The future is individualized

2025 Customer Experience in Healthcare

Content

Introduction – the future of healthcare

Companies, especially in the service industries, have long understood that the customer experience is the cornerstone of success and crucial in service development. If the experience is bad, customers will "vote with their feet" and can switch to a competitor's services.

In healthcare, the customer experience and its development have historically been a low priority development target. Of course, the most important thing is to take care of the customer's health, meaning the customer experience can be seen as a secondary factor. However, interest in customer experience is growing. The problems in encountering customers and in the customer experience – or often patient's experience in this context – and their importance in the overall context of good care are recognized. Quality improvement is also of interest in public health, although incentives are not based on commercial competition.

Development will be strongly influenced by the fact that in the future, the resources of healthcare in Finland and almost everywhere in Europe will remain more or less constant. At the same time, cost pressures increase as the population ages, the working-age workforce shrinks, and demand for services increases. Concerns about the sufficiency of resources – or rather the threat of shortages – are only deepening, as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In these circumstances, health technologies, such as mobile applications, self-service and telecare, are emerging as ways to develop the customer experience. They help reduce the staff's workload and provide transparency to customers.
When looking for practical solutions, it is necessary to determine at least what the customer experience means in healthcare in general, as well as what it consists of. What needs to be done to achieve real results that also meet the challenges of the future?

Solving problems related to the customer experience and reforming services requires ingenuity, courage and an open mind. To this end, we have produced this guide, which guides the reader to reflect on improving the customer experience from a variety of perspectives, presents some answers, and encourages to explore new innovations. We hope that this guide will serve as a rewarding and informative opening for discussion on the path to future solutions for healthcare!

Resource shortages, cost pressures and well-being at work

RAdequacy of resources is the worst problem in Finnish healthcare in the 2020s. The population is aging and there is a lot of skilled staff retiring or changing industries. There is no room for growth in the budgets.

"As a general rule, discussions with healthcare professionals show that they are working in survival mode: just ensuring that demand is met. All the focus is on how to make the most efficient use of nurses' and doctors' working time," says **Toni Hirvonen**, COO, Axel Health.

"Job satisfaction is low, work is chaotic, and there is a feeling of pressure."

Toni Hirvonen, COO, Axel Health

Healthcare customers, on the other hand, talk a lot, in addition to access to care, about how staff don't seem to have the time to meet and care for patients. This kind of customer experience is directly related to how resources affect the customer experience. Indeed, many healthcare professionals suffer from a feeling of inadequacy and perpetual lack of time.

"Job satisfaction is low, work is chaotic, and there is a feeling of pressure. If we use the terminology of lean thinking, a lot of wasted work is done, that is, there are issues in the working methods that do not produce the value that one would like the work to produce," Hirvonen describes.

Employee experience and well-being at work are some of the cornerstones of a good customer experience. If a healthcare professional is dissatisfied with their work environment, it also has a negative impact on the customer experience. Even if a care worker has strong internal motivation to help people and do quality care work, busy days and overlapping distractions coming from a number of directions disrupt the worker's experience. Staff members are exhausted, and some decide to leave for other jobs.

A good customer experience is not only created by improving the service the patient receives and by developing the customer path. When there is a shortage of resources, working conditions must also be improved by tackling operational problems and by reorganizing work.

WHAT IS LEAN?

The roots of the Lean management philosophy lie in Toyota automotive factory in Japan. The underlying idea is to cut down on waste, and make sure all operations improve production value. However, it is a misconception to believe that Lean would be a mere improvement in efficiency by pruning excesses away.

Lean in a nutshell:

