



THE VIRTUAL WAITING ROOM:

Increase Patient Satisfaction and Boost Operational Efficiencies

About the Author



Charlie Meyer, Vice President of Sales

Charlie leads the North American sales team, which is responsible for all aspects of sales and leads a team that demonstrates the business value and fit of QLess' software solutions. With more than 20 years of sales leadership experience in enterprise and SaaS software, Charlie brings a wealth of sales and leadership guidance to the growing company and market. He also possesses a talent for evangelizing new technologies.

Prior to QLess, Charlie has held the position of VP of Sales at several start-up companies and successfully grew them from birth to acquisition. Charlie graduated from the University of South Dakota with a BA degree in Business Administration.

Empty the Waiting Room for Happier Patients and Better Reviews

When Neil twisted his ankle playing soccer, his mom took him to a nearby walk-in clinic. Arriving at the clinic, his mom took a ticket as instructed, and she and Neil took a seat in the waiting room. As they waited, Neil was miserable and in pain, and his mom worried about missing a meeting at work. An hour later, they were finally seen by a nurse who took Neil's vital signs and then sent the pair back to the waiting room to wait another hour for the doctor. This time, there was a woman sitting nearby coughing non-stop, and Neil's mom worried that they would leave sicker than when they had arrived. Eventually, they got in to see the doctor, but only after the mom had posted a scathing review on social media about the wait time at the clinic.

Patients hate sitting in waiting rooms. If they're at an Urgent Care clinic, they're already anxious about the medical condition that brought them there, and the waiting room compounds their anxiety. They worry about the spread of germs from other sick patients, and they worry about the things they need to get done in their day. As they wait with nothing to do, time moves much more slowly.

The longer they wait, the more likely they are to leave before their turn and write blistering reviews on social media. Both actions hurt business. Each patient that walks out the door is a loss of at least \$200, much more than that if they have recurring medical issues. Nearly 84% of patients use online reviews to evaluate medical practitioners, and they put so much value in the reviews that negative ones can make them choose an out-of-network provider with better ratings.

The Virtual Queue – Wait From Anywhere

QLess eliminates the wait by giving patients the ability to join a virtual queue. Patients can wait for medical

care from the comfort of their own home – or get on with their daily lives and get things done – instead of waiting in a waiting room. Timely updates notify patients when it's their turn, with the option to move backward in line if they need a little extra time. In addition, with QLess, healthcare providers can see if wait times are longer at one location and can redirect patients to a nearby location where waits are shorter.

Improve Patient Satisfaction Scores To Increase Reimbursements

Patients who are unhappy because of long waits also hurt patient satisfaction scores, which can lead to cuts in reimbursements for healthcare providers. In 2017, the U.S. government was expected to withhold \$1.7 billion in Medicare reimbursements from hospitals with poor performance on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS), a survey to measure patient satisfaction. Getting patients out of the waiting room can improve satisfaction scores and increase reimbursements.

While the HCAHPS survey is intended to measure patient satisfaction, response rates nationwide for the survey tend to be low. QLess lets healthcare providers survey patients using SMS texts, which have a much higher response rate due to their ease and convenience. One QLess customer increased survey responses from 100 to 1,500 over the same time period by switching to SMS surveys. The QLess Survey feature can be integrated to work with existing survey instruments and data collection methods. QLess healthcare customers have seen a 20% increase in net promoter scores (NPS) – by getting patients out of the waiting room and by increasing survey response rates with SMS surveys.

"We've made great advances in medicine, but the way we treat patients is the same as it's been for centuries – they wait in line to see a doctor. As an industry, we've struggled to find a better solution for managing the process."

Mark Behl, CEO
Renown Medical Group

Keep Patients Informed When Appointment Times Shift

When Neil had a follow-up visit with an orthopedist at the hospital, he and his mom arrived in time for their appointment. They checked in with the receptionist, who said that the doctor had been tied up with an emergency and was running behind schedule. As Neil and his mom searched for available seats in the waiting room, they noticed that the room was full of exasperated-looking patients. They sat and waited. And waited. An hour and a half later, Neil's mom walked up to the receptionist to find out if they had been skipped over. There was another patient already there yelling at the receptionist because he had been waiting for three hours. At that point, Neil and his mom left, determined to find a medical practice that respected patients' time.

When there's a medical emergency or when multiple appointments run over, doctors can get further and further behind schedule, sometimes by several hours. Using current appointment systems, the receptionist cannot let patients know that there is a delay until they arrive in person. When this happens, it turns appointment times into empty promises and angers the patients who are forced to wait.

Eliminate Walk-Aways

If patients choose not to wait and walk out, the losses in revenue can add up. The size of the problem varies by practice, but an average of 42% of appointments become no-shows, and missed healthcare appointments account for an annual loss of \$150B in the United States. QLess virtual queuing keeps patients informed of their wait time, letting them wait anywhere until they are summoned to see the doctor. This makes it easier for patients to wait – instead of walking away.

