



Marketing Is Changing. Patient Expectations Already Have.

How AI Is Driving the Shift to Personalized Healthcare Experiences

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Healthcare marketing is being reshaped by a much larger transformation: the reinvention of marketing itself.

For most of the modern era, marketing worked by matching messages to audiences through channels. In the age of print, radio, and television, brands segmented people indirectly by choosing where to appear. A message placed in a women's magazine, a medical journal, or prime-time television was a way of selecting an audience before individual-level data existed. The goal was reach, repetition, and recall. It was a powerful model, but a broad one. Marketers could influence groups, not respond to individuals. The rise of television advertising in the 1940s and audience measurement systems such as Nielsen in the 1950s helped scale this approach, but its logic remained unchanged: one message, distributed widely, measured in aggregate.

The internet changed that logic. From roughly 2000 onward, marketing entered a digital era defined by targeting, clicks, and measurement. Search advertising, web analytics, and later programmatic media made it possible to identify narrower cohorts, follow behavior, and optimize performance in real time. Instead of asking only "How many people saw this?", marketers could now ask "Who clicked, who converted, and at what cost?" Google AdWords, launched in 2000, and Google Analytics, launched in 2005, became emblematic of this shift, while internet advertising revenues grew rapidly as digital moved from experimental to mainstream.

That era is now giving way to a third one.

Since 2020, marketing has begun shifting again, this time from targeting cohorts to orchestrating personalized experiences. Two forces are driving that change. The first is the decline of the old tracking model: privacy regulation, browser restrictions, and platform changes have made third-party targeting less reliable and less valuable. The second is the rise of artificial intelligence, which makes it possible to interpret behavior, generate content, and adapt communication at the level of the individual. The competitive advantage is moving away from buying attention more efficiently and toward creating experiences that feel timely, relevant, and personal. Safari's default blocking of third-party cookies in 2020, Apple's App Tracking Transparency changes in 2021, the public arrival of ChatGPT in late 2022 and the EU AI Act in 2024 are not isolated events. Together, they mark the beginning of a new operating environment for marketing.

This is why the current moment matters so much for healthcare.

What is changing is not simply the efficiency of digital campaigns. What is changing is the basic model of how organizations earn trust, guide decisions, and build growth. In healthcare, where decisions are personal, high-consideration, and rarely immediate, this shift may be even more significant than in other sectors. Patients do not want to be treated as anonymous leads moving through a funnel. They expect to be understood as individuals moving through a decision journey. The organizations that adapt earliest to this reality will not just market better. They will build stronger relationships, more resilient growth, and a more differentiated patient experience.

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AI Enables a New Model of Growth

Artificial intelligence is often described as a tool for efficiency. Its greater significance is strategic. It changes what kind of marketing is possible.

In earlier models, personalization was limited by human capacity. Marketers could create campaigns for segments, build email workflows, and optimize ads, but they could not realistically adapt communication continuously for every individual. AI changes that constraint. It can analyze patterns in behavior, detect signals of intent, generate relevant content, and help determine what message, format, or timing is most likely to support the next step in a person's journey.

This shifts marketing away from static campaigns and toward dynamic systems. Communication no longer has to follow a fixed sequence. It can become responsive. Content no longer has to be written for the "average prospect." It can be shaped around the questions, concerns, and interests of a specific individual. Measurement no longer has to stop at clicks or form submissions. When combined with first-party data, it can connect digital interactions to real outcomes. That is the deeper promise of AI: not simply more automation, but more relevance.

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In healthcare, that matters enormously. Patients rarely decide quickly. They search, compare, pause, return, and often need reassurance before they are ready to act. The value of AI in this setting is not that it pushes people faster through a funnel. It is that it helps providers create journeys that feel more helpful, more timely, and more personal. The result is not only better marketing performance, but a better patient experience.

Our earlier white papers already point in this direction. More sustainable growth increasingly comes from providing value before asking for commitment, engaging patients personally throughout the journey, and using first-party analytics to understand what truly drives treatment and revenue. AI strengthens each of these steps. It helps identify what content is most relevant, supports more tailored communication, and makes it possible to learn from patient behavior continuously.

Why This Matters So Much in Healthcare

In many industries, better personalization improves convenience. In healthcare, it also shapes trust. That matters because healthcare decisions are different from ordinary purchases. They are emotional, high-stakes, and often difficult to evaluate objectively. Patients do not choose providers on technical quality alone. They also judge how clearly information is communicated, how supported they feel, and how confident they are in the process. This is why patient experience has become such an important differentiator in elective care.

Seen from this perspective, the shift to AI-driven personalization is not merely a marketing upgrade. It is part of a broader move toward more individualized care experiences. Educational content that answers the right question at the right time, follow-up messages that reduce uncertainty, and digital touchpoints that feel coordinated rather than generic all shape how patients perceive the provider behind them. Searchable content builds authority. Social and ongoing communication build familiarity. Personalized engagement turns both into trust.

This is also why the move toward first-party data matters so much. Traditional analytics can say something about traffic and clicks, but they often fail to show what happens next. First-party systems create a fuller view of the journey, from first interaction to consultation, treatment, and follow-up. That makes it possible not only to improve marketing efficiency, but to design better experiences around what patients actually do and need.

The Future Is Personal

Healthcare marketing is entering a new era.

Rising costs, changing expectations, and advances in technology are pushing the industry beyond traditional models. The clinics that succeed will not be those that optimize campaigns more efficiently, but those that better understand and support individual patients.

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Artificial intelligence accelerates this transformation, but the principle remains human. Patients choose providers they trust. Trust is built through relevance, clarity, and connection. The future of growth in healthcare will be defined by the ability to deliver meaningful, personalized experiences - at scale.

And in that future, marketing is no longer just about acquisition. It is about building relationships that last.

