

The Ultimate Patient Retention Cheat Sheet

Your guide to perpetual business growth.

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As a qualified Physiotherapist and owner of a successful private practice with over 17 years of clinical experience, Sarah now shares her extensive knowledge with others to help them to achieve their business goals with confidence.



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Introduction

Returning patients contribute to the financial stability of a clinic through their appointments and ongoing treatments.

As healthcare providers, we're typically drawn to the industry with a passion for improving the lives and well-being of our families, friends, and communities. But in order to successfully make it our full-time profession, we must also master the strategic business components.

Patient retention is a critical component of clinical business success. And in this guide, we're going to take a look at the strategies and metrics we have successfully used (and personally recommend) to strengthen this key foundation of your practice.

The Bottom Line

A new patient costs a lot more than keeping an existing one.

The patients on your books are your clinic's lifeline, and you should go down every avenue available to help keep them - there is plenty of research suggesting that acquiring a new patient costs a lot more than keeping an existing one.

While new clients are essential and demonstrate a sign of growth, they are often more costly.

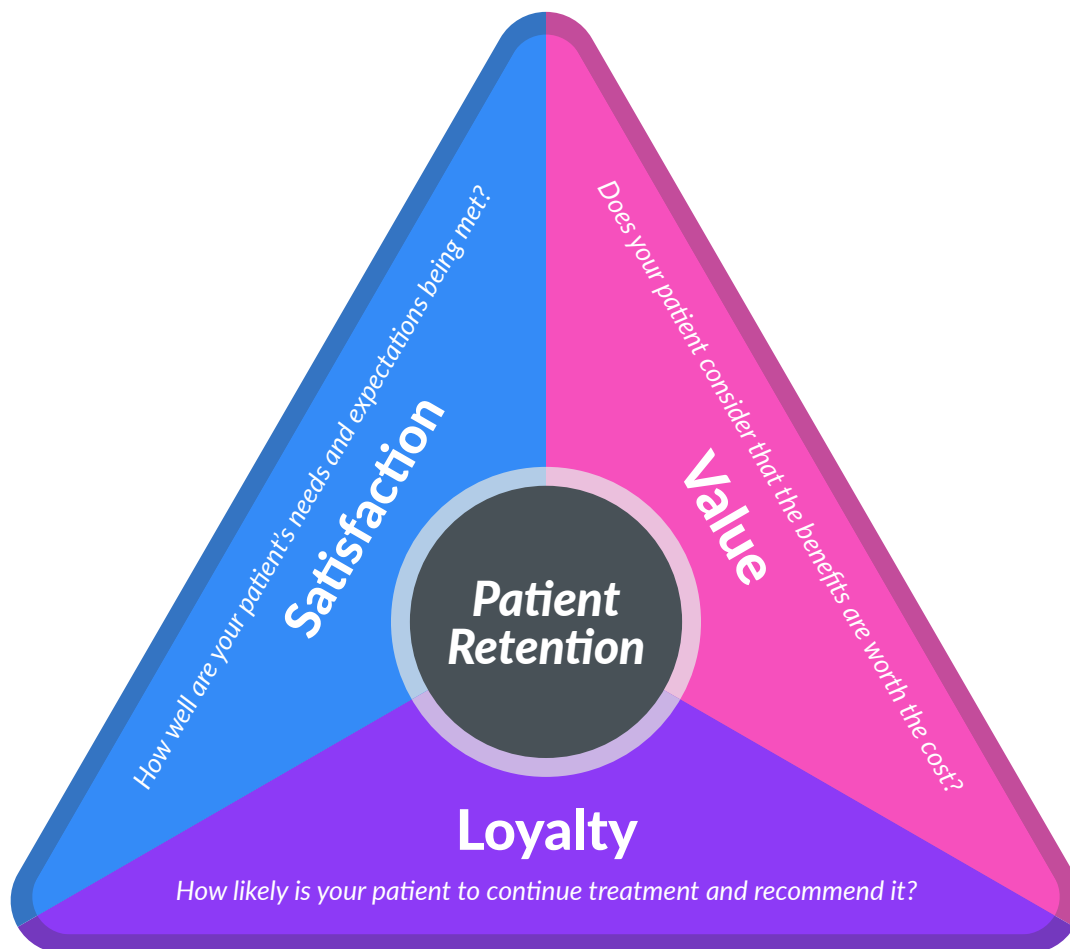
Marketing your clinic is not free, and new patients can require extra time and attention to engage with their treatment program and build a lasting relationship.

Compare those patients with existing happy clientele who see the value in your services and sing your praises to their family and friends - it's easy to see why keeping existing clients is more cost-effective than finding new ones.

One of the keys to converting a new client into a recurring one is pinpointing their challenges and understanding their values.

Patient Retention

Three major cornerstones of patient retention for clinics are identical to those for any customer-driven business - **satisfaction**, **value**, and **loyalty**.



$$\text{Patient Retention} = \text{Satisfaction} + \text{Value} + \text{Loyalty}$$

These factors are all intertwined, and influencing one can also affect the others. For example, satisfaction is not only about helping your patient meet their goals, it's also about building trust with open communication.

