

# THE INTERSECTION OF HOSPITALITY AND HEALTHCARE

*Don't discount the patient experience.*

Patient experience is often one of the most sought-after initiatives and goals of providers and hospitals alike. How to improve patient experience is constantly being addressed, changed, improved, and debated as it relates to either leveraging AI, new technologies, and treatments. However, technology and gadgets aside, a crucial lens to look through when addressing the issue of patient experience is that of hospitality. Just like a customer at a restaurant or hotel, patients arrive at their destination with certain expectations and make judgments throughout the process about the facilities, staff, and experience as a whole. One might argue that hospitality within the healthcare sector is even more important considering people who wind up at hospitals generally don't do so by choice.

As a provider, here are three simple yet powerful takeaways that can help providers shape their patient's experience by considering proven hospitality strategies:

## 1. PERCEPTION IN A SECOND:

Pinpoint specific moments in the patients' experience in the hospital that may carry more weight than the rest. Often times in hospitality, specific 30-second windows will shape how that person will recall that experience. When remembering certain restaurants and hotels, consumers may only remember a few instances and touchpoints but those are the ones that will define their experience and determine whether they rave about it or dismiss it later on in life. The same may hold true for patients in hospitals: the intake process, treatment conversations, initial consultation, or even the first welcome they receive upon walking in may be the moments recalled later on by patients that shaped their experience as a whole. Instances such as those previously mentioned may pose opportunities for increased training and investment rather than trying to master every aspect of the patient experience.

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN TOUCH:

Despite investing and updating the amenities, furniture, food, and technology of a hospital, if providers don't invest in their staff as well, the patient experience won't move in the right direction. In hospitality, the temperament, expressions, and attitude of employees are so critical to the customer experience, and it should be no different in the case of healthcare. In fact, one may argue it is more important in a hospital since emotions and stress naturally run higher when people are undergoing medical care. Putting in place the right resources and training to allow provider staff to effectively interact with patients and their friends or family is an essential step in improving the patient experience.



### 3. THE DOMINO EFFECT:

As a manager in hospitality, as well as in healthcare, one way to make sure customers are receiving a great experience is to improve the employee experience to the best of one's ability. Empowering, communicating with, and recognizing the hard work employees are putting into their careers will allow them to provide a more enhanced patient experience. Providing the appropriate benefits, time off, flexibility, and tools needed to succeed and grow within the company are necessities to any well-regarded employee experience, and in turn – a positive patient experience. Just as one sabotaged dish can ruin a restaurant's reputation, a mistake regarding treatment or medical services could severely damage a provider's perception, not to mention potentially risking the health of a patient. The trust a manager puts in the hands of their employees when they interact with customers or patients alike needs to be met with the proper care to make sure the employees have their managers best interests in mind. When Client-facing employees feel cared for and supported by their higher-ups, that will often lead to them passing this feeling off to the Clients as well.

All in all, while everything mentioned above is crucial to delivering a positive patient experience, it is still important to remember that providing the best medical care possible will always be the top priority. With that said, a huge aspect of delivering medical care are the interactions that patients have with nurses, doctors, etc. which is why after considering the quality of care, approaching patient care through the lens of hospitality can go a long way when it comes to both employee and customer experience. A well supported staff will lead to well-cared for patients and will ultimately promote business growth and boosted morale.

Source:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2019/09/10/the-hospitality-truths-that-will-deliver-better-patient-experiences-in-health-care/#108ed10536e1>



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