Turn No-Shows Into Later-Shows

QLess also helps healthcare providers fill holes in the schedule if appointments run shorter than expected or in the event of a last-minute cancellation. QLess FlexAppointments automatically fills those time slots, and it converts no-shows to later-shows by allowing patients who are running late to move backward in line instead of losing their place entirely.

"For us, QLess is a differentiator. It gives us an edge over our competition and fits in perfectly with one of our core values: respect for our patients and their time. Additionally, it complements our mission of giving our patients an experience that leaves them feeling "wowed."

CEO & President
Urgent Care Clinic



The Hidden Cost Of Waiting – Operational Efficiency

On the day of Neil's visit, the walk-in clinic's medical director noticed that the clinic was almost empty in the morning – with doctors, nurses, and medical equipment sitting idle – but ridiculously crowded in the afternoon. Patients, frustrated with the wait, were testy with the staff, and staff members were frazzled as they tried to rush through the line of patients. Had she known about the size of the crowds in advance, the medical director would have brought in fewer staff in the morning and more in the afternoon. Later, she learned that the hospital's clinic across town had been nearly empty that afternoon, and she wished that she had been able to send some patients there to balance the load.

Patients are not the only people unhappy about crowded waiting rooms and unpredictable wait times. Medical staff members are frustrated as well. Front desk staff must manage the waiting room and field questions from angry patients about wait times. Clinical staff may feel rushed to get through the line of patients. Management is concerned if the line is shorter than expected and expensive resources sit idle. No one is happy about staying late on a regular basis to get through long lines of patients past closing time.

Let Staff Focus On Their Work

With QLess as a self-service solution, front desk staff can focus on their work. Patients can easily join a QLess

virtual queue by SMS text message, through an app, on the healthcare facility's website, or by phone – without involving staff members. Patients are automatically kept apprised of wait times, which are more accurate than other systems because they are based on historical data and predictive analytics, instead of an overly simplistic 20-minutes-per-patient estimate.

Balance Patient Load Between Locations

When a healthcare organization has multiple locations, QLess can provide load-balancing between locations. By displaying wait times across multiple clinics on the provider's website, patients may choose to go to the clinic

with a 10-minute wait time that is 15 minutes away instead of waiting for an hour at the closer location. Front desk staffers across all locations have access to a dashboard displaying all wait times.

The QLess system is easy for staff members to use with a dashboard that displays each queue for each location, as well as at-a-glance views with live data of what is currently happening at the facility. In addition, QLess can automatically shut down the queue as closing time approaches, eliminating the need for staff to stay late.

Increase Productivity And Throughput

As Baby Boomers age and require more medical care, healthcare



The Hidden Cost of Waiting *(continued)*

organizations will need to improve productivity to keep up with demand. By 2030, more than six of every 10 Baby Boomers will be managing more than one chronic condition, which will put increasing demands on the healthcare system. QLess helps improve staff efficiency and throughput in several ways. QLess FlexAppointments helps fill every nook and cranny in the appointment schedule to make sure expensive resources, including staff

and medical equipment, maintain productivity. The QLess Dashboard provides operational detail on how much time each staff member spends on each type of appointment, giving management important insights to help improve efficiency. In addition, feedback from QLess surveys is correlated with the staff members who treated the patient, providing the right information to improve processes and patient satisfaction.

"QLess has provided my business with one of the most innovative customer service technologies of the 21st century. It has improved our customer satisfaction by reducing the time that a patient waits in the office."

Dr. Dan Murphy, Owner
South Tampa Immediate Care



The QLess Solution

When Neil twisted his ankle in soccer, his mom immediately joined a QLess virtual queue for the urgent care clinic by sending a text message from the sideline of the game. She then took Neil home, settled him into a comfy chair with ice on his ankle, helped him with his homework and took a call from work. She soon got a text from the clinic that Neil's turn was approaching, and they headed over. They were seen within 5 minutes of their arrival at the clinic. When his mom received a patient survey question by text message, she replied right away – 5 stars.

Over at the hospital, the orthopedist had a steady stream of patients but never felt rushed. Even when there was an emergency that took longer than expected, QLess kept her patients informed of their wait time. It also filled in gaps when patients took less time than expected, so she could see more patients, and the hospital could get the most out of expensive resources like doctors, nurses, and medical equipment.

Solution

- » Turn no-shows into later-shows by allowing patients to move backward in line if they need a little more time.
- » Keep patients apprised of wait times when the doctor is running behind schedule so they don't need to waste time in the waiting room.
- » Boost staff morale by letting them do the jobs they are meant to do instead of waiting room management.
- » Increase throughput by filling the schedules of expensive resources – staff and medical equipment.
- » Raise patient satisfaction scores for higher reimbursements – and get an accurate measure of patient satisfaction – through SMS surveys.
- » Improve patient satisfaction by eliminating waiting in the waiting room. Let patients wait in the comfort of home before heading to the healthcare facility, and let them go about with their daily lives.
- » Joining a virtual queue is self-serve and easy for patients. They can join by text message, by app, by website, at a kiosk, or by phone.
- » Enhance resource scheduling based on historical data and predictive analytics for patient traffic.





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