- Lean's starting point is always the customer and their needs.
- Lean requires staff involvement and management commitment.
- Lean means continuous improvement. The world is not expected to be perfect at once.
- The aim is to improve quality with scientific methods and make processes smoother.
- A Lean-led organization is agile, identifying and resolving problems quickly.
- Lean has become more common in healthcare in the 2000s. Good results have been achieved in quality of care, productivity and turnaround time, for example.
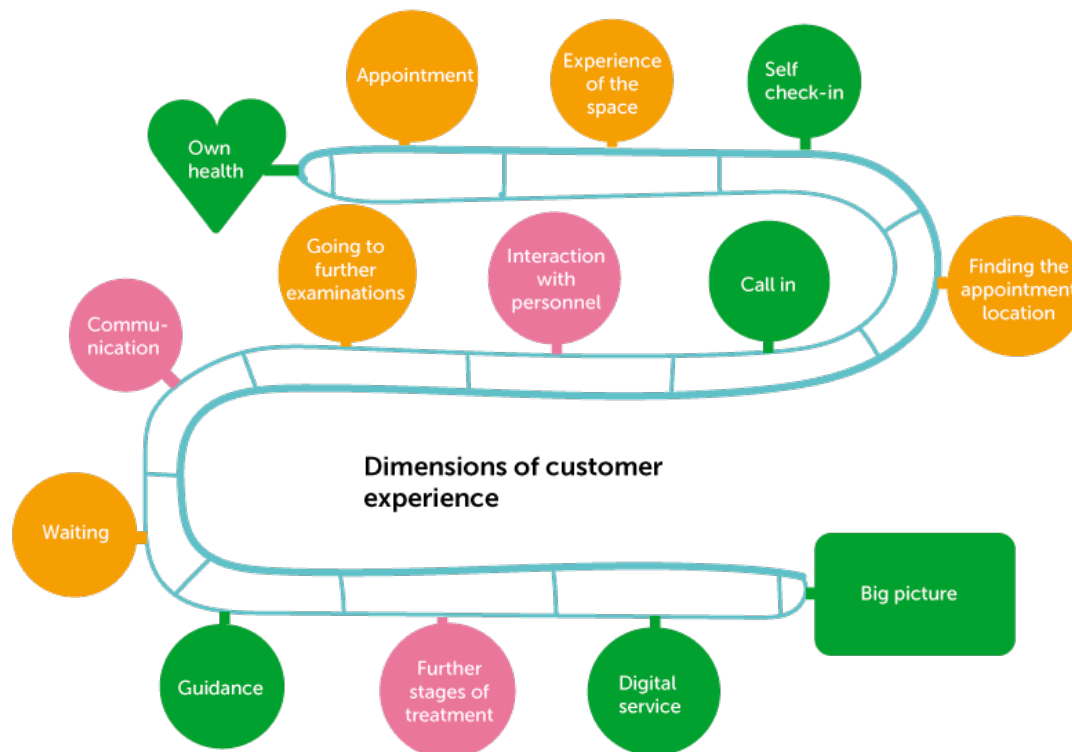
Key elements of customer experience

Before we rush into exploring how the customer experience can be improved, we need to stop and define what it consists of. This allows us to analyze all the things that may be wrong with the experience and how problems can be addressed.

So what are we talking about when we talk about customer experience in healthcare?

"It's a multidimensional phenomenon. It's not just an interaction at a service point or appointment, rather the experience accumulates throughout the treatment chain starting from access to the service. In terms of time, the experience can sometimes be a single visit or a months-long treatment process. In addition, the entirety includes not only the customer but also the customer service personnel and their perspectives," says Toni Hirvonen, COO, Axel Health.

The customer experience starts from the very first contact. Its cause, nature, and manifestation, of course, vary widely. The starting point can be a person's own perception of their health, such as a change on their skin or long-term pain condition, the subsequent acquisition of information, and the decision to contact a healthcare service for a diagnosis and treatment.

"In practice, a treatment procedure can be, for example, putting an arm cast, but the experience is a combination of all the things around the treatment process. How one accesses treatment, how transparent the service event is, and how it progresses - they all have an effect. It is also of great importance whether the customer sees what happens next and whether or not they are able to influence it," Hirvonen explains.

Dimensions of customer experience

ELEMENTS OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
- Experience in booking an appointment
- Arrival at the treatment location, experience in the space
- Registration and interaction during it
- Experience of finding the appointment location
- Moment of being called in to the appointment
- Interaction with medical staff at the appointment location
- Experience of going to further examinations
- Experience of information flow at different stages at the treatment location
- Experience of waiting at different stages of the treatment visit
- Experience with instructions received
- Experiences in further stages of treatment
- Experiences of digital services at various stages

From booking an appointment to checking in

Appointments are often the first step in the practical treatment process. During this step, the experience is particularly influenced by technical and virtual features, such as the user interface and usability of the web service or mobile application. At the other extreme, the first steps are acute emergencies, where the ambulance rushes directly for treatment past initial inquiries and registrations.

In any case, entering treatment initiates the next step of the customer experience. What matters then is how the registration takes place and how it feels. The next step is the need to know where the appointment takes place and how to find the appointment location. The experience is thus influenced by guidance to the location and, going farther, to the laboratory or imaging facilities, for example.

Physical spaces affect the experience through all of our senses. The customer may more or less consciously as-sess how the architecture of the entire building feels, as well as the lobbies and waiting areas, the appointment location and the operation rooms. Mental images are shaped by the style of the environment, interior and furnishings, hues, brightness, space, congestion, soundscape, and so on.

Interacting with the staff is a significant part of the experience. In the treatment context, the person is tuned into the desire to have an empathetic listener for their health concerns but also clear guidance on what is going on and what happens next.

