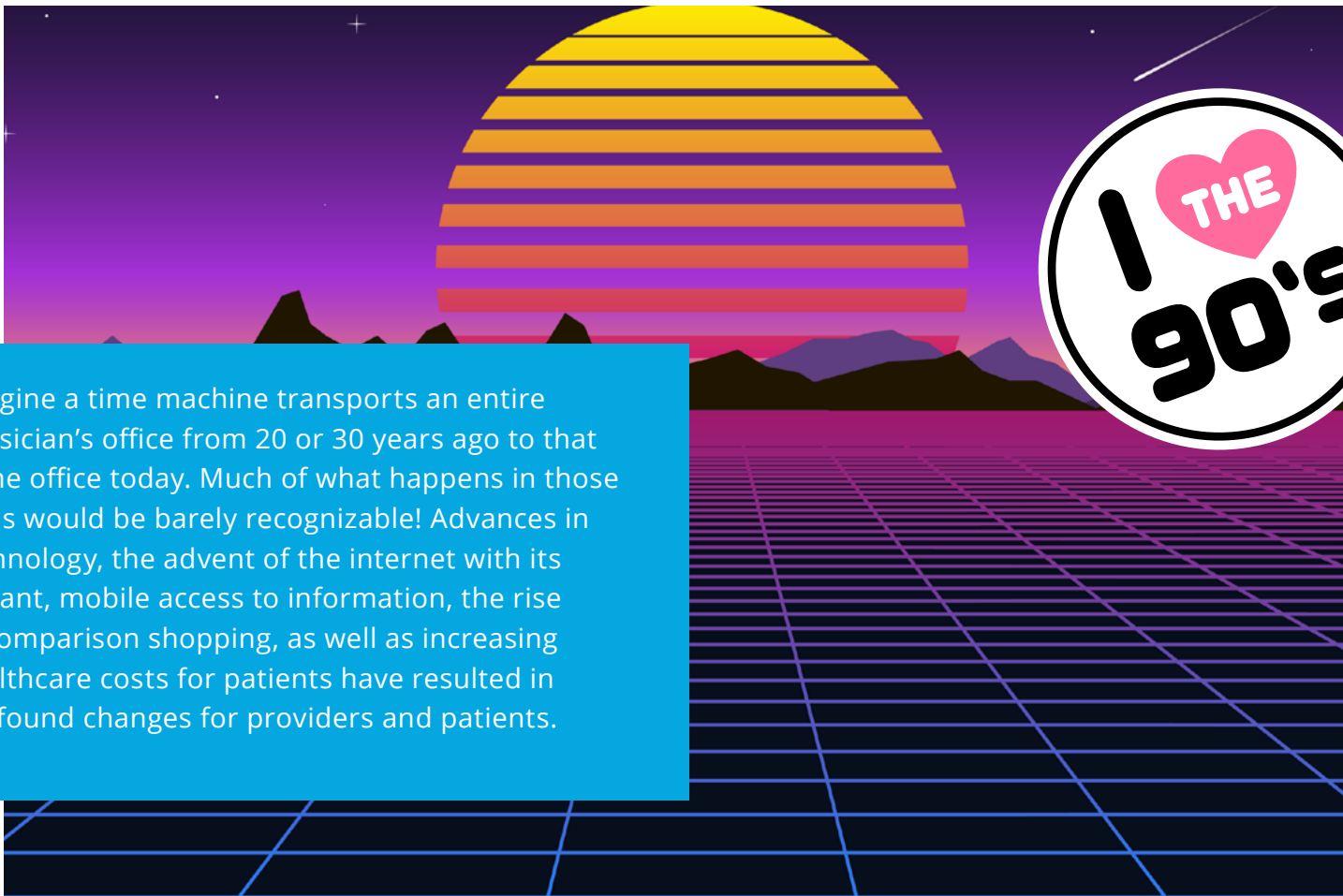




Moving from Patient to Consumer: Patient Expectations Then vs. Now





Imagine a time machine transports an entire physician's office from 20 or 30 years ago to that same office today. Much of what happens in those walls would be barely recognizable! Advances in technology, the advent of the internet with its instant, mobile access to information, the rise in comparison shopping, as well as increasing healthcare costs for patients have resulted in profound changes for providers and patients.

And while other sectors like retail have skillfully adapted to changes like these, many healthcare organizations have not. This is especially true when it comes to consumer-focused technologies. As Michael Dowling, CEO of Northwell Health, [pointed out at the 2019 North America Healthcare Forum](#), "The connection between healthcare and the consumer is behind. Healthcare in general has never been consumer-focused in the way it should. They have been patient-focused. There is a subtle difference."

