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# How to Offer Pharmacy Delivery That Will Increase Revenue

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We live in a culture where people can order just about anything for delivery, all with the click of a button. From Amazon two-day delivery on almost anything you can name to groceries. Even non-essential services such as furniture delivery and setup are on the rise.

Delivery is fast becoming an expectation for businesses.

Our love affair with delivery started in the food service industry. A study published in May 2019 indicated that over [29% of Canadians](#) had used a delivery

app for food at least once. Delivery has now spread to almost all retail sectors. As of early 2019, [experts were advising](#) grocery chains that they must offer delivery. Or lose out to the competition.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, customers were making their love of delivery clear.

Since the start of the pandemic though, the demand for delivery has skyrocketed. For many customers, the fear of catching the virus comes with a reluctance to shop in person.

And for shop owners, the implications are clear. The fewer customers in the store, the safer it is for everyone.

As a result, many businesses are struggling to add delivery to their list of services. During our current crisis, delivery can be key to keeping and even growing your customer base. Some may argue it's vital for pharmacies, given their expertise in patient care.

Delivery offers your patients convenience, sure. But it also offers peace of mind to those concerned about staying safe and healthy. And failing to provide peace of mind to your patients can mean losing them to pharmacies that do.

How is the pharmacy industry responding to the increasing demand?

Throughout North America, large pharmacy chains are offering patients delivery. Shoppers Drug Mart in Canada and CVS in the United States are just two examples of chains that offer same-day service.

Patients call in refills or request them through their app. They can receive their prescriptions on their doorstep within hours.

Currently 70% of independent pharmacies in the U.S. offer delivery to patients.

## **Why You Should Be Offering Delivery**

With the onset of the COVID-19, pharmacy focus is on both patient and staff safety. Offering safe ways of getting prescriptions to patients is a must. Delivering is one of most appropriate solutions to the problem.

It avoids the spread of COVID-19 to staff as patients don't visit the pharmacy. And it offers patients the convenience of receiving their prescriptions at home. As well as the comfort of knowing that their pharmacy is working to keep them safe.

Will the delivery trend disappear once the pandemic is over?

It's tough to say.

Dire circumstances can forever change our thinking in the most unexpected ways. Though the rising trend toward delivery before the pandemic suggests it will continue.

Consider this; every major pharmacy chain in Canada now offers prescription delivery. Which means no matter where you are in the country, chances are you have competition who delivers.

So if you're not offering the service, will your pharmacy be overrun by the competition?

For many pharmacy owners, the need for a delivery solution is clear. Yet there are obvious concerns about starting a delivery service, not the least of which is budget.

After all, with the COVID-19 crisis, front shop sales are down for many pharmacies.

The good news?

Studies have shown that implementing a delivery service can [raise revenue](#). By as much as 6-8% in the first few months.

Offering delivery also offers ways to differentiate your pharmacy. Which means the chance to outperform the competition, especially larger, less personal chains.

But how exactly can starting a pharmacy delivery service increase revenue?

## **How a Delivery Service Can Increase Revenue**

Offering prescription delivery can help increase revenue in several ways. First, it can help you build a larger patient base. As discussed, recent trends suggest that customers love delivery.

Which means investing in delivery means an opportunity for new patients. Especially if you're offering amazing service. Delivery gives you a chance to stand out from other pharmacies; and not just because you *do* deliver. The *way* you deliver can help define your brand and make you unforgettable; more on that later.

Second, there's the opportunity to keep your current patients happy. And to avoid losing them to the competition, who probably does deliver. And of course, delivery can offer a bit of a boost as far as front shop sales if done right.

## **Attracting New Patients with Your Delivery Service**

First off, there's the obvious draw of convenience. As the restaurant industry has taught us, who doesn't love fast delivery right to their door? Especially during a crisis?

But delivery also offers you a way of expanding your location. Without needing to buy a new brick and mortar store.

Think about it.

Most people like to shop in their own neighbourhood for essentials; we're busy, it's what we do. You stop by the grocery store on your way home, head to the pharmacy as you're getting the kids to soccer practice.

Many of us don't even think of switching where we shop for essentials, even if we're not thrilled with the service.

It's all about convenience. Which means it's all about location.

But offering delivery means you're now available in everyone's neighbourhood. It means you can reach patients who wouldn't normally be driving by. But who still love the convenience of being catered to.

Delivery allows you to expand your service to anywhere in town you want. Without the expense of buying new brick and mortar locations.