Branches and intersections of the customer path — What does the customer path consist of?

Temporally, the customer experience can be modeled on a timeline. An even more illustrative picture is obtained by thinking of the experience as a path with many different stages. Some of the steps are almost always the same, but usually the customer path is divided individually into many different paths that occasionally intersect with other paths.

The customer path usually progresses in a twisting, rather than a straightforward, way. Along the path, the patient encounters numerous different people with different ways of encountering patients and different emotional states. The patient goes through different emotional states in several different physical spaces at the treatment location, under examination, and while waiting for their turn.
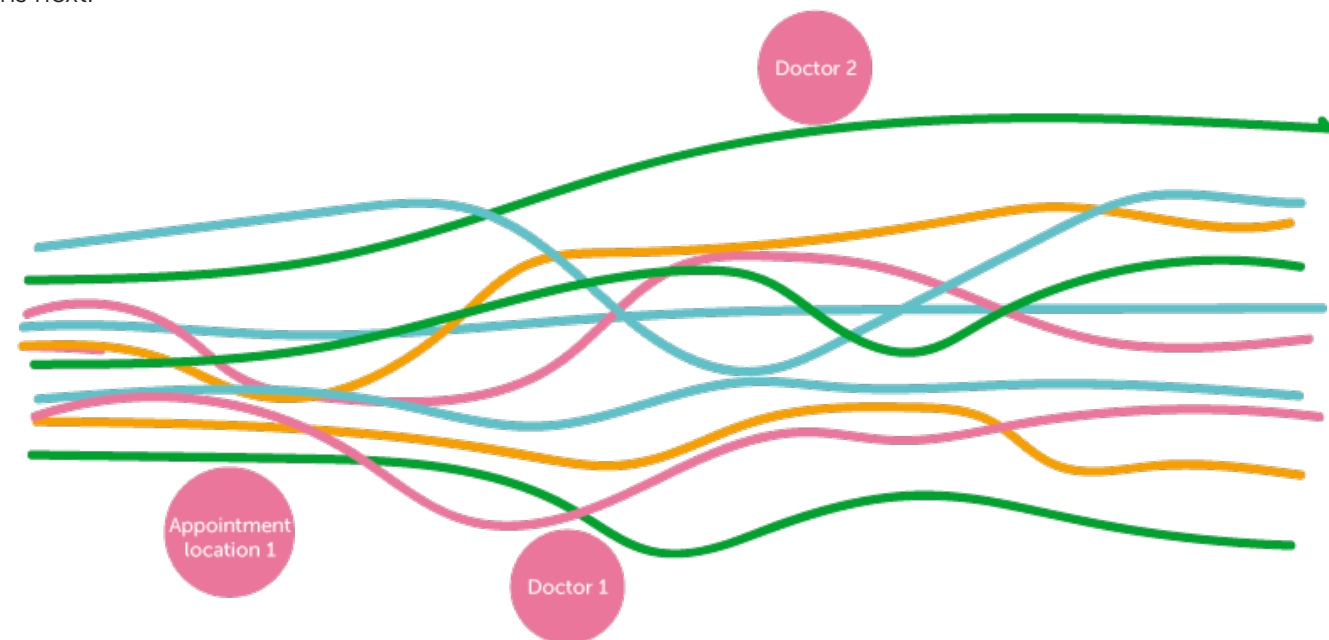
At different points in the path, the patient receives information on the examinations to be made and on what has been observed in the examinations performed. They ponder what has been left unsaid accidentally or deliberately. The patient receives instructions on how to find their destination and how to act at various stages of treatment. They may be dissatisfied or satisfied with the instructions they receive.

How can the customer experience be improved?

The customer experience can be improved simply, without dreaming of better resources: by being friendly and greeting people. In terms of customer encounters this is true of any industry, but kindness doesn't necessarily stop bad customer feedback. The reasons for a bad experience can be deeply embedded in the way an organization operates, and one caregiver can't do anything about them.

In a good service process, it is essential to respond to the patient's need for information. While the acute need for care is already being fully addressed, questions arise in the patient's mind about the service event: am I in the right

place for what happens next, can I go to the cafeteria instead of sitting in the waiting lobby?

Responding to the need for information requires transparency. Its great importance has been proven in several studies and through analyzing the results of healthcare feedback systems. In other words, it is worthwhile to provide the patient with practical and comprehensible information about the stage of the customer path they have reached.

Why and how does the customer experience need to be measured?

Improving the customer experience requires knowledge as to what it is today and how it is changing. Information is gained through direct feedback and the staff's own feelings, but experience can also be measured in a variety of ways.

