



## Reducing Costs, Increasing Efficiency and Improving Patient Services in Healthcare with SMS

### BACKGROUND

TXTconnexions is a specialty text messaging company providing a premium patient communication service to the healthcare sector. TXTconnexions works with private and public sector organizations in the UK and Ireland serving customers such as BUPA Cromwell Hospital, James Hull & Associates and numerous National Health System (NHS) trusts.

TXTconnexions' text messaging service notifies patients of their appointments and is extensively used for check-up reminder notices, cancellation messages, and for staying in touch with patients, even sending them 'happy birthday' wishes.

“At less than one tenth of the cost of written communication, a text message is a cost-effective and automated solution that improves customer communication and significantly reduces non-attendance.”

NICHOLAS JACOBS | Managing Director | TXTconnexions Ltd.

### CHALLENGE

Millions of pounds are wasted in the healthcare sector due to patient non-attendance. With customers needing to be contacted regularly with appointment reminders, test results, payment reminders, etc, healthcare practices needed a cost-effective solution that would improve customer communication and appointment attendance.

“We wanted to reduce missed appointments in order to improve productivity. TXTconnexions' service allowed us to achieve that aim while also improving our customer service, something that is important to us in the NHS. Many patients are very happy to receive a text reminder about their dental appointment if asked” says Penny McWilliams, Director of Primary Care Dental Services, NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

### SOLUTION

With more than 86% of the population of the UK owning a mobile phone, utilizing text messages to notify patients of their appointment is the obvious solution to improving customer service and reducing the lost productivity that results from non-attendance, or from patients arriving at the wrong time.

The healthcare community can use a straightforward text message for a multitude of common notifications such as informing patients of the date and time of their appointment, or that their check-up is due. In addition, many practices use text messages to transmit preventative health notices or to inform a block of patients that appointments have been cancelled. In some parts of the community, a text message can be the most effective means of reminding the patient to settle their account.

# CASE STUDY

TXTconnexions' system easily integrates with existing practice management software, and as such, no additional work or training is required in order to implement its SMS service. One of the major advantages of text messaging is the fact that each message is tracked by TXTconnexions, and out-of-service numbers are 'flagged up.' The reporting element of the TXTconnexions' service also informs practices of data-entry issues with the number, or if the number is valid but the patient has not received the message - perhaps due to the phone being switched off for an extended period.

**“We’ve already cut our FTAs by more than 50%, saving us nearly £1,300 compared to the previous month and the time it has saved us all is fantastic.”**

TERINA WORRALL | Practice Manager | G.S. Worrall & Associates

## BENEFITS

Replacing traditional communication methods such as the telephone or mail, SMS can save the typical healthcare practice over 80% on its communications costs, and increase efficiency and productivity by reducing FTAs (Failed-to-Attend) through a more effective reminder service.

“We’ve been using the text message service for just over a month now and I’ve been amazed at the results we’ve seen at this early stage. We’ve already cut our FTAs by more than 50%, saving us nearly £1,300 compared to the previous month, and the time it has saved us all is fantastic. If we keep this rate up we will save the equivalent of one dentist working for an entire quarter of a year!” said Terina Worrall, Practice Manager, G.S. Worrall & Associates, Wincanton, Somerset.

The direct nature of SMS messages and the ability to tailor each notification ensures that the messages are personal to each recipient. Patients can read the appointment messages at their leisure, in contrast to a phone call which can be intrusive for many busy professionals. As the preferred communication tool for teenagers and young adults, text messaging is often the most effective way to send preventive health campaigns to this audience.

TXTconnexions is delighted with its choice of mBlox for SMS delivery. “Reliability and quality of service is paramount for us as a quality provider to the healthcare industry. SMS messages are delivered by mBlox immediately, ensuring our customers have the utmost confidence in our service” says Nicholas Jacobs, Managing Director, TXTconnexions Ltd.

**“Since using TXTconnexions the number of patients that we have had failing appointments has dropped to maybe one a week; patients love the text system and are always saying how great it is. We also send our recalls the same way and patients start ringing the practice straight away which has improved our revenue greatly.”**

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