

# Using Experience Mapping to Build Patient Enchantment



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As in the case with most healthcare organizations, MD Anderson Cancer Center's marketing team is challenged with providing unique value internally and demonstrating returns on investment. The ultimate goal is to advocate out for patients, families and referring physicians using effective and efficient marketing campaigns.

At MD Anderson, Houston, TX, experience mapping is used to understand patients' functional and emotional needs. The technique integrates the "voice of the customer into marketing and operational decisions. Experience mapping involves interviewing staff and patients about the journey of care – from diagnosis to follow-up – to understand expectations at various touch points and identify areas of praise or opportunity for improvement.

Recently, MD Anderson's Proton Therapy Center (PTC) and Marketing Department used experience mapping to increase the volume of pediatric and adult patients. The process explored how patients learned about proton therapy (a highly advanced form of radiation), how and why they chose MD Anderson, and how well service expectations were met. Interviews with 46 adult patients and 25 parents of pediatric patients resulted in:

## **1. An understanding of how patients chose proton therapy at MD Anderson**

Experience mapping interviews revealed that most discovered proton therapy and the PTC through online searches and cancer discussion groups. Proton therapy was selected for its precision and targeted delivery, resulting in fewer side effects.

## **2. Assessment of key touchpoint**

Key touchpoints were prioritized and analyzed for performance for both marketing and operations. The MD Anderson PTC received high marks: the team was praised for its compassion and expertise; the facility was noted as being impressive and "high tech"

Areas for improvement were identified as well. For instance, the website lacked detailed information about the benefits of proton treatment and MD Anderson's leadership. Prostate patients wanted improvements around in-center patient communications and staying connected after treatment was completed. Families of pediatric patients expressed concern about adults being allowed to eat in the waiting area in view of their children, who typically are restricted from eating before their appointments.

Digital audio recordings made with the consent of each interviewee, increased staff empathy and helped to provide a strong case for change.

## **3. Recommendations and action**

The marketing team and PTC personnel gathered for two workshops – focusing separately on adult and pediatric patient experiences. Recommendations were translated into action items, assigned and given a deadline for completion. Actions were developed for both marketing and clinical operations.

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## Marketing Action Plan and Results

Based on feedback about the PTC web site, marketing worked with the clinical team to greatly expand the site from five pages to more than 45. It now includes sections about the benefits of proton therapy, the treatment process, survivor stories, videos, and dedicated online referral forms. In the first three months, visits increased by 309 percent and page views were up by 280 percent over the same period of the previous year

The PTC's digital presence as also expanded to include a dedicated Facebook page and the support of Proton Pals, a resource website and online forum for proton therapy patients with prostate cancer. Both of these sites drive high amounts of web traffic to the PTC website, with Facebook as the seventh highest external referral source. MD Anderson's PTC Facebook page consistently out performs competitive proton therapy center pages, with more "Likes" by a highly engaged group of supporters, patients, and caregivers connecting at an average rate of nine interactions per post.

The experience mapping initiative inspired several national integrated marketing campaigns as well, including advertising, public relations, paid search, and sponsorships. By aligning messages based on experience mapping interviews, The PTC has been able to attract new patients from across the United States.

From these campaigns alone, the PTC receives more than 100 online self-referrals and information requests per month and substantial call center volume. Each request is carefully tracked back to its corresponding marketing touchpoint, and on average 48 percent of the online self-referrals completed convert to patient appointments. Because the campaigns support business objectives and financial ROI, marketing budgets have increased each year.

## Clinical Operations and Action Plan Results

Feedback from the mapping process led to three key changes in operations:

- Patient communications were increased through promotion and use of **myMDAnderson**, a secure online patient portal, and a new weekly patient information meeting called Beam News, attended by over 50 families per week.
- Scripts for front line staff were created to encourage patients to register at specific points in the treatment process. The clinical team reported an increase in registrations for the portal, which ultimately leads to higher patient satisfaction
- A private room for children and families was constructed, with an area for consolation with clinical professionals, child life specialists, and dietitians. Toys and games are also provided. Feedback from families has been extremely positive. "Families have commented on how much they enjoy the new playroom, and may have said it's a nice escape for their kids from the medical environment, " notes Kelly Wagner, Child Life Specialist. "In fact, I have seen a lot more parent-to-parent interaction and sharing since the playroom opened"

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## **An Institutional Standard**

Individual marketing campaigns and operational enhancements are not the only benefit of patient experience mapping. To ensure that best practice information is shared with internal stakeholders across the organization, MD Anderson developed an online, searchable Customer Insight Dashboard. Using this dashboard, leadership and staff can easily access survey results, interview transcripts, and other valuable research insights.

MD Anderson also uses real-time feedback tools. These “listening posts” provide a mechanism to track success and quickly respond to service recovery issues. From the call center to the referring physician, these dashboards pulse the effectiveness of specific efforts and relate those back to ROI.

Finally, the experience map creates a framework for demonstrating results to senior management. By creating alignment across the institution, experience mapping enhances the perceived value of all departments that work together to create an exceptional patient experience.

## **The Experience Mapping Process**

What does experience mapping involve? Here’s a quick summary of action steps:

- Identify the key steps before, during, and after a patient visits the facility
- Determine the activities patients and families go through at each step
- Assess which type of touchpoint delivers the brand’s promise for each activity
- Talk to patients and families about their functional and emotional needs at each step
- Consolidate the findings into a “Voice of the Customer” report
- Determine the priorities of touchpoints and performance of each
- Identify key opportunities for improvement in care, coordination, and communication
- Review patient stories to identify candidates for testimonials
- Develop meaningful messages by understanding attitudes, differentiators, and reasons to believe

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Endeavor Management, is an international management consulting firm that collaboratively works with their clients to achieve greater value from their transformational business initiatives. Endeavor serves as a catalyst by providing pragmatic methodologies and industry expertise in Transformational Strategies, Operational Excellence, Organizational Effectiveness, and Transformational Leadership.

Our clients include those responsible for:

- Business Strategy
- Marketing and Brand Strategy
- Operations
- Technology Deployment
- Strategic Human Capital
- Corporate Finance

The firm's 40 year heritage has produced a substantial portfolio of proven methodologies, deep operational insight and broad industry experience. This experience enables our team to quickly understand the dynamics of client companies and markets. Endeavor's clients span the globe and are typically leaders in their industry.

Gelb Consulting Group, a wholly owned subsidiary, monitors organizational performance and designs winning marketing strategies. Gelb helps organizations focus their marketing initiatives by fully understanding customer needs through proven strategic frameworks to guide marketing strategies, build trusted brands, deliver exceptional experiences and launch new products.

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