In North America, measuring the patient experience is a central and well-integrated part of the service process. In comparison, measuring is still infrequent in Finland. Until now, the cost of care, the use of resources, or the duration of queues covered by the care guarantee have mainly been measured.
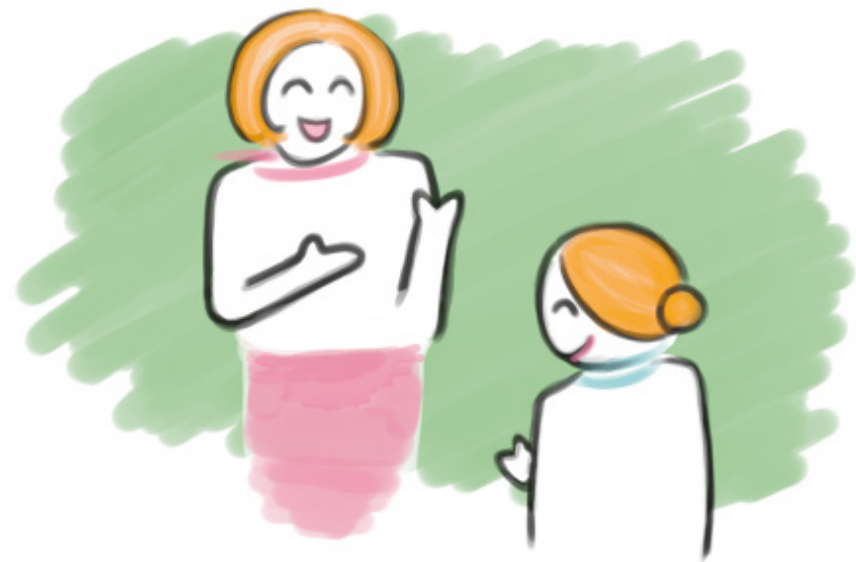
However, the culture of measuring the customer experience is starting to take root. A typical way is to ask for feedback in numeric form and, like commercial services, track the net promoter score (NPS).

So far, there is little systematic and collaborative information on the custom-

er experience in Finland. Each hospital, hospital district, and private actor collects its own information through different means, if they are even collecting anything yet. Nationwide comparable customer experience metrics may emerge in the future, making the data even more useful.

CUSTOMER OR PATIENT?

In healthcare, a pointless semantic argument might exist about whether to talk about a customer or a patient. However, this discussion is not always pointless. It does matter to the person whether they are a patient or a client in healthcare. It is also appropriate for the service provider to recognize this difference. Context matters, and for that it is useful to define terms. When should we talk about customer experience and when about patient experience?

Let's take three examples:

1. When a person recognizes that they are ill, seeks treatment, and is diagnosed, they become a patient. They also identify themself as a patient. At the same time, they still have a customer relationship with the care provider, meaning they expect to receive the service both as a patient and a customer.

2. When a person takes care of a relative's healthcare, they are in the role of a customer. From that person's point of view, the relative is the patient, but equally the customer. Both regard the care process as a customer experience.

3. When a person has a concern or interest related to their own, or a family member's health, but not an acute emergency, they can contact a healthcare professional. They perceive themselves as clients, not patients. They become a patient only if a diagnosis is made and a treatment process begins.

Customer experience is a broader concept, and patient experience becomes its sub-concept. In this guide, we still use both terms quite loosely, partly according to the context, partly based on which word the experts use at any given time.

WHAT IS NPS MEASUREMENT?

The NPS, or Net Promoter Score, recommendation question is the world's most widely used measure of user experience and customer loyalty in particular. The results are commensurate because customers are asked the same question after the service provided by the user: "How likely would you recommend the service you use to your loved one or friend?"

The customer can answer the question with a value from 0 to 10. In the rating of responses, 9–10 respondents are positive referrers and loyal customers, 7–8 respondents are neutral, and 0–6 respondents are dissatisfied critics who are sensitive to switching providers. The net recommendation figure is obtained by subtracting the proportion of respondents from 0 to 6 from the relative share of 9–10 respondents. This sets the total NPS result on a scale of -100 to 100.

In the international comparison, the score is classified as follows: a score of -100–0 means that the service needs to be improved, a score of 0–50 is good, a score of 50–70 is excellent and a score of 70–100 is world class. Score averages vary to some extent across industries.
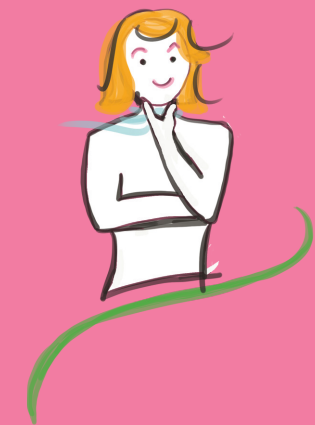
Dissertation: New technology contributes to customer experience management

New technology is a significant factor in developing the healthcare customer experience. It can be used to facilitate the flow of information, measure experience, and collect data to support the management of the entire customer path. This is what **Lauri Litovuo**, who is writing Finland's first dissertation on the subject at the University of Tampere, says. Litovuo is a doctoral student in the Faculty of Management and Business with a major in industrial management.

