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6 Best Practices to Improve Patient Experience with Chatbots

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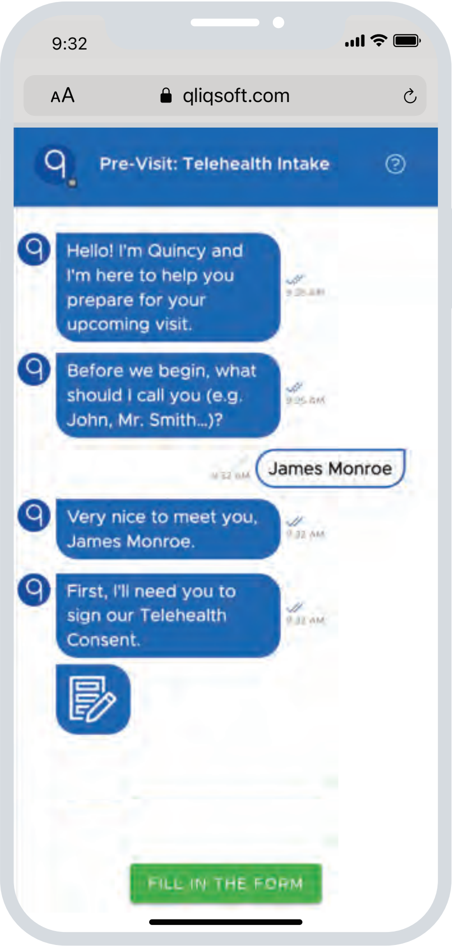
6 Best Practices to Improve Patient Experience with Chatbots

Congratulations! You've taken the first step toward amplifying your organization's digital presence to improve patient engagement.

AI-powered chatbots, "aka virtual assistants," imitate human conversation to answer patients' queries or escalate them to the proper department and care team member — meeting people's expectations for 24/7 convenience, speed and simplicity.

For healthcare organizations, chatbots automate time-consuming, routine tasks that otherwise involve additional human staff. Common uses of chatbots are sending appointment reminders, sending prescription refill reminders, closing gaps in care, automating patient intake by having the patient sign forms or provide proof of insurance coverage, providing information about a condition, capturing proof of licensure updates, registering patients for classes, and more.

QliqSOFT's six best practices explain how to create an effective chatbot that keeps patient users happy while giving you a more modern, safe and reliable approach to customer service.



Hello! I'm Quincy and I'm here to help you prepare for your upcoming visit.

Before we begin, what should I call you (e.g. John, Mr. Smith...)?

James Monroe

Very nice to meet you, James Monroe.

First, I'll need you to sign our Telehealth Consent.

Meet Quincy

Take a Deep Dive into Digital Engagement

85%

of Americans own a smartphone

PEW RESEARCH CENTER: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted 2002-2021.

