

Multichannel  
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# Is Inclusive Geo-Fencing the Future of Point of Care?

Crafting a multichannel and multi-device approach will help you reach “restricted see” offices.

By Richard Nordstrom and Jim McDonough

In healthcare marketing circles, *Geo-Fencing* is a current buzzword. A *geo-fence* is a “virtual perimeter for a real-world geographic area that can be dynamically generated”—as in a radius around a store or point location. Or it can be a predefined set of boundaries in which engagement can be made with patients to improve interaction and drive positive outcomes.

For example, hospital and physician offices are dynamic point of care (POC) geographic environments with clearly defined boundaries. “Restricted see” office staff now often set these boundaries. More than 53% of healthcare provider offices are considered restricted or no-see offices to sales people.

Geo-fencing at POC creates an opportunity for powerful multichannel initiatives that are inclusive and expansive, allowing all participants in the POC ecosystem to communicate with patients while on their health journey. It also offers the unique ability to wall off those patients from competitors to support the brand growth objectives.

Three considerations govern how to approach a patient-centric multichannel geo-fence at POC.

## 1. Location

Few brands can afford to blanket their entire universe, so targeting top prescribers’ offices is essential. Marketers should select suppliers who can provide both reach and touch points throughout the patient’s healthcare journey.

## 2. Creation

Each brand has a story that emotionally connects with the patient. A mix of advertising, education and, most importantly, storytelling can motivate a patient to action. Print and digital messaging should be mixed to surround the patient with content specific to the point in time on their journey.

## 3. Serving

Every patient is on their own unique healthcare journey that can be mapped for meaningful touch points. Serving your messages in a

variety of digital and analog formats in multiple locations—including pushing a message at POC to a mobile device—will drive patient engagement, stimulate action and improve outcomes.

An ROI case can be made for geo-fencing at POC with proven tools available today.

A patient who has been diagnosed and referred to a specialist will often study the condition online. Geo-fencing patients can begin when they are doing this research. Marketers can show they understand the patient by providing condition-specific health information through *real patients* and *real experts* sharing inspirational health-related experiences.

This patient is now more informed and prepared for a meeting with the specialist. While this patient is in the waiting room, marketers can influence the approaching patient-physician discussion. Condition and single-sponsored publications, along with digital media and mobile notification at POC in targeted high-value physicians’ offices, provide brand credibility through implied endorsement of the HCP.

In the exam room, being integrated into the physician’s digital workflow is essential. Physicians are incredibly pressed for time and need digital content that helps them effectively educate patients about their disease and treatment. When this exam room content is sent to a portal for future reviewing by the patient, the branded educational content bridges the continuum of the journey by tying together all of the messaging to help improve outcomes.

Not all suppliers can provide a cohesive suite of multichannel tools. Yet smart marketers will benefit enormously by engaging with those innovators who have done the hard work of driving reach in high-value offices to deliver condition and brand sponsored messaging.

Marketers need to challenge the current POC environment planning with an eye toward innovative geo-fencing to drive higher patient engagement to leverage the patient journey. ●