"In my dissertation, I aim to bring a customer angle to the management of healthcare processes. The key is to lead the entire customer path, and not just manage some part of it. In addition, a multi-stakeholder network should be taken into account, as partners and subcontractors influence the customer's service experience, and together we should strive to produce a unified and consistent experience," says Litovuo.

The starting point of the dissertation is the transition to an era of experientialism, during which healthcare also renews its operating models and examines its operations from the customer's point of view. Litovuo studies how the special features of healthcare affect the creation of a customer experience in the ecosystem. To this end, he has analyzed the factors influencing the patient experience of the New Children's Hospital and contributed to the creation of a new tablet-based experience metric.

> **"With the help of technology, information flows better and helps both the patient and the service providers."**
>
> Lauri Litovuo, doctoral student, Faculty of Management and Business, University of Tampere

"The healthcare customer experience differs from traditional customer experience because the initial situation – an illness or symptom – is often skewed to the negative. In addition, the experience is accumulated over a very long period of time and on the basis of many different encounters. The family perspective must also be taken into account, because the situation of one family member affects the well-being of the whole family," says Litovuo.

For example, the family's hospital visit experience begins before the visit and continues thereafter. The visit is preceded by some sort of exploration and investigation phase, and the customer may have many previous experiences that affect the current experience.

"More and more information, from the time before the customer starts using the services, is sought. We want to measure every situation very accurately. We want to find out what stage of the customer path the customer is at and how the experience has been at that point. All of this requires the help of technology," says Litovuo.

Healthcare has a wealth of information about the customer experience, but it is fragmented into various information systems, paper forms, and spoken form. Technology can help combine data from different feedback channels into information that can be utilized by a service provider.

Digitalization also improves the customer experience directly by promoting communication. The biggest critique is aimed at the lack of information. The customer has to guess where they are on the customer path, what will happen next, why and where to go.

"Often we end up in a situation where the patient is stressed about whether they have to take information with them as they travel from one care unit to another. With the help of technology, information flows better and helps both the patient and the service providers," says Lauri Litovuo.

Health technology as a success factor

Digitalization has been a frequent mantra when thinking of answers to solve Finland's healthcare problems. Utilizing new health technologies is inevitably essential and will undoubtedly open up many new opportunities to innovate, alleviate resource shortages, and improve the customer experience. The digital tools already in place seem to meet the high expectations.

"Using new technology to organize services takes courage, but I believe it's a success factor. The customer experience, patient flow management, and the quality of care can be greatly improved. Yet one must always remember that technology is a good slave and a bad master and should not be worshiped as a solution for everything. Instead, we can aim for the sensitivities we've identified with targeted strikes," says Toni Hirvonen, COO, Axel Health.

Poorly designed, the benefits of deploying digital solutions may be slim, and the whole thing could turn into a mess of technical gadgets. In order to achieve good employee and customer experience, what should the technology be like?

"Central to any use of technology is that the technology is linked to, supports, and complements the normal care process. Used properly, technology has a value-generating function in the real world. The system must not be run for the sake of the system itself, but must lead to a value-producing end result," Hirvonen emphasizes.

Successful use of technology in any industry requires that the technology is neither an extra feature nor does seem like one. If it lacks a clearly identifiable function as part of the process, something has gone wrong.

What does the customer demand from the technology?

When technology is leveraged to change the customer experience, attention must be paid to the patient's starting point. Seeking medical care is based on a health concern. Technology should not pile new concerns on the customer path.

"The customer's mood when they come to treatment is typically not one where they want to waste time using technical equipment. Therefore, the technical solution offered must be simple. It should feel like an easy necessity that is easy to take care of so that the process can move forward. It is important to respond to the patient's need for information, such as whether they are in the right place, what will happen next and when or whether they can visit the café while waiting for their turn," Toni Hirvonen explains.

The customer wants to be carefree and, most importantly, needs any gaps in information to be filled. The information needed at different stages must be available in an easily digestible form and at the right time. For example, the waiting room information display may show information about a particular customer in relation to the customer's known location.

Customers can be provided with automated services and self-services that are closely tied to the care production process. A number of self-service solutions, mobile applications, and text messages for conveying information and giving feedback are natural and typical applications. Communication and processes can be sped up for the benefit of all.