There was a time when a whole family went to one doctor and it was paid for

by their insurance. They rarely saw a specialist. They trusted their doctor's word as law. Patients were patients and doctors were doctors. But lines have blurred and patient experience has changed.

Today's patients have consumer expectations and they are knowledgeable. They have more access to information. They are more technologically savvy. They Google everything. Healthcare is making the transition from the pure traditional model of patient to the world of patient/consumer.

Understanding what this shift from patient to consumer looks like is the first step toward successfully navigating these changes. Adapting to the new consumer mindset will improve patient relationships, boost loyalty, and lead to a strong online presence—ultimately making you increasingly competitive and less vulnerable.

Look over some of the differences between the way we connect with patients today compared to the past. Ask yourself if you are keeping up with modern expectations or if you might be stuck in the past.

General

An efficient patient experience has always been important. But now it's REALLY important. In fact, [92 percent of patients](#) say that optimizing their experience should be a provider's top priority.

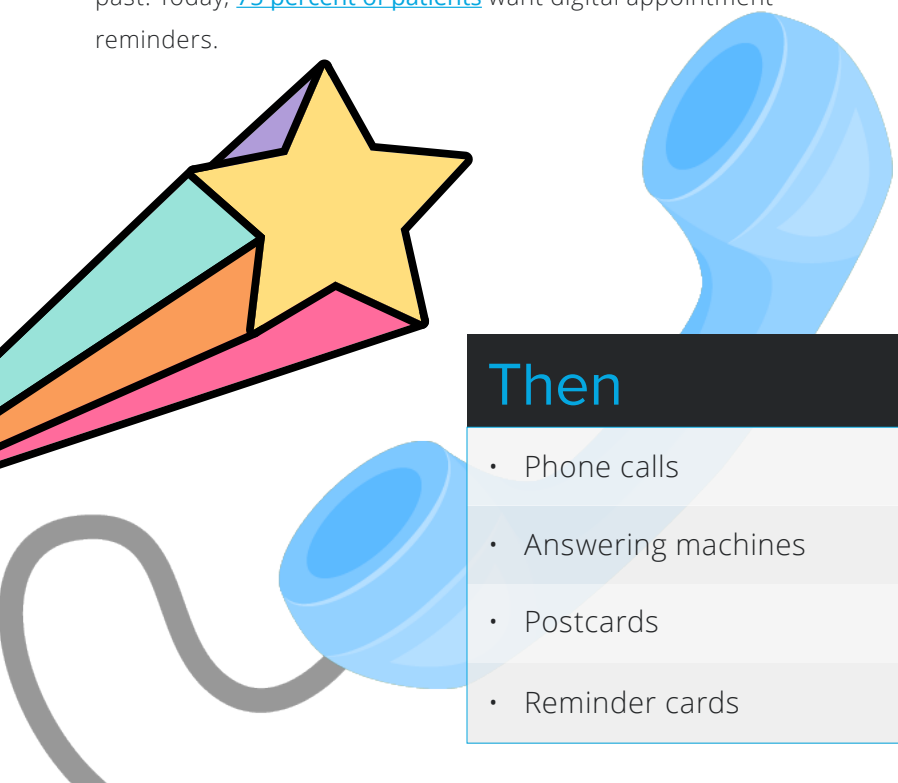
Then	Now
• Face-to-face contact	• Digital visit and communication options
• Physicians handled all information	• Electronic documentation (EMR/EHR)
• No contact between visits	• Access to records
• Patients stayed with same provider	• Customer service experience
• Pen and paper	• Personalized care and education
• Pagers	• Instant communication
• Post cards	• Patients change doctors for better experience



Old school methods for reminding patients about their upcoming appointments are becoming dinosaurs of the past. Today, [75 percent of patients](#) want digital appointment reminders.

