

CASE STUDY: LIVE GUIDE

Specialty Internet Pharmacy Provides Personal Assistance, Prompt, Quality Care With Netop Live Guide



ITSRx specializes in providing quality specialty medications to those suffering from chronic illnesses. ITSRx's commitment to helping patients manage their complex, high-cost healthcare needs is unmatched in the pharmaceutical community.

In addition to ITSRx's unsurpassed patient focus, the company offers a host of services designed to meet the needs of physicians, hospitals, payers and drug manufacturers.

Challenge

People battling chronic or life-threatening illnesses frequently need assistance from their pharmacy - whether it's to learn if they're injecting medication properly, to inquire about a reaction to a medication or to find out about insurance coverage. ITSRx, a specialty Internet pharmacy, serves customers with debilitating illnesses including hepatitis C, cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, respiratory syncytial virus, cystic fibrosis and multiple sclerosis. With a large portion of the clientele using injectable medications, questions abound and, often, can't wait.

Headquartered in Houston with satellite offices in Los Angeles, Miami, New York City and Sacramento, Calif., and also licensed to provide services to patients in more than 40 states, ITSRx opened in 2004 and has been growing rapidly

since. With more expansion in the works across the country, the company is tasked with providing

exceptional, personalized customer service that will stand up to any brick-and-mortar or online competition.

In the past, ITSRx has made help available by telephone and email. Company leaders saw the need to take customer service to another level - to offer instantaneous assistance that patients could receive in the comfort and privacy of their homes, with the personalized service they would expect from a neighborhood pharmacy.

Solution

Brian Smith, director of information technology at ITSRx, examined all the options before choosing Netop Live Guide™, the leading solution for personal communication between a company and its customers on the Web.

With Live Guide, anyone visiting the ITSRx Web site can click on a "live chat" link to ask questions, in real time, of one of the company's customer service representatives. "Whether people are at home or on the road, they can connect. Live Guide makes us very accessible," said Smith.

In addition, ITSRx offers "chat with a pharmacist," under the Patient Services tab on its Web site, for customers needing that level of expertise. Any ITSRx patient with access to a webcam - an inexpensive, readily available tool - can schedule a private video consultation with a pharmacist at one of ITSRx's pharmacy locations. "Sometimes it's essential to have the pharmacist see the patient, which is very easy to do with Live Guide. The

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patient can show how he's injecting the needle, to ask if it's at the right angle, or ask about possible side effects. It's a great way to give our customers personalized care," he said.

Because Live Guide is based on the Adobe Flash Player, customers aren't faced with downloading or installing any software - which is one of the reasons Smith chose the solution. "There's nothing on the technical end to stop anyone from connecting to us," he said.

Security was a prime concern for Smith when choosing a solution. It is critical that ITSRx complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and with Live Guide's state-of-the-art security, Smith is confident that customers are communicating using an encrypted platform that safeguards data and privacy. "I love the security of it. We know any conversation between two people is just between them," he said.

Results

By offering another path for communication, ITSRx is drawing customers to its services, explained Smith. "Live Guide has been a huge asset to our business. It's another way to bring customers closer to us." For those who work from a computer, they're already there, he noted. "If, for example, a patient has lost his medication, it's two clicks and he's on with live help."

ITSRx is seeing measurable results: notably, a 20 percent increase in online conversions - from browsers to customers - at a lower cost than with any competing alternative. In addition, the company has reduced service operational costs by 25 percent since implementing Live Guide. Meanwhile, customers are happy with it. Customer satisfaction for Live Guide transactions outscores any other human-assisted channel.

Many patients report they appreciate the opportunity to deal with an embarrassing medical situation from a private, quiet setting, said Smith. "It's much more comfortable to talk with a pharmacist through Live Guide than to go to a pharmacy with bright lights, long lines and other shoppers nearby who may overhear personal questions."

Live Guide is proving to be an important part of ITSRx's move toward digital communication, an efficiency in accessing and storing records. With Live Guide's digital logs, ITSRx leadership can quickly review records to make sure high-quality care is being administered. "It's easy to see if everything is being done properly," said Smith.

The company is also finding Live Guide helpful for internal communication, as sales representatives reach for it to ask a quick question of a customer service representative. Smith foresees expanding its use internally, as well as using it to communicate with physicians' offices.

The best part of Live Guide, he said, is "really being able to help people. It's a new way to connect with patients, to help them quickly. It's a tremendous benefit to have this capability."

Benefits of Using Live Guide

- Instantaneous support for patient questions
- Prompt and efficient personalized care
- Confidential video consultations protect privacy
- HIPAA compliant security safeguards
- 20% increase in online conversions
- 25% reduction in customer service costs

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