Successful digitalization supports the work of staff

In the same way as the digital medium offered to the customer, the employee's tool must also easily provide the information needed at any given time. The interface must be visual and intuitive, so there is no need to sacrifice any cognitive energy to manage the tool. For example, patient information systems must not have the typical complex search paths.

"Whatever the system or technological solution, it will not be seen as an additional task if it is able to automate tasks and if it allows a better focus on the essentials, such as encountering a person and accessing information related to them. That's when technology increases satisfaction. The focus should always be on care," says Toni Hirvonen.

"If, for example, the rationalization of services can eliminate the chaotic appointment situation and the feeling of urgency, people will not be so stressed. It promotes both well-being at work and the customer experience," he continues.

For example, when the entire internal production process of a hospital is working well, the more, and better, patients can be treated. The less the employees have to do work that is perceived as unnecessary or secondary, the better they feel mentally. This, in turn, affects the customer experience.

75-100 %

In Lapland, versatile technology will improve the customer experience

A lot has already been done in the Lapland Hospital District for the benefit of the customer experience, and several development projects are underway. Care status information is transmitted to patients, for example, via a mobile application. There are electronic means for making appointments, for example. Many units consistently conduct NPS-type feedback surveys.

"We've gotten good results from our new modes of communication. People have really liked the application because the patient can see how the treatment is progressing. We are currently investigating the patient process control tool, and the entire phase of defining the strategy work for digital services with background studies is underway," says **Mikko Häikiö**, Development Director of the Lapland Hospital District.

They are well aware of the issues related to customer satisfaction. The basic problem is that the organization consists of highly segregated units that work optimally almost entirely for their own field.
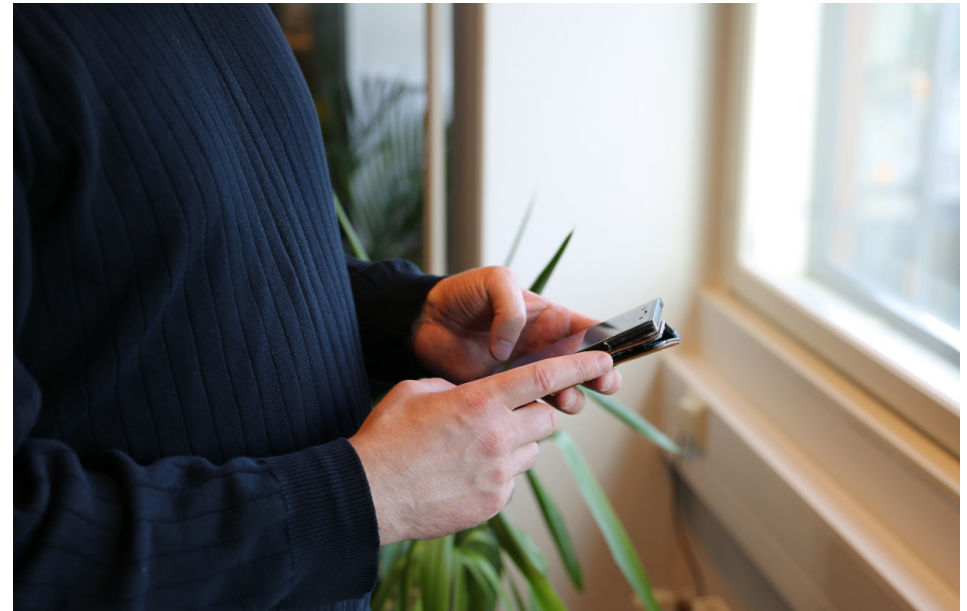
" **The technology allows the customer and the professional to see the information that already exists, and each becomes aware of the stage the customer is in, in relation to the whole treatment process.** "

Mikko Häikiö, Development Director, Lapland Hospital District

"Interactions are not treated as a whole and information is not accumulated. For example, if a patient visits a specialist, imaging, and laboratory during an outpatient visit, the process is controlled from the perspective of only one procedure. We get feedback from customers that often the acquisition of information has to start from scratch and the same things have to be discussed many times," Häikiö says.

He sees new technology as a way to get a grasp on the big picture. For example, from the point of view of information management, it's possible to gain a better understanding of the pieces that make up the customer experience as a

whole and what it's like in general, and to investigate the customer preferences further. Technology also helps in measuring waiting times, for example.

"The technology allows the customer and the professional to see the information that already exists, and each becomes aware of the stage the customer is in, in relation to the whole treatment process," says Häikiö.

Sub-optimization is also a risk in digitalization. In many healthcare organizations, different units purchase technology for their own needs. Well-intentioned procurement can lead to an information system that is isolated, complex, and incompatible. Integration, on the other hand, would be expensive, slow and cumbersome. This is also a familiar problem in the Lapland Hospital District.

