

CASE STUDY



Tucson Medical Center utilizes Real-time feedback to align brand reputation and care experience

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TUCSON MEDICAL CENTER IS A LOCALLY GOVERNED, NON-PROFIT REGIONAL HOSPITAL.

- 600+ beds
- \$534M in net patient revenue
- 90,000+ patients per year
- 608 physicians

Opportunity

Tucson Medical Center (TMC) has always enjoyed a powerful brand presence in the Tucson area. The organization's outstanding care experiences, its strong bond with the local community, and its brand's knack for storytelling all contribute to its institutional renown in Tucson.

"At TMC, we believe we can begin the path to lifelong loyalty when people are at their healthiest. By beginning their experience with them when they are healthy, and helping them on that journey, we set a foundation for a positive experience during their eventual acute-care or hospital experience. It's important—and in fact vital—that the experiences we create match the brand story we are telling externally."

—Karen Mlawsky, Chief Operating Officer, TMC

The organization has long been Tucson's birth center. Many people in the community identify with "being born at TMC," and that has helped lay the foundation for lifelong consumer loyalty. It makes TMC a foundational community brand, based on generations of experience. But the organization's leaders are not complacent. They understand that they owe it to their community to continue to improve.

They acknowledged that the care experience they provided within their Emergency Department (ED) to their middle-acuity patients—who often had long wait times to be seen, and who were sometimes even left without being seen at all—did not live up to the organization's reputation in the community.

"There is no question that patients who leave our Emergency Department without being seen have a financial impact on our organization. And we certainly have no idea what it does to our reputation."

—Mimi Coomler, Chief Nursing Officer, TMC

They decided that they needed to take a proactive approach to align the reputation of their brand with the care they provided, in order to prevent future financial and reputation issues.

Consider this: The average lifetime value of a patient to a health system is \$1.4 million.

If a hospital lost just one patient per day for an entire year to competition, it could add up to a loss of \$511 million in future revenue.

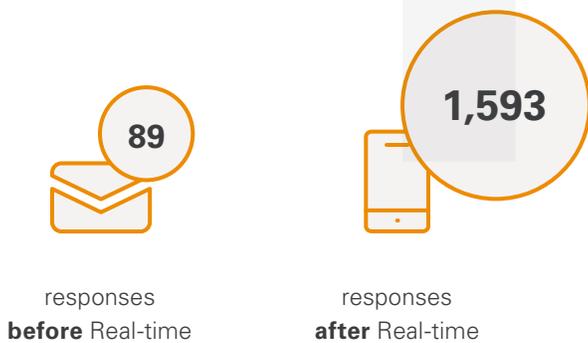
Success strategy

TMC's leaders turned to their staff for ideas on how to efficiently and safely assess middle-acuity patients so they could be admitted or discharged in a more reasonable timeframe. They established a third track for level-three acuity patients, which employees quickly embraced. They ran several iterations of the new model, during which they tracked metrics such as arrivals per hour and length of stay. They ran multiple PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) cycles to maximize the new track's efficiency. With objective measures in hand, they then evaluated staff and patient feedback to gauge reactions to the changes.

Initially, TMC staff simply asked patients about the new model during rounds. Patients were quick to offer positive feedback—and staff had no reason to doubt it. However, that would soon change.

That's because, in the midst of the transition, TMC rolled out NRC Health's Real-time feedback solution. Real-time allowed them to reach out to every patient immediately after their care experience, reducing survey lag time and resulting in a significant—over 16%—increase in response rate. This gave the organization's leadership a much more objective window into their patients' thoughts.

Tucson Medical Center ED experienced a rapid increase in responses within the first 30 days



¹ NRC Health Consumer Insights Study, 2017

LEARN MORE

For more about Real-time feedback, call 1 800 388 4264 or visit nrchealth.com/realtime.

Results

TMC's Real-time data immediately illuminated something very concerning—patients did not actually approve of the ED's changes. Many of them, in fact, reported confusion and frustration around the new model. It became clear to the organization's leaders that patients were hesitant to give candid feedback during their care experience, but provided very honest data in their comments afterward via the Real-time surveys.

73% of patients want to be asked for feedback a few minutes to a few days after their care event.¹

After reviewing the more honest Real-time feedback, TMC staff were able to adjust their ED initiative to make it work not just for them, but for their patients. The now-successful initiative has allowed the ED team to become the agile organization it has always wanted to be.

"Real-time feedback really helped us take a step back and truly look at the initiative from the patients' perspective, not just our own."

—**Cynthia Carsten**, Director of Patient Care Services, TMC

Organizations like TMC have the ability to continue to evaluate the impact of their initiatives and Real-time feedback by measuring consumer loyalty in their market. TMC could see that their efforts were successful: their Loyalty Index score—a metric used to identify and track consumer loyalty—increased from 64.1 to 69.0 in three quarters. In comparison, market competitors averaged a Loyalty Index score of just 57.1.

4.9↑
increase in Loyalty Index score

TMC's leaders now feel that the patient care they are able to provide is more aligned with their brand's exceptional reputation. Providers and staff are now able to see their efforts making a difference to every patient, every day.



**NRC Health helps healthcare organizations
better understand the people they care for and
design experiences that inspire loyalty.**

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