And the other bonus? If you choose branded cars, you're helping new patients find you. As your drivers are out keeping your patients happy, you're also drumming up new business.

Don't want to invest big in marketing during the initial phase? Great! Have some magnetic signs made for your drivers to put on their vehicles and let them go!

Be sure to include your contact information so potential new patients can get in touch!

## **How Delivery Can Help You Retain Patients**

Patient retention is also an important benefit of offering delivery service. It makes sense; keeping your current patients happy is vital to your bottom line. And it's not only about showing up at the patient's door with a package. Although that's a great thing.

Pharmacies that deliver, especially in times of crisis, show their dedication to patients.

What does that mean to a patient? It means that their health and welfare *matter* to their local pharmacy. It means they're more than just a transaction, and it means they're far more likely to reward you with their loyalty.

What exactly does patient loyalty mean? It means continued refills, sure. It can mean an increase in front shop sales, too. Providing you include front shop items in deliveries along with medication.

But even more important, it also means referrals.

If there's one thing people are talking about these days, it's their health. Oh, and the changes in the way we secure our essentials. Staying safe while we source our food, medications, and other things we just can't do without.

Chances are that your patients are having these conversations. With their friends. Their families. And if you're making life easier for your patients, those friends and family members will hear about it.

Which translates to more patients bringing their business to you.

That's not something that's going to go away. Once your service is performing well, the referrals will continue. They will outlast the current health crisis, which makes delivering a smart investment.

## **Increasing Front Shop Sales**

With COVID-19, many pharmacies are finding front shop sales down significantly. How can a delivery service help with that? As mentioned earlier, making front shop items eligible for delivery is a great idea. Simply allow patients to add front-shop items to their order. Everyday items like Tylenol, band-aids, shampoo.

It's not only a boon for patients. Those pharmacies who do offer delivery are finding it boosts ailing front shop sales.

## **A New Perspective on Patient Interaction**

But offering pharmacy delivery isn't only about offering superior patient care and convenience. It's also an opportunity to make your pharmacy stand out from the competition in the way you interact with patients.

Delivering prescriptions can mean a whole new touchpoint with your patients. One that most pharmacists don't get to take advantage of, and it can be an interesting one.

When done the right way, delivery offers a chance for in-home visits that can offer insight into your patients' lives. Insight that can add a whole new dimension to the way you handle their healthcare.

I mean, when most of us think about a pharmacy delivering, we tend to picture someone dropping our meds at the door. Because that's generally what happens.

But imagine if there was more to it. Imagine being a patient who places an order for a refill.

You might have some anxiety about taking your meds, you may have some questions about something you read recently relating to your medication. You get the idea. You can call into the pharmacy, that's what most patients do. And sure, you can get some pretty reasonable answers over the phone.

But it's a voice, it's not a personal interaction, and if you're anxious about your health or just not feeling great, the experience is... something you just want to get over with fast.

Now imagine you ordered from a pharmacy with an exceptional delivery service.

A team member from the pharmacy you trust actually interacts with you when they get to your home. They ask about how you're doing, they ask if you have any questions. And when you say that you do, they put in a video call to the pharmacist, who answers your questions right away.

It's a whole new level of patient care, and the sky's the limit. You can gather information on how the patient is feeling, whether there are any concerns.

You can have a conversation.

Elderly patients and those with chronic conditions may particularly appreciate these interactions.

It's all about engagement.

Seeing delivery as a home visit could revolutionize your understanding of your patients. And while it may not be feasible with all patients, the most vulnerable would be great candidates.

Our aging population means that more patients *will be* vulnerable in the years to come. Offering incredible service to this demographic means delivering value. And delivering value will always bring great returns to your business.

**So Should Your Pharmacy Offer Delivery?**

There are so many great reasons to offer a delivery service to your patients. Expanding into deliveries can offer the perfect opportunity to grow your business.

All without having to open a new brick-and-mortar store!

For many pharmacies, the idea of delivering just makes sense, but there's a lot to consider. Stay tuned for the second part of our series on offering pharmacy delivery, coming May 6th, 2020.

In the meantime, if your pharmacy is already offering this great service, we'd love to hear your thoughts. And if you're still considering the idea, where are you at in your research?

**Want to chat about offering deliveries? Contact us today at [contact@iapotheca.com](mailto:contact@iapotheca.com) or (800) 209-6052.**