"One goal of digitalization is for us to turn a significant portion of all hospital visits into e-visits, but now we're only struggling to reach 5 percent. There are three platforms with different technology, which causes an unimaginable amount of trouble," Häikiö explains.

Geography motivates the improvement of e-care visits and the customer experience. The Lapland Hospital District is the largest in Finland, and the distances are long. If the follow-up routine check can be done remotely, it is pointless to require the patient to drive 300 kilometers to meet the doctor on site.

According to Mikko Häikiö, it is high time to start utilizing measurements people take themselves and wearable technology. It would complement information management in practice and alleviate resource shortages.

"For example, we already deliver sleep apnea monitoring equipment to the patient's home. In addition, we need to start discussing how we could use the my data layer and whether people want to share its information. Yes, consumers' own sensors, for example in activity bracelets or rings, can provide usable data for monitoring and form one part of the overall picture," says Mikko Häikiö.

Towards a holistic service process

Measuring the customer experience is a good example of the things that new technology makes possible in healthcare. If the results start to improve after certain measures are introduced, it may well be considered as an objective sign that the development is moving in the right direction. In managing the customer experience, it is also necessary to acquire and analyze data, for example, for comparison between different units.

Measurement data is also closely tied to knowledge management, which is the dominant megatrend in business. The idea is that the data makes the invisible visible, especially when data is visual-ized. However, there is still a long way to go from measuring one phenomenon to reaching real business intelligence. The reliability of the data produced by isolated data sources can also be questioned.

"The understanding that arises from the data can only be seen in the big picture, but this may often be an instance of the 'seeing the forest from the trees' phenomenon. People are firmly attached to what they do, and the overall picture is easily blurred," says Toni Hirvonen.

Technology serves best when it aims toward a holistic service process, piece by piece and systematically. Knowledge management is improved as the number of data sources is increased and they become interconnected. Data can be collected from, for example, waiting and turnaround times, queue lengths, and customer experience measurement.

"When activities are developed, different areas always have an effect on one another and are not mutually exclusive. If you can reach faster turnaround times or create a speed lane for on call care, it can streamline operations and improve the customer experience."

