

5 Reasons Why Pharmacies Should Offer Home Deliveries

and What to Look for in Delivery Software



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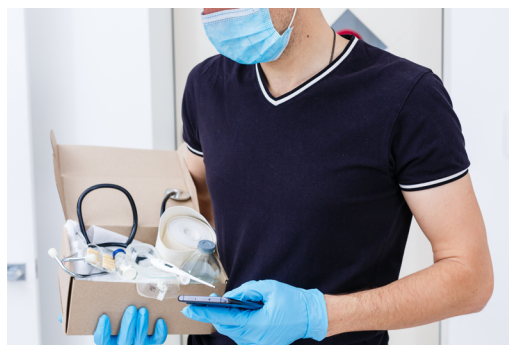
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Patients are increasingly turning to delivery services to get their prescription drugs during coronavirus lockdowns, a shift from the traditional visit with a pharmacist that is expected to endure after the pandemic subsides.

At a time when we're all taking steps to self-quarantine and socially distance ourselves from others, it should come as no surprise that all delivery services are seeing a surge in business.

According to reports, those with preexisting health conditions are more susceptible to the coronavirus, making any public outings potentially dangerous. Likewise, doctors are saying to patients, "Don't come in if you think you have a virus," but also, "Don't go into the pharmacy."

As a result, CVS saw a 10-fold increase in pharmacy home deliveries during the first three months of this year, mostly since waiving fees in early March, a spokesman said. Express Scripts, a subsidiary of insurer Cigna Corp., said it is processing more home delivery orders since stay-at-home measures began in March. Walgreens is also seeing a boost in demand for prescription delivery during the pandemic.



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Locally-owned pharmacies have already been struggling to compete against national chains, a situation made worse as some health plans and drug-benefit managers steer patients to large pharmacies. The cost of delivering to the home must be affordable, efficient and safe, and there is no shortage of delivery solutions to choose from.

With the general understanding that this is a trend that will continue, here are five reasons why pharmacies should offer home deliveries, as well as features to look for in an advanced dispatch system that will streamline those deliveries.

Improve Customer Adherence

It is estimated that 30–50% of medications are not taken as advised. Part of the reason is that many people are unable to travel to the pharmacy in time, or they forget to pick up their medication. Chronic conditions can make it difficult for customers to leave their homes.

Delivery will increase the chances of medications being taken correctly, which is called medication adherence. Researchers found that patients who use home delivery are 88% more adherent. Pharmacies that offer delivery services also are more likely to improve their customer retention rate.

Increase in Revenue

Pharmacies that offer delivery may see an increase in revenue. A study in 2016 showed that pharmacies saw their revenue rise 6–8% after roughly three months of using delivery services. Part of the increase was a result of customers ordering other goods along with their medication. Some even ordered items without getting a prescription.

Delivery can expand a customer base by reaching those who would not have been able to travel to the pharmacy. The chances of customers returning to the same pharmacy may also increase.

Save on Resources

Implementing delivery services can help pharmacies save on resources. A delivery system will reduce customer service responsibilities, and orders get completed faster. Since pharmacies use advanced computer technologies, orders get made with higher accuracy. As a result, fewer resources are spent trying to fix mistakes.

Customers also save money by avoiding potential medical expenses. When customers fill prescriptions online, overhead costs are lowered.



Increase in Efficiency

Delivery services offer tools that improve efficiency for pharmacies. Pharmacies can handle a larger volume of prescriptions, which get filled at a faster rate. The workflow becomes more optimized as certain responsibilities get delegated to computer technologies.

Pharmacists no longer have to spend time counting pills by hand. They can focus on customers' needs and other management duties. Pharmacies can save money on filling prescriptions while also improving the quality of the medication.

And telemedicine industry veteran Randy Parker said he's working with partners to integrate and leverage the logistics platform, guaranteeing same-day delivery for acute medications.

Medical Waste Reduction

Unused medication may result in medical waste, and providing delivery services helps to reduce the number of prescriptions that are filled, but never picked up. In 2013, the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Defense created a report that showed one of the benefits of pharmacy delivery is reducing waste. Delivery services will reduce the chances of medications that are not picked up being discarded.

What to Look for in Delivery Technology

If you are considering offering pharmaceutical deliveries to your customers, make sure to analyze each solution to ensure it provides the efficiencies, customer experience, and security that you and your customers are looking for.

Route Optimization

Taking delivery to the next level requires the ability to optimize and also prioritize routes. Optimized routes organize each order in the most efficient way possible and may allow for re-arranging and customization of routes to prioritize VIP customers. Optimized routes are the first step in ensuring efficiency in pharmaceutical deliveries. Routes are instantly built according to customer time windows, traffic, proximity, customer preferences, and much more to get routes dispatched to drivers as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Real-Time Tracking

The ability to track in real-time can provide immense opportunities in efficiency, reporting, and customer satisfaction. Real-time tracking provides the ability to see a detailed full-picture view of where everything is concerning the dispatching cycle at any given moment.

External and On-Demand Delivery Services

Driver shortages are having a heavy impact on the world of retail. With external delivery services, businesses can now call in an outside driver to help deliver pharmacy products faster and more cost-effectively. This same feature also benefits couriers who are working with pharmacies, by allowing them to float their fleet and accept orders, creating a win-win scenario for both industries.



Contact-Free

Through an advanced dispatch solution, photos capturing the condition and location of delivered or serviced pharmaceuticals can easily be obtained using a mobile application on a driver's or technician's device. Additionally, these images can be generated on a proof of delivery or service document and automatically sent to customers after an order is completed.

Customizable

While some solutions may provide a cookie-cutter, one size fits all option, other solutions provide customization to help meet each pharmacy's individual dispatching needs. In addition, software customizability allows the business to adapt its operations as well as grow with future trends and needs.

Delivery or Service Windows

When service or delivery windows are part of the delivery equation, it is important to be able to organize and route properly to meet the indicated time windows. Routes can be built to meet time windowed deliveries in the most optimal order to ensure that all deliveries are completed when the customer needs them to be.

Communication

Communication is key in the quickly changing dispatching operation. Through email and text alerts, better customer communication is both possible and necessary to compete against larger e-commerce pharmacies. Customers expect more, and with the proper dispatching tool at your fingertips, providing key details to customers can be done automatically.

Visit www.EliteEXTRA.com to learn more

Cited Resources:

- <https://pharmacy-staffing.com/independent-pharmacy-home-delivery-services/>
- <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mail-order-drug-delivery-rises-during-coronavirus-lockdowns-11589281203>
- <https://www.pharmacist.com/article/mail-order-drug-delivery-rises-during-coronavirus-lockdowns>
- <https://www.technologynetworks.com/informatics/blog/this-digital-pharmacy-aims-to-deliver-prescriptions-to-your-door-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-333011>