

# Got CRM Data?

## Resuscitate Your Database with Direct-to-Patient and Direct-to-Physician Communication

CRM databases can help you effectively connect your brand with patients and their physicians.

By Jeanne Zucker

CRM databases built over the past few years may have delivered a solid roster of current patients and potential future patients to your brand. However, beyond the initial collection of their names and contact information – presumably now going a bit stale – have you tapped into the full potential of this database, to actually try to connect these patients with their physicians and perhaps lay the foundation for ongoing, interactive communications?

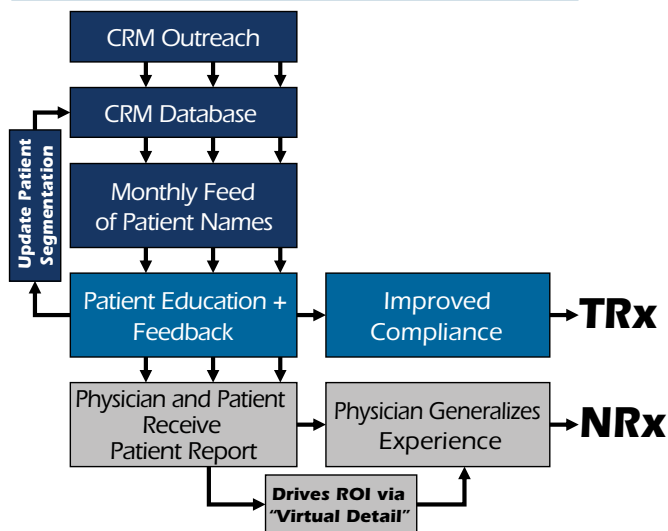
Due to escalating marketing expenses, the need to find a more cost effective way to reach current and prospective patients has become increasingly urgent. Many healthcare organizations have adopted customer relationship management (CRM) as a solution to better communicate to consumers and increase revenue. As pharmaceutical marketers throw up their hands in frustration with continuous efforts to fill the “leaky bucket” of patient acquisition, one solution may be right under our noses: to make CRM patient databases work to reconnect patients with their physicians, root out any compliance issues and personalize the dialogue between patients and their doctors.

Imagine if you could reach out to patients who had initially shown an interest in your brand, or even better – started a new prescription and had an initial motivation to improve their health. Why not reach out to those patients to find out where they are today?

A voluntary survey allows patients to reconnect with their physician and report current medication use, satisfaction with it, self-care behaviors and intent to start or continue use of a prescription medication.

What the physician actually receives is a confidential, brief, current and personalized patient status report outlining the patient’s compliance, understanding about their condition and

### Patient-Physician Communications Can Revive your CRM Database and Increase Prescribing



treatment, as well as their motivation. The impact is profound. Both patient and doctor are better prepared for the next office visit and a more informed dialogue.

### The crux of doctor-patient communication

The patient status report serves as a connecting link between the doctor and patient in between office visits and provides a basis for dialogue at the point of care. InfoMedics conducted a study recently which indicates that physicians rate these reports useful, plan to file them in the patient’s chart and use them as a basis for discussion at the patient’s next visit.

The study evaluated four different InfoMedics programs that were designed to provide feedback to physicians about their patients’ experiences with different medications. Patients who were prescribed a given medication voluntarily completed surveys about their current medication use, satisfaction, self-care behaviors and compliance challenges. The prescribing physician received a detailed data report summarizing individual patient responses. Analyses of the data received demonstrated that physicians greatly value the reports:

- the average useful rating of the report was 3.9 (based on a 0-to-5 rating scale, with a 5 score the highest);
- 75 percent of the physicians rated the usefulness of the reports a 4 or 5;
- 91 percent of the physicians said they would add the report to the patient file;
- 68 percent of the physicians said they would discuss the report with the patient;
- 66 percent of physicians said they would add the report to the patient file and discuss it with the patient.

Overall, the study found that patient-reported data, viewed in the report, play a role in providing physicians insights on patients' current conditions and challenges. Physicians are interested in programs and initiatives designed to give them that information. Specifically, the respondents identified data about patient well-being, self-care behaviors, and satisfaction as the most valuable types of information.

And patients appreciate the opportunity to provide this structured communication and feedback to their physician. On average, 77 percent of patients report participating because they want to provide information to their physician or because their physician asked them to participate.

### Personalized support of marketing message

CRM-based outreach reconnects both the patient and the physician to your brand in a highly credible, helpful and supportive manner. Professionally designed and implemented with the CRM database as a foundation, you can offer patients and their physicians a unique and valuable support service that associates your brand with not just a pill, or the latest DTC ad campaign. For example, individualized "service bundles," such as the Infomedics' Comprehensive Treatment Package, can include personalized, interactive education and support materials. The effort to facilitate informed communication will also distance your brand from your competitors' and can yield improved brand loyalty from your two essential customers – physicians and patients.

As CRM databases have been sliced, diced and analyzed, and patient segments created for marketing and product positioning, so can interactive communications. Your current segmentation practices can best identify which patients would be most receptive to specific type of survey interventions. Their survey responses can then not only drive personalized information to their physician in their individual report, but lead to an ongoing personalized and interactive flow of communications.

### Keep doctors in the loop

A well-executed patient-feedback program will demonstrate the value of CRM from the patient's perspective to the physician and additionally provide important medication and satisfaction data to the prescribing physician. InfoMedics program experience suggests that when patient feedback is provided to physicians, their prescribing decisions are confirmed and brand loyalty increases because physicians generalize the positive experiences from patients in these programs to other appropriate patients within their practices. Patients involved in feedback programs also tend to be more compliant with their treatment regimes and have greater likelihood to adhere to their therapy regimen.

This type of communications program offers an innovative way to link physicians to information and to the experiences

**The effort to facilitate informed communication can yield improved brand loyalty from your two essential customers – physicians and patients.**

of their patients enrolled in your CRM program. Physicians will learn and see the value of your CRM program and be open to encouraging new patients to enroll into the program based on its unique and patient-centric benefits; including patient education and informational resources as well as the unique information feedback loop.

But perhaps the most valuable benefit is that, for the first time, physicians will be able to receive information from their patients about the quality, content, usefulness and effectiveness of the features and services associated with the CRM program. The program will be an appreciated complement to treatment education provided to patients in the office and help physicians set appropriate patient expectations. It will give physicians an additional outlet for ensuring patients get the right support and information about their condition, and it will confirm back to physicians that educational material is received, understood and comprehended by their patients.

By breathing new life into your CRM program, it will transform into a value added service to patients helping them to keep their physician informed of their treatment progress. Patient feedback programs are the emerging standard in patient support programs and an important element in Comprehensive Treatment Packages – tying the services provided from the CRM program to information available to physicians about patients' use, approval and satisfaction with those services. This approach is the first DTC / CRM initiative to effectively link the doctor to information and experiences from patients who participate.

Got CRM data? Take another look at how you can utilize it to bring renewed vitality to your brand. ■

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*Jeanne Zucker is a member of the founding management team at InfoMedics and is currently responsible for strategic business development, identifying new markets and partners. Founded in 1995, InfoMedics Inc. is the only pharmaceutical services provider that delivers clear, actionable patient feedback to physicians; this feedback is designed to improve patient-physician communications while providing brand insight to pharmaceutical manufacturers. For information, please visit InfoMedics at [www.infomedics.com](http://www.infomedics.com) or e-mail Jeanne Zucker at [jzucker@infomedics.com](mailto:jzucker@infomedics.com).*