Reminders

Then	Now
• Phone calls	• Automated text messages
• Answering machines	• Automated email
• Postcards	• Automated phone calls
• Reminder cards	• Social media



Recall

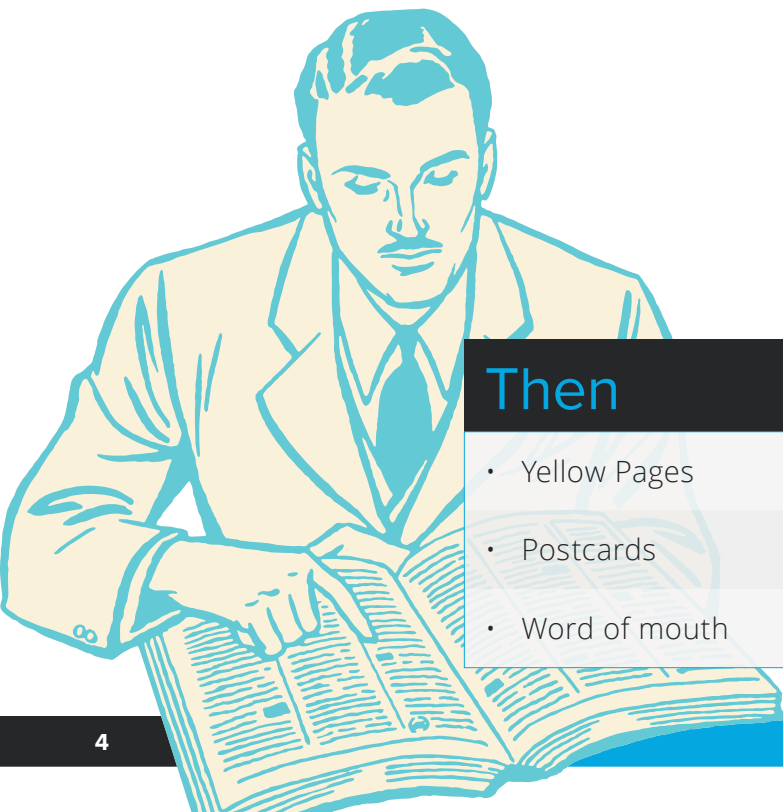
One thing hasn't changed—patients are still notoriously bad at visiting the doctor as often as they should. Fortunately, recall efforts are far easier and more effective in today's world.

Then	Now
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postcards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automated text messages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Automated email
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media



Marketing today compared to the past has completely changed with the advent of the internet. Digital marketing and online reputation has become key to attracting patients.

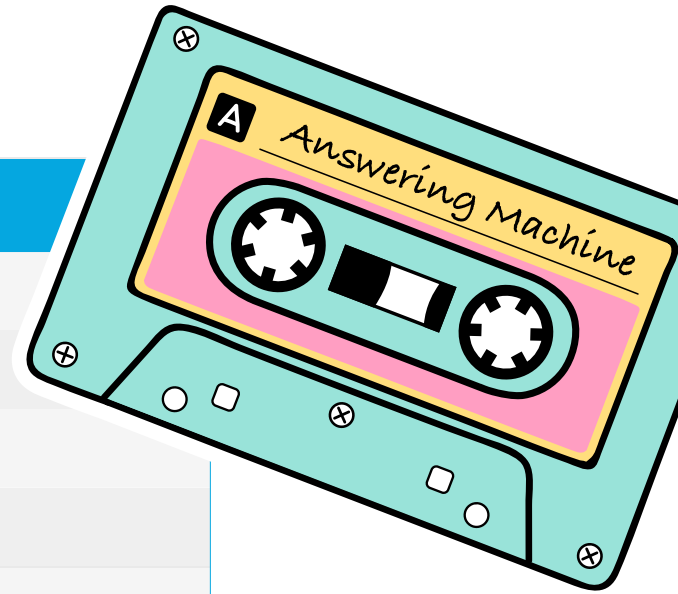
Marketing



Then	Now
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yellow Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Digital ads
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postcards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word of mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website

Scheduling

Patients no longer want to call to set up appointments. In fact, [77 percent of patients](#) say they want to be able to book, change, or cancel appointments online.

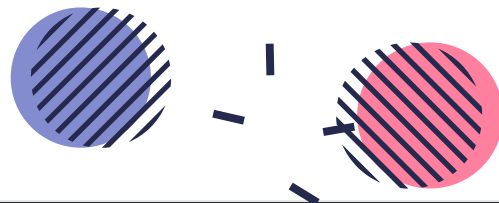


Then	Now
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients call 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text message
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instant messenger



Once upon a time, education mainly happened in the exam room. No more. Today's patients are more educated about their health conditions than any group in history—and want a say in their care.