We can't always help our patients in a single consultation, so setting their expectations up-front with honesty, empathy, and confidence builds trust. When you build that trust with patients, it can lead them to recommend you to their family and friends - bringing you loyalty.

Satisfaction, value, and loyalty are very multi-dimensional - they are typically all driven by similar factors.



This is why it's critical to implement and regularly review the goals for your clinic in order to keep them aligned with the factors that drive patient retention.

Patient Experience

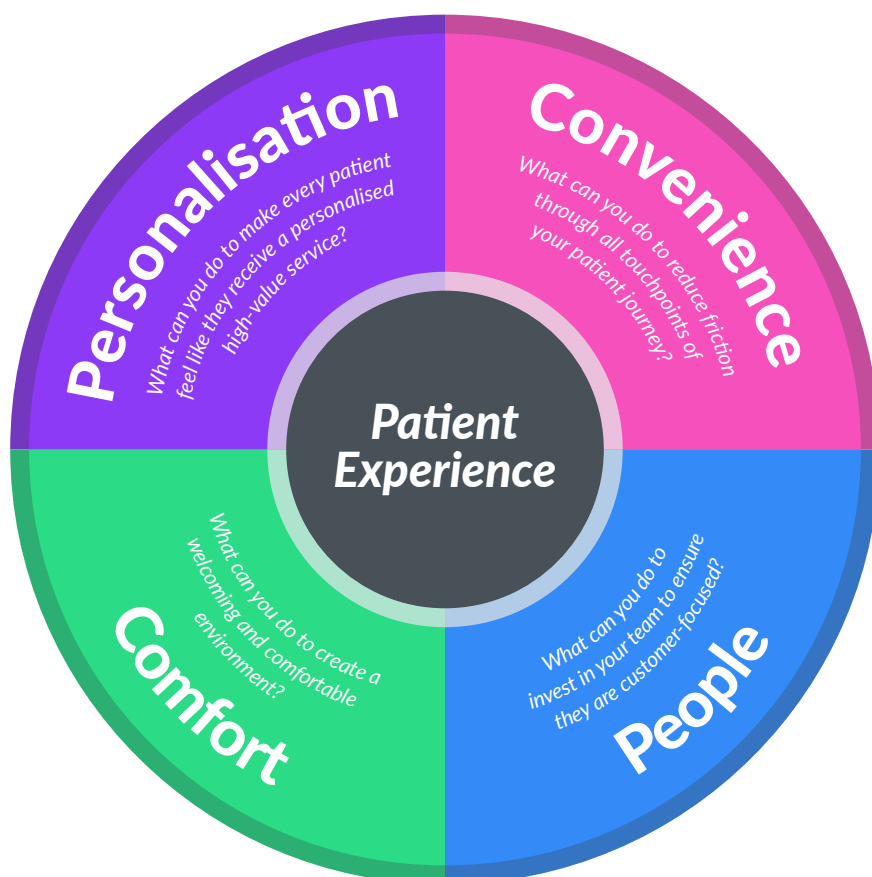
Your professional experience is only one type of "experience" that's important when it comes to building patient retention...

"Customer experience is the next competitive battleground."

- Jerry Gregoire, Dell CIO (Former)

Whether you're actively competing for a customer's business or passively influencing referrals and walk-ins, creating a unique and memorable experience for patients makes a positive impact on your retention by helping to target satisfaction, value, and loyalty.

Our four quadrants of patient experience are **personalisation**, **convenience**, **comfort**, and **people**.



Four Quadrants of Patient Experience

When designing your vision, have a look at leading companies from other industries. Apple Inc. excels as Personalisation... Amazon.com is known for Convenience... *what experience has made you feel comfortable?*

Retention Ideas

Let's have a look at how you could consider implementing these to improve patient experience and retention...

What can you do so every patient feels like they receive personalised high-value service?

Could you...

Customise and present treatment plans in a branded personalised package?

Follow up with each patient with a personal call or message after their visit?

What can you do to reduce friction through all touchpoints of your patient journey?

Could you...

Offer on-site parking and extended hours to maximise accessibility?

Provide online scheduling and electronic payments for appointments?

What can you do to create a welcoming and comfortable environment?

Could you...

Engage an interior designer to refine your environment, pathways, and decor?

Develop private treatment rooms with acoustic dampening to reduce outside noise?

What can you do to invest in your team to ensure they are customer-focused?

Could you...

