

# Acting Insights



The Acting on Insights Series from Cramer looks at studies from influential consulting firms like McKinsey, Deloitte, and Accenture, and offers practical ways to act on their insights in the real world.

## **IN THIS EDITION**

*“Transforming the clinical trial patient experience” from Accenture*



*“Transforming the clinical trial patient experience” is a 2021 report in which Accenture makes the case for adopting a human-centric approach. The centerpiece is a detailed patient journey. We highly recommend reading it in its entirety.*

*In this edition of Acting on Insights, we focus on the journey touchpoints where Accenture sees communications making an impact and look at ways to implement those recommendations in the real world.*



*...a fundamental contributor to the challenges of patient engagement and retention... is a faulty perspective. [C]linical trial experiences and recruitment... designed around the investigators and pharmaceutical teams... neglect a central element of the equation: the patient.*



With that statement, Accenture drops a gauntlet and lays out its thesis. The authors go on to say quite starkly the “patient experience is an afterthought.” The statement may surprise some in the industry. After all, patient centricity is a pervasive theme throughout healthcare. However, it can be elusive to achieve. Only 30% of pharma companies are confident that they can deliver patient centricity and only 35% of patient groups report that they believe the industry is “excellent” or “good” at putting patients first.

Accenture notes that “Every touchpoint is an opportunity to improve the overall experience. Focusing on the patient experience goes beyond simply thinking about disease factors; it’s about understanding a patient’s illness as well as their everyday life and empathetically viewing the effects of clinical trial interactions at every level.”

Once that understanding is achieved, it must be communicated. Doing this effectively takes a willingness to reexamine the touchpoints and materials along the entire patient journey.

# Patient-centricity & Health Literacy

There are many facets to patient-centric research, including early patient participation in protocol design. But one of the pillars is health literacy. [Health literacy](#) is defined by the National Library of Medicine as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.” The organization also states that nearly 9 out of 10 adults struggle with health literacy, noting that even people with high literacy skills may have low *health* literacy skills in certain situations.

Taking a health-literate approach to trial content strategy involves more than plain language summaries. The messages and media for communication change from phase to phase of participant engagement.

Accenture maps out the patient journey from awareness, interest & considerations, intent, screening & consent, eligibility & randomization, enrolled & monitoring, study closeout. Along that journey, there are touchpoints where communication needs attention. In this issue, we focus on recruitment, onboarding, and adherence. The aim is to keep participants engaged throughout these critical points in the research lifecycle.

# *Three touchpoints where patient-centric content can enhance the research experience*

1. Recruitment
2. Onboarding
3. Adherence

# Three touchpoints where patient-centric content can enhance the research experience

## 1. Recruitment

### INSIGHT

*Considering that 85% of patients may not be aware clinical trials exist at all, there is an opportunity to increase HCP awareness and provide access to education.*

### ACTION

An overwhelming number of patients would consider a clinical trial if their physician recommended it and an equally high number of HCPs are willing to make the referral. However, there are strong barriers including: lack of time to gather and evaluate clinical study information, not enough information, and the perceived burden for their patients. A three-part engagement plan crafted to **inform**, **convince**, and **empower** the HCP can create a strong partner for the investigators. For example, targeted, emotive digital ads can inform HCPs of the clinical problem/solution the trial is addressing. That leads to data-driven “part-two” assets such as video, animation, or infographic that clinically lays out the case for the trial. Part three includes patient-facing educational assets the HCP can offer, including both the clinical and logistical aspects to participation.

# Three touchpoints where patient-centric content can enhance the research experience

## 2. Onboarding

### INSIGHT

*With less than 10% of patients who start a pre-screener randomizing into a study trial, there is an opportunity to reexamine materials written in medical language to remove a potential barrier to participation.*

### ACTION

As stated earlier, health-literate materials are crucial to communicating with patients. This, however, is not just a simple reading level exercise. It's a holistic look at the materials to ensure that they use the best methods to communicate. Cramer's Health Literacy Compass is a tool for guiding patient-centric communications in four key areas: accessibility, visuals, tone, and messages. The objective is to create assets that are easy-to-understand, communicate the right information, appeal to the different ways people take in information, and are optimized for the distribution channel.

# Three touchpoints where patient-centric content can enhance the research experience

## 3. Adherence

### INSIGHT

*Given that 40% of patients become nonadherent to investigational medical products after 150 days, there is an opportunity to support patients emotionally and with logistics.*

### ACTION

A [study](#) investigating 50 years of research in oral agent clinical trials found a number of patient factors leading to nonadherence including purposely skipping doses; not understanding written materials about the medication; and concerns about side effects. A patient community site can address concerns, misunderstanding, and inertia with empathy, clear information, and patient stories. This gated forum can be designed for security and regulatory compliance. In addition to personal touchpoints (text messages, emails, visits), this kind of community can support patients emotionally by giving them a common destination where they know their unique concerns are addressed.



## *Summary*

Accenture's deep dive into the realities of the patient experience is a call-to-action. Marketers have the tools to create better connections through strategy, content, and technology. As the authors note, "While engaging stakeholders has been and continues to be the biggest barrier to optimizing clinical trials, a novel approach can be informed by similar successes in patient care and hospital treatment, as well as trends in consumer experiences beyond the healthcare realm." A powerful way to act on this insight is to create health-literate communications that are not just clear, but engaging and relevant to where the patient is at any point in the research journey.

A photograph of a modern office interior. On the left, a bright orange wall features a white rectangular sign with the word "CRAMER" in orange capital letters. Two people are walking through a hallway with wooden doors on the right, their figures blurred to suggest motion. The floor is made of large, dark grey tiles. The ceiling has recessed lighting and exposed wooden beams.

# *Ready to take action?*

This is an amazing moment to be in healthcare. Cramer has decades of experience helping our clients create experiences people love with strategic campaign, virtual, and video solutions.

Reach out to us at [theteam@cramer.com](mailto:theteam@cramer.com) to get the conversation started. And be sure to visit [cramer.com](https://cramer.com) for more insights.