1. Define Your Patient Audience

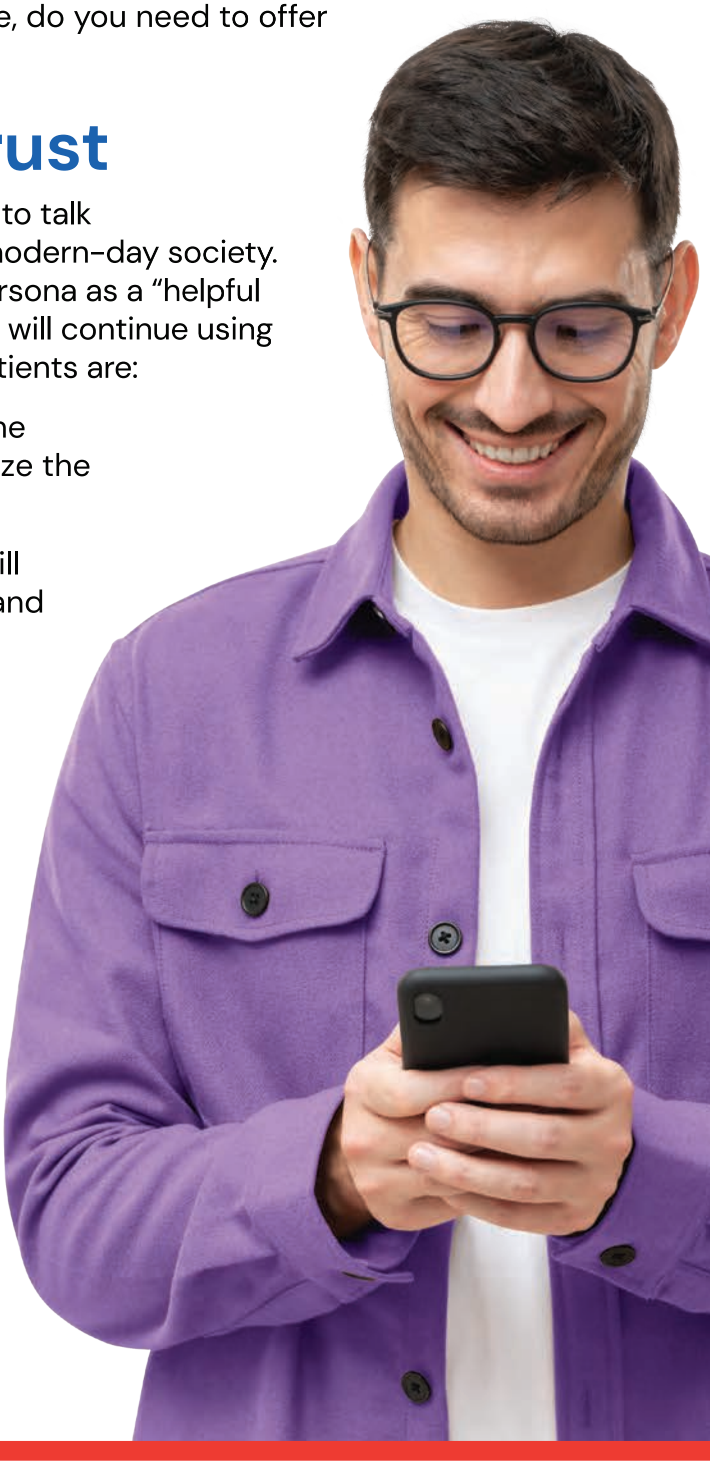
Since the chatbot will have direct contact with patients, figure out what type of patient group, population or individuals you need to reach. Consider the following topics:

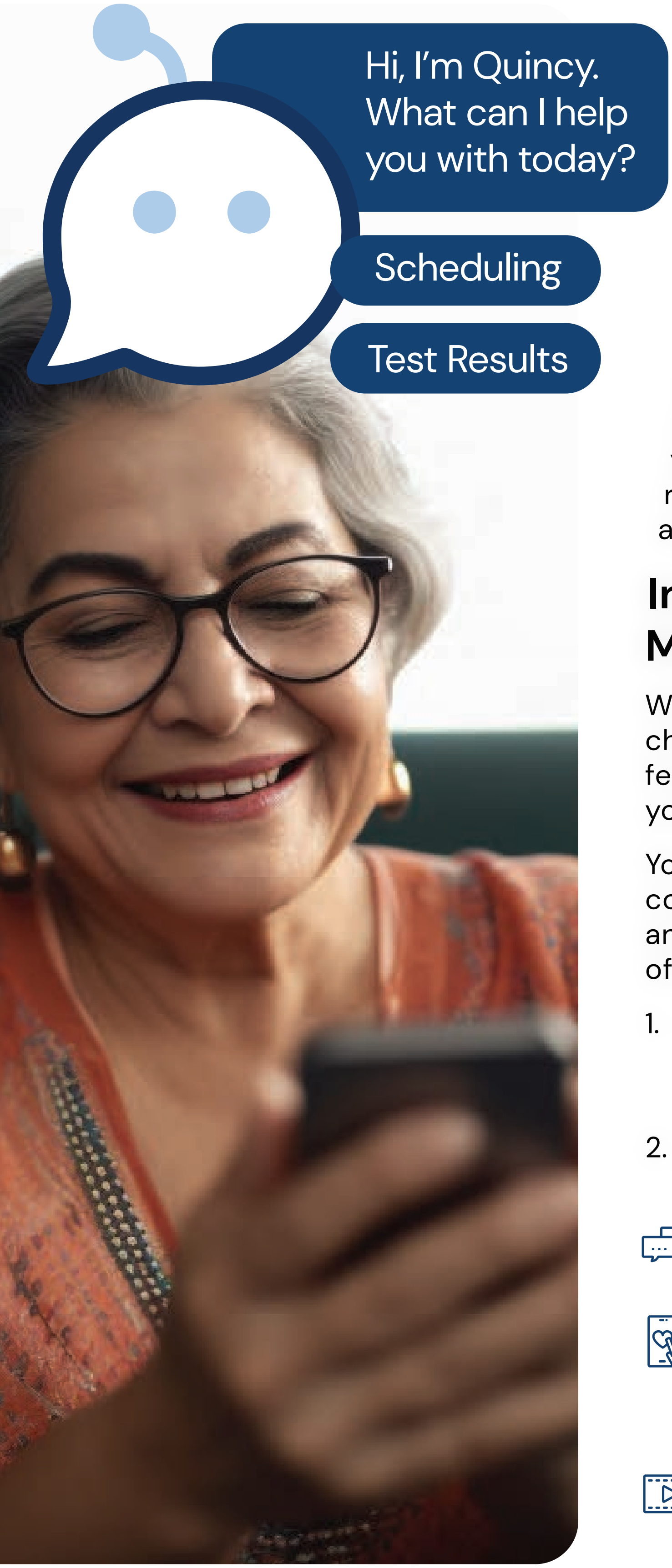
- Understand your audience's literacy level. Patient-facing health resources are often written at the fifth-grade level to maximize understanding.
- Is your audience proficient in English or, for example, do you need to offer another language, such as Spanish?

