So I would probably say I think probably one of the biggest challenges has been helping organizations transform when they're feeling not quite ready for it. So that takes it actually takes a lot. So I would say that obviously there's a lot I think personally to do like a lot of personal study, a lot of work on my part. But I think it's really hard when you're trying to help an organization transform the way that

they communicate with their patients or transform their acquisition strategy or something like that, they think about it. Yeah, yeah. When maybe they're not quite ready for it or maybe part of the organization is pushing against that transformation. So helping the broader organization see how absolutely critical it is and pushing that agenda forward, that's probably when you can kind of figure that out with that organization. It's super rewarding, but it's also crazy hard because when you are able to work that out and get through it, you make friends for life because those people are pretty happy. They did, but but it takes a lot of pushing.

[00:23:02] Yeah, and I think that's important that you said that just be willing to push, right, be willing to be in uncomfortable situations or or dealing with people. People assume when you offer a service that each client or each member is so open and willing to have it done, and that's just not true. I love that you said that. Like, sometimes it gets uncomfortable. Sometimes it involves forcing. Sometimes it involves a lot of explaining, walking and holding. So I think it's just that's just, I mean, any service. I think it's not just health care, but one of the things I've got to talk about that I love with Podium. I love our partnership, and I even know this from my own agency is I love a center that podium. This is just something I just love, but they have a way that you can communicate. It's via patient engagement. So if you have a Facebook chat bot and you have someone on your page and they're liking it, let's say you have one person in your practice or two people in your organization that are in charge of monitoring all the ways patients can engage, right? So that means you need to be checking in on Facebook Google Chat. You need to be everywhere all the time. But I love that podium kind of created this center hub, and they even created ways to communicate with your own team. So it all comes into one place, and I think a of providers out there could really use something like that. So they don't feel again that they're chasing all these new ways patients can engage, and that slow follow up can really affect kind of converting that new patient, right?

[00:24:24] Yeah, that's a good point, Kelly. I think we talked a lot about text messaging, but there's other digital avenues of communication that patients prefer and go through, right? Maybe they're on Facebook and they send in a Facebook message. Maybe it's on Google and they Google quick to chat. Maybe it's Apple business chat. There's so many different ways that they can communicate. So consolidating it into one inbox where an organization can actually engage properly through the right channels with those

patients. It's been a fun opportunity to tackle. It's definitely been difficult with HIPA not going to lie. It was kind of crazy, but the cool thing is like being able to communicate in a HIPA compliant way with patients on mobile has been phenomenal for these organizations, and it really has been transformative.

[00:25:03] Are your review generation, reputation process, is it HIPAA compliant?

[00:25:07] Yeah, yeah.

[00:25:08] And we also have, you know, guys, there's not a lot out there.

[00:25:10] Yeah, yeah. We also have what's called secure messaging and secure messaging allows us to authenticate a patient into a secured version of communication that allows them to send back and forth insurance information, whatever they need to book that appointment or to have communications.

[00:25:24] So huge. There are a lot of companies actually that do review generation and reputation, but there are very few, honestly, that work HIPAA compliant and I didn't even know about the security area. So I mean, that really kind of narrows down how you guys have started to really focus on the world of health care and how you get that unique approach. So if you're going to work with someone, you want to work with, somebody that understands health care, right? You don't want to have to worry about HIPAA after this whole workflow.

[00:25:52] Absolutely. Yeah. And look like again, I do think it speaks to our focus on health care. But if you're going to transform an industry, you've got to focus on what that industry needs. And HIPA compliant communication is something that is an absolute need in health care, obviously. But solving for it has been hard over the years because there are obviously limiting factors in the way that you can communicate with patients and the information that you can share and not share. And so being able to have mobile communication that is HIPA compliant is critical and obviously something that we're happy to be able to to help with.

[00:26:25] Well, what advice do you have for anyone out there looking to get in contact with you guys or considering to finally boost their reviews and reputation? How can they get in touch with podium?

[00:26:34] Yeah. So Podium is our website. The best thing to do would be to go to our website and chat with us podiums webchat tool, so that's probably the best way to get in touch with us again. You could also just shoot me an email and Brian form at Podium Ryan with a Y or with an A.. So that's it.

[00:26:51] And what we didn't talk about is kind of how we got connected is the health care resources also that I love so much. Sometimes we just need some information, right? So Podium also provides some health care resources, blogs and articles that I know a lot of my CEOs and executives really love to fall. So and don't miss us will be in Vegas. When is it August 11?

[00:27:13] Yes, 11th and 12th, I think. Yeah, yeah, and

[00:27:16] We're going to break down all the SMS texting and kind of the huge difference it can make for your organization, your health care organization. So we'll be speaking at Hims on in August. So if you're there, make sure you stop by the podium area. Come say hi. Let us know you listen to the podcast.

[00:27:34] Love it! All right.

[00:27:35] Thank you,

[00:27:36] Brian. Thank you. Have a great one. Thanks.

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