Voice Search in Healthcare

Connecting with patients through voice search.

CHATMETER
LOCAL BRAND MANAGEMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, over 1 billion searches related to healthcare are made on Google daily.[1] With over one-third of Americans owning smart speakers, we've seen a rise in healthcare voice search use cases over the past few years. More importantly, voice assistant usage has accelerated during the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic.[2] As people look to protect their health in a time of uncertainty, it's more important than ever that healthcare organizations give their patients the tools to do so.

The healthcare industry has seen one of the fastest growing adoption-rates for voice-assistant use cases. From Alexa skills to voice searches across Google, voice assistants are bettering the lives of patients everywhere.

Healthcare organizations are missing out on a large opportunity to improve patient access, connect consumers to the right health information and increase patient volumes by leveraging voice search as part of a comprehensive strategy.

In order to understand how healthcare organizations can better reach their patients through voice search, Chatmeter has put together a comprehensive guide into the world of voice search for healthcare.

UNDERSTANDING THE PATIENT JOURNEY

How patients find and receive healthcare has evolved over the years. Today, most patients begin their search for healthcare online. Patients research everything from health insurance, doctors, clinics, specialists, and more all online. Relying on reviews, social media posts, and the organization's website, patients have already made a decision about healthcare providers before they even receive care. Patients are looking for healthcare organizations that can provide them with a seamless patient experience, both online and in-person.

The Patient Journey[3]

Manage Health
Recognition
Post Care
Research
Pay for Care
Act
Receive Care

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR?

80% of internet users search for health-related topics online.[1]

98%

Of health searches on Yelp are unbranded.[4]

Monthly healthcare-related searches:

1B

health-related searches are made on Google daily.

HOSPITALS: 17 MILLION

DOCTORS: 5 MILLION

OUTPATIENT CENTERS: 2 MILLION

THE RISE OF VOICE SEARCH IN HEALTHCARE

Today, over 19.1 million people have turned to voice assistants for healthcare-related information.[5] That number only equates to about 7.5% of the adult population in the US. We expect this number to dramatically increase because when asked, more than half of the adult population in the US states say they would use a voice assistant device for healthcare related use cases. Of those people, 65.9% of use cases were focused around local search; finding a doctor, physical therapist, hospital, clinic, urgent care center, etc.

The Top 7 Voice Assistant Use Cases for Healthcare[5]:

1   Ask about illness or symptoms

2   Ask about medication information

3   Find a hospital, clinic, urgent care, etc.

4   Research treatment options

5   Ask about nutrition information

6   Find a doctor, physical therapist, or other providers

7   Shop for medications, pricing, etc.

88%
of consumers are likely to use driving directions to a nearby location after a voice search.[6]

THE VOICE SEARCH ECOSYSTEM

The Voice Assistant Market At-A-Glance

In the past year alone, smart speaker usage has grown 32% from 66.4 Million in January 2019 to 87.7 Million in January 2020.[7] Today, 1/3 of Americans have access to a smart speaker and every smartphone owner has access to a voice assistant.[7]

SMART SPEAKER MARKET SHARE[7]

Amazon	53%
Google	30.9%
Apple	2.8%
Sonos	4.7%
Other	8.5%

9 in 10 consumers use a voice assistant on their phone.[6]

VOICE ASSISTANTS USAGE ON SMARTPHONES[5]

Apple Siri	46.2%
Google Assistant	27.7%
Amazon Alexa	16.9%
Samsung Bixby	6.9%
Microsoft Cortana	3.9%

WHAT DEVICES DO PEOPLE USE FOR VOICE SEARCH?

- Smartphones
- Laptops
- Wearables (Watches, Headphones, etc.)
- Appliances (Refrigerator, Thermometer, etc.)
- Smart Devices (TV, Scale, etc.)

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

During Q1 of 2020, smart speaker sales rose 6% compared to the year before. [8] Amid Coronavirus fears, more people are staying home and turning to technology-backed solutions to limit their exposure to the virus.

During the Coronavirus outbreak, we've seen Amazon's sales jump 26%, searches for "telehealth" hit an all-time peak, and the use of voice assistants accelerate.[9,10,11] Changes like these mean that businesses need to adapt and healthcare organizations are no exception.

One of the easiest ways for brands to adapt to changes in consumer behavior during and post-pandemic is by optimizing for voice search. In a time when healthcare marketing teams need to be resourceful, a Voice Engine Optimization (VEO) strategy is a cost-effective way to prepare for voice search.

VEO is the practice of optimizing your brand to be found in local voice search. 65.9% of healthcare use cases involve local search 6; finding a doctor, physical therapist, hospital, clinic, urgent care center, etc. VEO uses a combination of SEO and Local SEO practices helping to build the online visibility of businesses no matter how consumers are searching.

How to Build a Voice Engine Optimization Strategy

#1 - Increase Your Local Rankings

This is the first and most important step. When it comes to local voice search, ranking #1 is everything. Depending on the device, oftentimes voice assistants only return the first listing for local search results. Ensure your locations are #1 by optimizing your local business listings.

Start by making sure you have your business name, address, phone number, website, category, hours, and description (a.k.a. NAPWCHD) all up-to-date. Take your listing optimization one step further by increasing engagement. Doing things like responding to all reviews and answering consumer questions, and adding photos are all great ways to increase engagement on your listings. Don't stop at your Google My Business listing, Yelp plays an extremely important role in voice search. Yelp provides local data to Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, Samsung's Bixby, and several other search tools. The only way to ensure your healthcare organization is a local voice search result is by ranking first, on every relevant directory.