2. Establish a Sense of Trust

QliqSOFT's Qunicy chatbot platform's persona is designed to talk conversationally as a friendly, caring, person current with modern-day society. It's important that you and your staff view the chatbot's persona as a "helpful friend" essential to building trust with patients so that they will continue using it. Likewise, some ways that you can establish trust with patients are:

- Use Campaigns and custom fields to incorporate the patient's name and other relevant data to personalize the chatbot communication.
- Have staff trained to inform the patient that they will receive a digital communication, so they expect it and don't mistake it for spam.
- Personalize the SMS message to help the recipient differentiate between your communication and spam
- Have your IT team help you implement a personalized URL for your organization to replace the standard QliqSOFT URL to help the recipient recognize the sender.
- Allow the patient to choose their preferences for how they receive the information, for example, text, email, or paper; digital is default but not the only option.
- Provide flexible pathways to escalate help requests such as wanting to speak with a live agent.
- Integrate the chatbot into the healthcare system's current workflow and electronic health record (EHR) for seamless delivery and data capture, ensuring patients receive continuity and coordination of care.




Hi, I'm Quincy. What can I help you with today?
Scheduling
Test Results

3. Develop a Persona

Define your chatbot's persona and tone of voice that reflects your care culture and resonates with your designated patient audience to build rapport and trust. This gives the chatbot a personal touch and will make the conversation appealing.

Define the Chatbot's Purpose

Determine what you want your chatbot to accomplish. Consider what the needs and wants of your patients and incorporate that into your message. For example, you may wish to send reminders to reduce no-show rates. Your patients may also want to fill out forms in advance and need driving directions.

Increase Adoption With Proactive Marketing Campaigns

Whether your organization is ready to deploy its first chatbot or you're already launching advanced features, a little marketing can do wonders introducing your new virtual assistant to your patient community.

Your marketing doesn't have to be fancy or complicated. Marketing efforts actually drive adoption and use and boost patients' loyalty to your brand. We offer the following tips:

1. Choose a chatbot name that is easily recognized to personalize each patient's engagement experience
2. Create and distribute an email with a friendly tone to patients

- Introduce the chatbot by name and its landing page
- Briefly, list features and emphasize key benefits like: 24/7 convenience, get answers to questions fast, easy to use, and educational materials
- Provide simple written or short video tutorial on how to use the chatbot

Hi, I'm Quincy. What can I help you with today?
HEALTH @ HOME
We will now contact you over text and email to provide information before and after your appointment.
A Message From:
MEMORIAL HEALTH

