Healthcare Chatbot:
The digital diagnosis

SnatchBot

DIGITIZATION: THE PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTHCARE

In the twenty-first century, healthcare is arguably the market sector that faces the most challenges. Costs in equipment and care are rising faster than other industries, while healthcare providers continue to be plagued by a scarcity of qualified professionals. Consumers—or in the case of healthcare organizations, patients—tend to have similar expectations as they do with other consumer sectors, like retail and financial institutions.

This may not seem feasible; however, advancements in technology and consumer care present providers with opportunities to offer the same, or even higher, levels of service to their patients as other industries, particularly through digitization, multi-channel integration, and bot-building.

Curbing Increasing Costs

First, let's examine some of the persistent problems that affect the healthcare industry. Costs continue to rise, with no signs of stopping; research shows that a strong percentage of the gross domestic product in developed nations is spent on healthcare, typically anywhere from fifteen to twenty percent.

Experts predict that healthcare spending will continue to increase to nearly triple the current level within the next five years. One of the leading factors behind this explosive increase is the advancement of medical technology, including pharmaceuticals, which rises commensurately with the cost to deliver such options.

Industry leaders have made it a priority to find ways in which to control these rising costs, while at the same time improving efficiency. One aspect that many providers are turning to is system integration. As with many industries, incredible amounts of money have been spent to develop information technology that improves workflow and assists consumers; however, until recently, it has not been a priority for these systems to work together.

Every day, huge amounts of data are gathered and stored in the healthcare sector. The issue is that this data is cordoned by various systems, applications, and data silos. Gathering information is not a problem, but analyzing it in a meaningful way and giving both providers and patients the ability to access it relevantly is still an immense challenge—one that, if overcome, could mean cost savings in the billions annually.

Patient Engagement

Anyone who believes that the expectation of a patient (essentially, a healthcare consumer) are different from that of a consumer in nearly any other industry is, unfortunately, wrong. In fact, it's the non-healthcare industries that are setting the bar for such providers.

For example, a consumer who has a single poor service experience at a retail outlet is not only likely to abandon that brand, but also three times more likely to share their experience on social media than only five years ago. Studies show that consumers feel the same way about healthcare experiences; one bad interaction can lead them to completely desert a provider.

The Digital Prescription

As such, patient engagement is an integral part of the equation of solving both the cost problem and improving the patient/provider relationship. Modern consumers want fast, easy access to information; they want a self-service option; and they want their interactions to be engaging and personal.

Currently, healthcare providers are generally lacking in the service arena, and the burgeoning number of applications that attempt to provide information without interoperability exacerbate the problem. That's not to mention that the development costs for such applications, both mobile and web-based, are quite high and the development cycle can be months long.

The solution is fairly simple. With the right digital strategy and by employing bots with multi-channel integration, healthcare providers can empower not only their caregivers but also their patients, by giving them an improved experience with a self-service option that provides information and answers questions in real time. Better informed patients and a proactive relationship with their provider leads to overall improved health, awareness, and streamlined service.

Integrating Multiple Channels

Today's consumers and patients want to be able to engage with providers on the channel of their choice, regardless of location, device, or time. Multi-channel integration is crucial to a modern digital strategy, but without streamlined interoperability, a seamless experience between channels and devices would be impossible.

That's where bots, also called chatbots or intelligent bots, enter the arena. Bots are able to access data and respond to patients' requests over a number of channels, regardless of device or location. This sort of anytime, anywhere engagement bridges the gap between consumers and providers in a way that is personal and conversational, using human language and contextual awareness.

Furthermore, bots are able to connect healthcare professionals with the necessary data repository that meets their needs. The same kind of functionality can be available to patients, who can find information, resolve issues, and access health records simply by interacting with a bot.

Conversational Healthcare

This sort of personalized, all-access approach is dubbed "conversational healthcare." Traditionally, GUI (graphical user interfaces) required navigating menus and screens and speaking "computer language" rather than human language.

Bots, on the other hand, provide a two-way interaction based on text or voice input and draw context from the conversation to meet a user's needs. Bots can access various data silos and systems to provide necessary information, and do so securely, in complete compliance with healthcare-relevant standards and regulations.

Benefits of Bots

Below are some of the capabilities and functions that bots can perform or facilitate, specifically as they relate to the healthcare sector:

Patients' Experience

- ✓ Provide answers to frequently asked questions quickly and efficiently
- ✓ Offer an engaging self-service experience
- ✓ Schedule appointments and post-discharge follow-ups
- ✓ Answer patient inquiries and common issues with the channel of patient's choice
- ✓ Track patients' care to reduce readmissions
- ✓ Send alerts and notifications for prescription refills and care guidelines

Caregiver Versatility

- ✓ Streamline admission, discharge and transfer requests
- ✓ Alert care teams of urgent changes in patients and emergencies
- ✓ Send and receive referrals
- ✓ Facilitate collaboration between peers
- ✓ Schedule patient consultation requests
- ✓ Update record systems with patients' medical history
- ✓ Signal hospital staff if patient needs assistance

Interoperability

- ✓ Allow the exchange of data from currently disparate health systems
- ✓ Create a single system of record by transferring data from legacy systems to new database
- ✓ Automate data entry to significantly reduce error and avoid double entry
- ✓ Automatically send relevant training materials, patient history, and pertinent data to the necessary parties

Security and Compliance

- ✓ Perform in full compliance with all standards and regulations
- ✓ Reduce or even eliminate human error in HIPAA compliance challenges
- ✓ Provide real-time analytics and reports that decrease the need for audits

As you can see, bots can already serve a wide variety of functions that are relevant to the healthcare industry, and their full potential has not yet been realized. As advancements are made in artificial intelligence and heuristic learning, the capabilities of bots will only grow. Yet even now, bots are helping to reduce overhead, control costs and deliver better healthcare experiences for both patients and providers in a way that creates a personalized, engaging conversation. In the coming years, or even months, those that adopt digitization and streamline the healthcare experience will see a vast improvement in the way they interact with patients.

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About SnatchBot

SnatchBot's revolutionary platform streamlines business workflows and communications with a single message based interface. With SnatchBot's omni-channel platform, customers can specify the channels through which they'd like to connect. SnatchBot's tools support the entire lifecycle of a bot, from developing and testing to deploying, publishing, hosting, tracking, and monitoring. The platform provides robust administrative features and entreprise-grade security that comply with all regulatory mandates.

For more information about SnatchBot's bot-building platform,please visit our website at **https://snatchbot.me/**
If you don't know how to start building your bot contact us today and we will build your bot for you.
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