Education

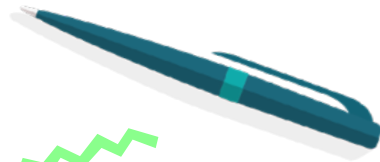
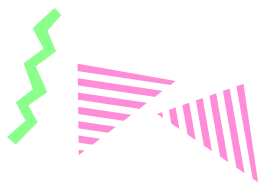


Then	Now
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper flyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted to condition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent via email and text
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out in multiple ways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated series over time

Billing

Too many organizations are still using paper billing or phone calls as their main collection method. Collection rates jump [25 percent](#) when providers contact patients the way they prefer—most often by text message.

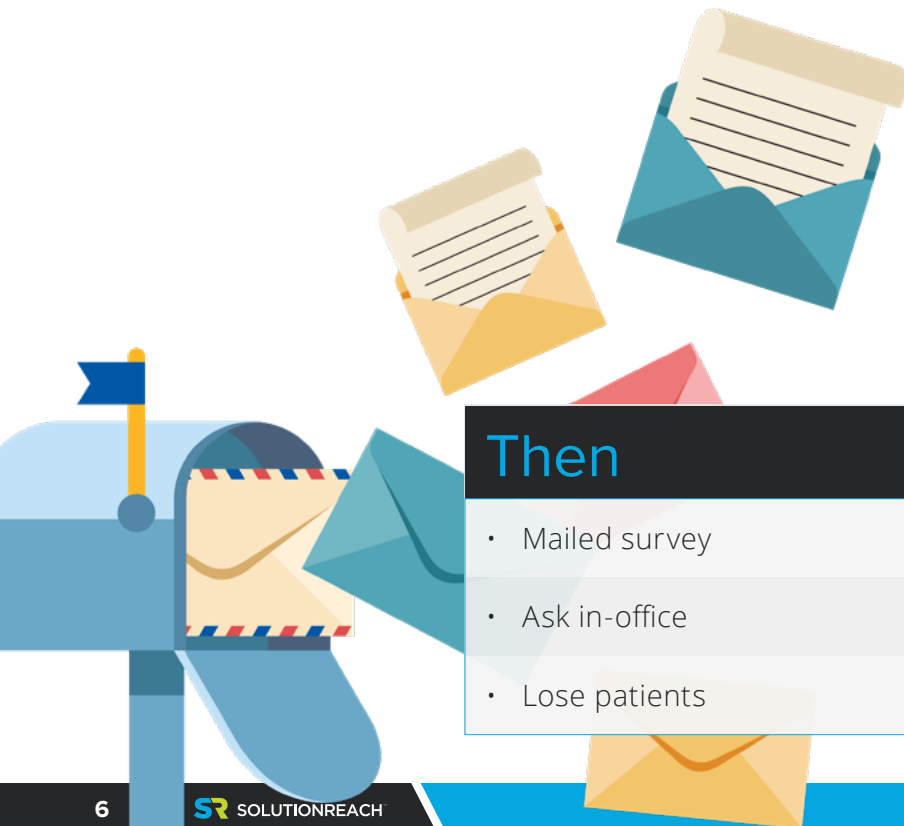
Then	Now
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic billing and payment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailed check 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit card on file
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient portals



Never before has it been so important to accurately measure patient satisfaction. Otherwise, you may end up with poor reviews, disappearing patients, and falling revenue.

Measuring Patient Satisfaction

Then	Now
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailed survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text message
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask in-office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lose patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media





Challenging, but not impossible.

Catching up to the consumer experience patients have every day in other industries is challenging, but definitely possible—and important—for every healthcare organization. The ability to meet evolving patient expectations has a direct impact on patient satisfaction levels, retention, and the overall success of the organization. By meeting patients where they are—online, using modern technology—these challenges can be eased and overcome. It's a win for everyone.



Solutionreach is 100 percent focused on providing the technology, and the expertise on how to effectively use it, to deliver better care and build a more profitable practice. We did it first, and after nearly 20 years, we're continuing to lead the way.

We show practices how to improve the patient experience and connect with patients in the way they want to connect. The result? More patients schedule more appointments and actually show up for them. More patients leave glowing reviews of their providers for others to see, and then they book appointments. And all patients get regular communications that keep them connected to the practice and coming back.

But we can't do it alone. Each practice we work with has to be "all-in". When practices commit to working with us, we bring all the experience we've gained working with 52,000 other practices to the entire process, whether it's that first welcome email or a practice check-in five years down the road.

If a practice is willing to roll up their sleeves and get to work on making patients happier and healthier, then we're the right partner. If a practice is ready to start growing and increasing revenue hand over fist, then we're the right partner. To learn more about whether or not we're the right partner, schedule a personalized consultation now at www.solutionreach.com.