Since spam messages and phishing attacks happen frequently, assure patients that your chatbot is HIPAA-compliant and their personal medical data is secure and safe

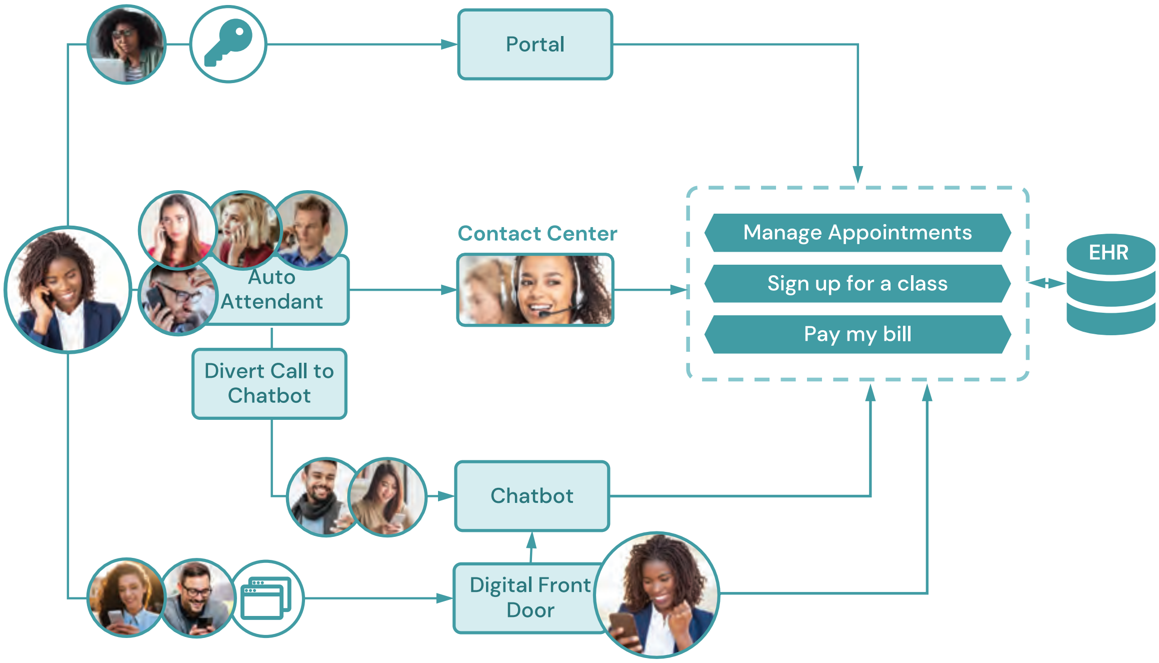
3. Hang visually captivating signage announcing the chatbot in waiting and exam rooms
4. Incorporate a chatbot announcement into your practice's phone system to broadcast when the patient is put on hold
5. Socially promote the new chatbot with an appealing image on your website, patient portal, patient's personal health record, and social channels
6. Include a brief chatbot announcement with patient educational materials
7. Ensure staff is aware of the patient-facing marketing and is prepared to answer any questions. Consider creating a FAQ document for staff. Test a simple version internally to experience how patients see the chatbot.

4. Promote Custom Design & Maintainability

Chatbot design is the practice of creating AI-powered computer programs that can interact with people conversationally.

Offer escalation pathways to redirect the conversation to a human where needed. Offer flexible options that empower patients to take action such as: sending messages, moving appointments to a new time, connecting them to resources, and escalating queries to a live agent such as a nurse or other clinician.

Engage your end users. Your chatbot must be able to work with and not against your current workflow. Involve the care team in design improvement processes for how chatbots are used. Once the chatbot is live, solicit their feedback. They can observe trends where patients are always escalating or interested in one specific topic. Knowing that, you can revise a chatbot workflow to design out these challenges.