#2 - Increase Your Site Speed

It's one thing to have great content but it doesn't help anyone if your site is too slow. Voice assistants want to give their users the fastest possible answers and if your website doesn't load quickly enough, search engines won't wait around for it. Try to keep your site speed under 3 seconds. You can test your site using Google's PageSpeed Insights tool.

#3 - Provide Conversational Answers

Voice search queries are typically more conversational and asked in the form of questions. Brands can optimize for voice search queries by creating content that answers common questions. Think of answering the most frequently asked customer questions such as "What time does the pharmacy close?" or "Where can I donate blood?". Answer location-based FAQs by featuring these questions on your website's local pages. Asking and answering these questions on your website might help your brand earn a featured snippet. A recent study found that 80% of Google Assistant voice search answers come from featured snippets.[13]

#4 - Add Schema Markup

Now that you have answers on your website, ensure they're found in search by adding Schema Markup. Schema Markup is a form of structured data used to help search engines read the content of your webpages. Adding Schema Markup to your FAQs will make it easier for search engines to read your content and help you rank as a featured snippet. You can add and optimize structured data to your website through Google's Structured Data Markup Helper.

#5 - Test It!

Test your voice search readiness by conducting common search queries on different devices (speakers, phones, wearables, etc.) and voice assistants (Google, Alexa, Siri, etc.). Each voice-enabled device offers different results and different benefits for brands and users alike. See where your brand ranks for your most common keywords and discover new ways to improve your voice readiness.

HOW OPTIMIZED IS YOUR BRAND FOR VOICE SEARCH?

See where your locations are ranking with Chatmeter's Instant Audit tool.

Give it a try today!

CONCLUSION

Voice search has been one of the fast growing uses cases for voice-activated technology and will continue to grow dramatically over the next few years. Healthcare organizations who prepare for this shift in search will be able to better provide patients with a seamless experience. As the need for contactless technology grows, VEO will be a vital part of patient acquisition strategies post-pandemic. Learn more about how Chatmeter is dedicated to helping healthcare organizations increase patient acquisition and retention at Chatmeter.com/healthcare.

ABOUT CHATMETER

Consumers have high expectations for brands to deliver accurate information with convenience. Chatmeter gives multi-location brands the tools to manage the online to offline customer journey by focusing on improving online reputation, business listings and local SEO rankings.

Established in 2009, Chatmeter now analyzes billions of customer reviews, social media mentions and sentiments from hundreds of sources to help businesses keep a pulse on all of their locations. Fortune 5000 companies rely on Chatmeter's expertise in multi-location brand management to make confident business decisions that provide a competitive advantage at every location. From search rankings to business listings, store pages, and more, Chatmeter is the trusted solution for driving traffic and revenue to local businesses in over 40 industries including retail, healthcare, financial services, real estate, food services, and automotive.
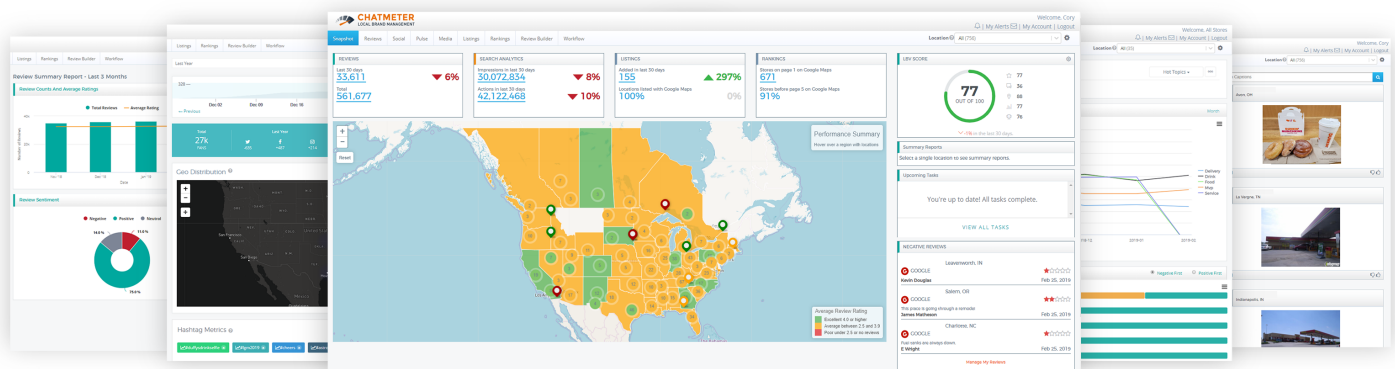
LISTINGS
Create, update, and optimize your local listings with Chatmeter and see how you can expand your reach.

REVIEWS
Read, analyze, and respond to reviews everywhere. Our review tools help you to engage with local customers.

LOCAL SEO
Outrank the competition with local SEO tools built to help you gain the local online visibility your brand deserves.

PAGES
Make it easy for your customers to locate the right information about the business location closest to them.

SOCIAL MEDIA
Listen and engage with your loyal fans on social media. Easily monitor all social activity across 100's of accounts.

LEARN MORE

SOURCES

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