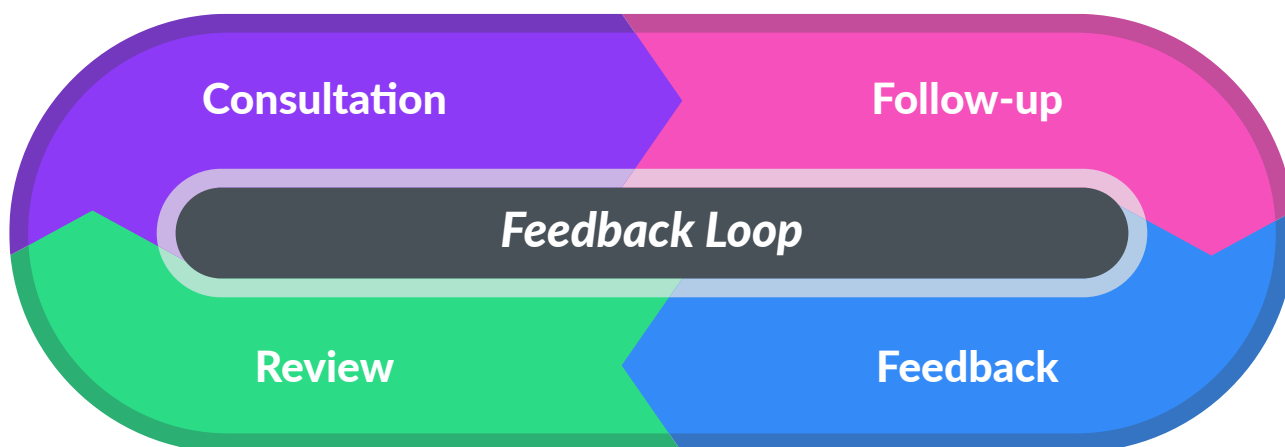
Refine your customer service policy to help your team make quick autonomous decisions?

Incentivise and recognise providers of exceptional customer service?

Patient Feedback

Asking your patients for feedback (and making sure you keep an open mind) is the key to helping you measure satisfaction, value, and loyalty.

Typically, we take feedback and use it to adjust our patient experience to improve their satisfaction - but you can also review the perceived value of benefits for each patient alongside their loyalty.



Keep in mind that value can vary person-to-person, and what you personally perceive as a valuable benefit may not be the same for your patients.

There's no need to ask them pointed questions - as some patients may be diplomatic or apprehensive about answering direct or blunt questions with the true level of honesty you're looking for.

So avoid questions such as:

- *"Do you feel you've received value for money from your visit?"*

Instead, tailor your feedback process to target the processes and systems that you have implemented in order to add value to their experience:

On a scale of 1 - 5...

- *"How well did your therapist explain your treatment plan to you?"*
- *"How would you rate the cleanliness of our waiting room?"*

Complement these questions with a suggestion box (to help you check that your values align) and, finally, a Net Promoter Score (NPS) to measure loyalty:

- *"What could we do to improve your experience?"*
- *"On a scale of 1 - 10, how like are you to recommend us to family and friends?"*

This helps you to pinpoint **what's being valued**, **what's not**, and **how you can potentially refine your process** to meet each individual's needs in a future session - leading to better satisfaction and perceived value.

The Patient Retention Checklist

Patient Retention (*Satisfaction, Value, and Loyalty*)

- ☐ Are you meeting or exceeding your patients needs and expectations?
- ☐ Are you providing benefits and value to your patients?
- ☐ Are your patients continuing treatment and recommending you?
- ☐ Are you communicating with your patients?
- ☐ Are you building trust with your patients?
- ☐ Are you empathising with your patients?
- ☐ Are you providing your patients with education?
- ☐ Are your patients experiencing positive outcomes?
- ☐ Are you following up with your patients?

Patient Experience (*Personalisation, Convenience, Comfort, and People*)

- ☐ Are your patients receiving personalised service?
- ☐ How can you reduce friction in your patient journey?
- ☐ Is your clinic environment welcoming and comfortable?
- ☐ Are you and your team customer-focused?
- ☐ How do the leaders of other industries approach customer experience?

Patient Feedback

- ☐ Are you getting patient feedback on the things you consider benefits and values?
- ☐ Are you asking patients how you could improve their experience further?
- ☐ Are you asking patients how likely they are to recommend your clinic?
- ☐ Are you reviewing and implementing suggestions based on patient feedback?

Your Feedback

Thanks for taking the time to read our Ultimate Patient Retention Cheat Sheet - we hope you found it valuable and useful, and maybe our checklist will find its home in your clinic strategy.

But before we go, it's also important that we practice what we preach - and we would love to hear your feedback...

- Got a great idea that we should add?
- Did we inspire you to make a change?

Good or bad - we'd love to hear your insight at email@nookal.com.

Regards

Sarah Howitt and Daniel Doherty

Nookal Clinic Success

Patient Retention is Smart Practice Management. Smart Practice Management is Nookal.

Secure cloud-based software for your clinic:

- Appointment Scheduling
- Clinical Treatment Notes
- Invoicing and Accounting
- Reporting and Analytics
- and more...

Including tools to help retention. *Like this one* →

Reports » Last Attendances

Name ▲	Last Appointment ◆	Type ◆	Location
Barry Fallon	29/10/2021 - 5 months ago	Reformer Pilates	Physiotherapy
Bruce Layne	13/12/2021 - 3 months ago	Neck Injury	Osteopathy
Clark Tent	06/12/2021 - 3 months ago	Initial Consult	Psychology
Diana Rinse	06/12/2021 - 3 months ago	Reformer Pilates	Physiotherapy
Victor Shown	08/12/2021 - 3 months ago	Counselling	Psychology



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