

Get on Board with Technology



Historically, pharmacies have been slow to get on board with technological advances, but this is changing rapidly. The healthcare industry is in the process of being redefined by some heavy-hitting disruptions. These include increased competition, value-based care, digital health, and improved patient care participation. But the most relevant industry shaper by far is technology. Technology helps to streamline business operations – an essential part of any successful venture.

Independent pharmacies already understand that to remain relevant relies on maintaining a competitive edge. Adopting technology gives the independent pharmacy an edge over their retail-chain competitors by creating the opportunity to provide personalized customer attention. Here are some technology enhancements that pharmacists can implement with minimal disruption from their day-to-day operations:

1. Apps and Patient Portals

Many customers have hectic schedules or cannot make it into the pharmacy with their prescription. Creating electronic options for customers to utilize will not only help your current customers, but the convenience it offers will most surely draw in more traffic. There are several hands-on options available that can satisfy your patients' desires to play a more active role in their healthcare, for instance:

- Alert patients with text, email, or phone refill reminders
- Have an App that allows patients to send refills to pharmacies
- Remind patients to take medications at timed intervals
- Develop a patient portal with access to community health news, ongoing sale promos, and coupons

Pharmacists willing to step out into the digital world can uncover numerous ways to improve medication adherence and patient engagement using mobile applications and portals.

2. Update Your Website

A responsive website design that allows for patient access is an enormous draw for new customers and a vital marketing move. When a patient is shopping for a local pharmacy, they will choose the one which offers value and convenience. By providing a responsive web option, patients will have access to your brand in the snap of a finger. Some of the benefits of having a responsive web page are:

- Increased traffic both to your website and your store
- Consistency in messaging across multiple devices
- Update one spot and reach across multiple devices
- Design can be implemented with SEO in mind

Your organization will be in a prime position for new technology to be implemented – putting yours ahead of the game.

3. Revisit Your Existing Technology

Make it a point to look at your existing technology and maximize it to its full potential. People often tend to add new stuff when most don't know how to use what they currently have and duplicate an unnecessary expense. Check with your wholesaler and buying group to see if you are missing out on any free incentives or add-on's, like med-sync or adherences programs, instead of investing in a new service.

4. Automated Dispensing Machines (ADM)

ADMs have proven to be huge loss prevention and money-saving devices in hospital pharmacy settings, preventing losses (internal) and tracking returns of unused medication. In an independent setting, these devices can free up your pharmacy staff to better attend to customers in one-on-one interactions, saving your organization money while building stronger customer relationships. Implementing an ADM in an independent pharmacy setting can:

- Create a more efficient supply chain
- Manage inventory levels
- Lessen customer wait times for restocking, and
- Allow pharmacists to track and proactively monitor drug usage

Closing Thoughts

With a massive growth in digital options, now is the time for independent pharmacies to embrace the available technology to help provide easier access and convenience for their customers. Your pharmacy does so much more than simply dispensing medications, so why not invest in technology and tools aimed at helping your business make a more meaningful impact? By embracing technology, independent pharmacies can transform an old perception of simple medication dispensaries and deliver a patient care-driven resource, which benefits the entire community.

Not sure where to start? Through our partnership with Aspire Health, Keystone can provide technology advancements to help you efficiently and effectively reach your goals. For any questions, please connect with your Keystone Business Consultant via email at info@kpparx.com