



# SMS in healthcare

Driving cost savings and staff efficiency whilst improving patient outcomes and satisfaction through the innovative use of SMS.





Whether you're running a GP surgery, ambulance service, mental health trust, NHS trust or even a dental practice, you will need to communicate with your staff and patients. SMS is an extremely cheap and effective way of communicating the right message to the right person at the right time - it's therefore no surprise that so many healthcare providers are using SMS as such an integral part of their communications.

## Driving cost savings and staff efficiency

### Planning staff shifts

When shifts need covering, trying to ring all your staff members or organising external cover can become very time consuming and expensive.

Using SMS is a perfect way to communicate with all your staff members on the rota at once, cutting a job that would usually take hours, down to just a few minutes. You can then receive instant replies from staff members that are available. Not only does this speed up the whole process saving time and money, but it increases the probability of covering a shift internally rather than through expensive agency staff.

### Missed appointments

An appointment made a few days or weeks in advance can often be forgotten. Missed appointments mean wasted opportunities to see each other patients, resulting in an increase in costs and longer waiting times. It's also likely the appointment will need to be rescheduled.

Sending an SMS to remind patients of their appointment gives them the opportunity to confirm, cancel or reschedule. This simple, inexpensive and time saving communication can be the difference between someone showing up for their appointment or not.

### Staff attendance

Training days, meetings or company get-togethers can be difficult to arrange, particularly when 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.



## Increase patient satisfaction

### Outpatient follow-ups

For some facilities it's important to follow up with patients to make sure there are no issues or give them important information. When you're running a large facility with many patients coming in and out, this can become a very time consuming job.

An SMS can be sent to give outpatients the information they require instantly. 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.

### Reduce waiting times

When collecting a prescription, patients don't want to face long waiting times 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.

### Test result updates

Considering the sheer volume of medical 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 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.



## Improve patient outcomes

### 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 helps reduce future health problems.

### 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

Use SMS 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 send motivational SMS messages to staff, encouraging them to continue their good work.



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

**- A spokesperson, Bupa Care Service**



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

**- 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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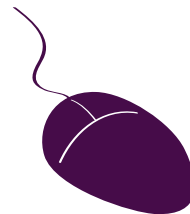
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