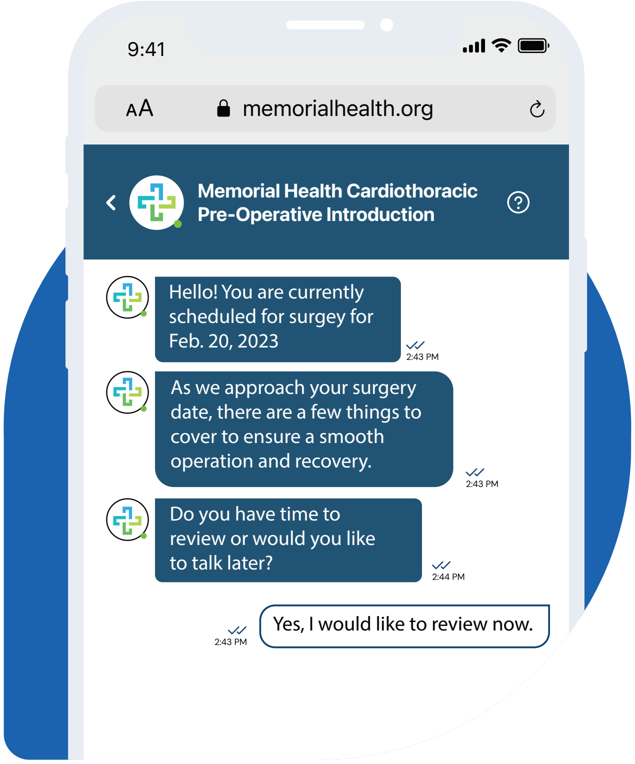


Create a Custom Look With Visualization and Text

As the look of chatbots become more sophisticated and attuned to an organization's brand, visual elements make patient user experiences better, more natural, human-like and enjoyable. Some tips to make it all work are:

Identify the majority of patient users' most popular digital device, namely smartphones, laptops or desktop computers, or tablets. Adapting a chatbot conversation's text and visual elements to the device's screen.

Select design elements that align with your organization and users' needs and preferences. Decide if certain medical topics are better conveyed through visuals such as a photo, graphic, or video vs. conversational text. When should the chatbot divert to a live agent?



Memorial Health Cardiothoracic Pre-Operative Introduction

Hello! You are currently scheduled for surgey for Feb. 20, 2023
2:43 PM

As we approach your surgery date, there are a few things to cover to ensure a smooth operation and recovery.
2:43 PM

Do you have time to review or would you like to talk later?
2:44 PM

Yes, I would like to review now.
2:43 PM

If you plan to create a lot of chatbot content, consider a reusable, modular design for videos, FAQs and forms to allow you to modify once and update all the chatbots that use that visual element.

Build Scalable Chatbots to Update Content

Construct chatbot modular designs — “blocks” of content that can move about and be rearranged — that enable a scalable work effort that your staff and care team can reuse, modify and expand with ease.

Case in point: A multispecialty surgery practice’s pre-op instructions are built in modules across different chatbots. If the practice's arrival instructions change, every chatbot linked to those instructions updates automatically rather than requiring individual updates or rebuilding from scratch.

5. Personalize Delivery Timing

Use campaigns to personalize the timing each patient should receive the chatbot. Set chatbot timing relative to the care event. For example, if a patient will have a colonoscopy, create a series of chatbots that provides instructions on the day of or the day before the patient needs to take the required action.

A chatbot can provide guidance reminding the patient pre-appointment what items to bring such as their health insurance card and driver's license. Post-hospital discharge, a chatbot can provide a series of check-ins timed based on the discharge date. These can reinforce discharge instructions, patient education, and other resources and can provide an escalation path if patients need help, for example, making an appointment or filling prescriptions.

Hello! I'm Quincy and I'm here to help you prepare for your upcoming visit.

12:10 PM
12
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Lunchtime is the best time to reach out to patients with chatbots

Source: AllianceChicago

6. Agility & Continuous Improvement

Chatbot use needs to be monitored and optimized using an agile, iterative approach. Observe usage patterns such as noticing where in the chatbot conversation the user abandons the interaction.

Establish a workplace environment that encourages continuous feedback and improvement. Ask patients for feedback (with a chatbot!) Encourage staff to brainstorm ideas for new chatbot uses, content to drive conversations, and ways chatbots can help workflows operate more efficiently.

The ultimate goal is to tailor each chatbot to a specific purpose to provide the most positive impact possible for the patient while maximizing the help to the staff.