Data collection

Data sources

Waiting time · Lead time → Customer satisfaction measurement → Result → Improvement
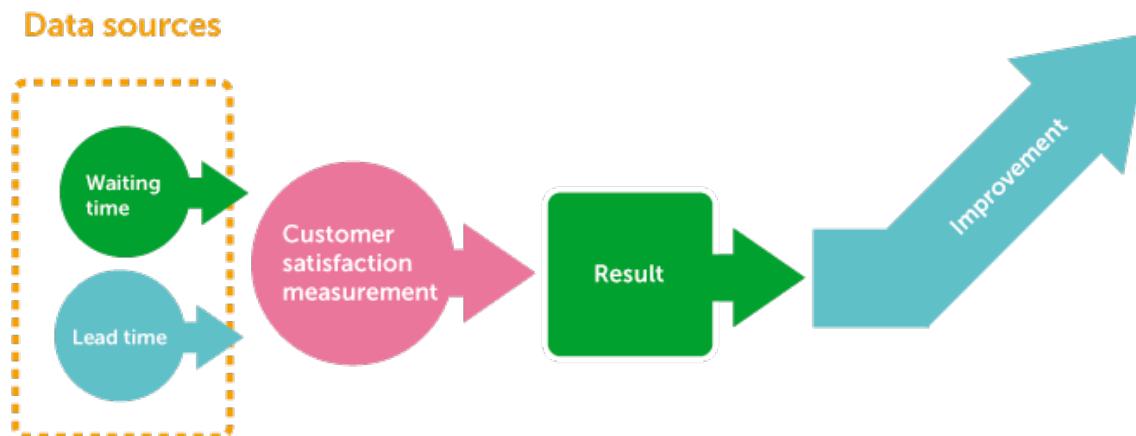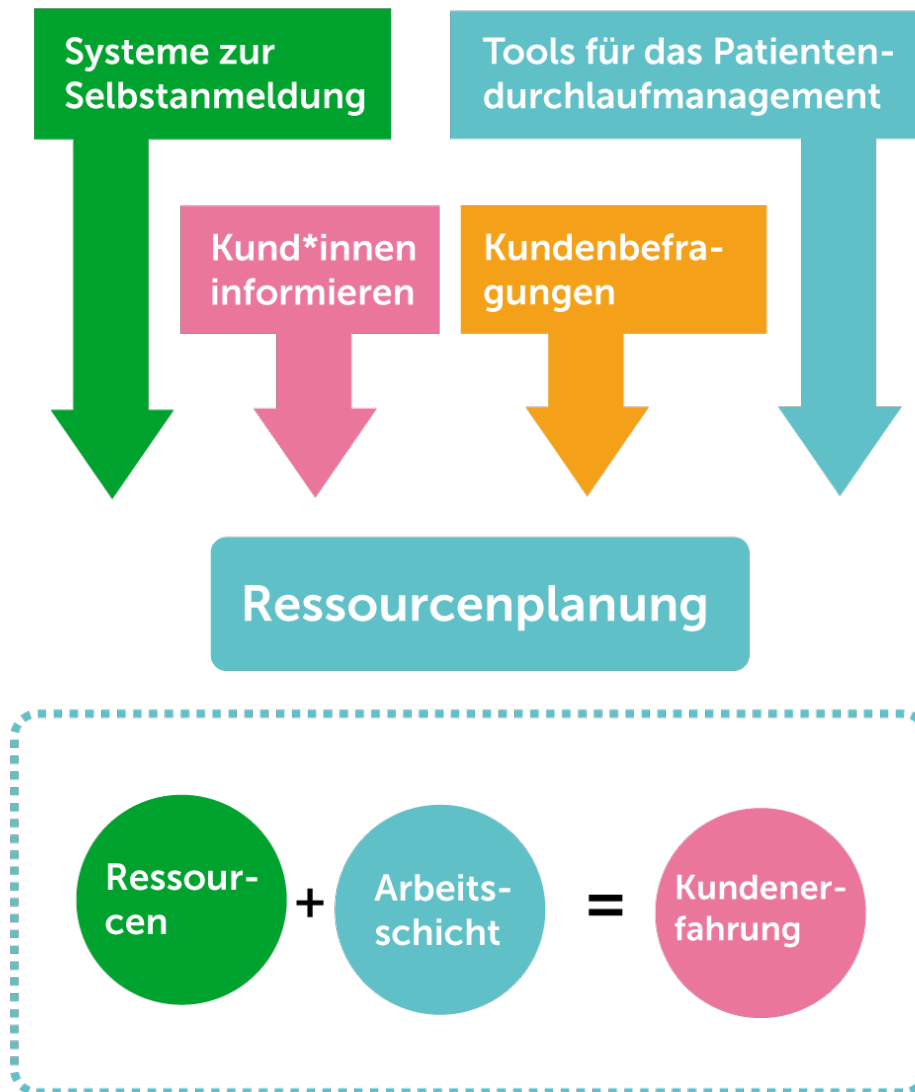
Fixing the problems caused by sub-optimization

The healthcare customer experience is often fragmented, reflecting the fragmentation of information systems, processes, and the entire organization. Often, different care units acquire isolated information systems independently alongside their previous systems.

If the holistic point of view is buried under the utilization of technology for practical benefits, it will primarily end up as sub-optimization. It just leads to further problems. In some places, people feel that there is already too much technology in use. At various stages, staff have to use systems that do not create value for the care work itself, but, according to Lean management philosophy, are wasted work.

One example is patient information systems. In principle, a bold, new cornerstone of technology could be built on top of them, which could be used to strive for smooth processes and a good customer experience. However, as the name implies, patient information systems have been developed primarily to collect information about patient care and to act as a management tool. They are very versatile, but they are heavy in nature and the user experience is cumbersome.

Care organizations need a comprehensive ERP that makes day-to-day life easier for the production process. It should cover the allocation of nursing staff resources to shifts, always basing actions on creating a positive customer experience. The system may include self-service systems as a data source, transmission of customer information, customer satisfaction measurement data, patient flow management tools, and so on.

Case: Improving the experience at the New Children's Hospital

* The starting points were patient group research and the consultation of family and children's councils

* A digital customer feedback system for parents and NPS tools are in use

* An internal process created to process the feedback data

* The goal is to continuously improve the state of affairs in accordance with Lean principles

The New Children's Hospital in the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS) has taken the development of the customer experience as the guiding star of all its operations. Digital tools are important both for acquiring experience data and for improving experience and managing patient flow. During the design phase of the hospital, HUS conducted a Lapsus research project with Aalto University, with the intent to understand what the hospital experience consists of.

"The research project was an in-depth attempt to understand patient groups, that is, the experience of families. We also had a family council and a children's council, whom we consulted for opinions on the ways in which the old children's hospital operated and expectations for the new hospital. The children were involved in the design of the hospital clothes, and the children's council was involved in the design of the tablet's user interface in each room," says **Pekka Lahdenne**, Project Manager

for major construction projects, HUS. Until the fall of 2020, he was the Head of Digital and Innovation Services in the HUS New Children's Hospital.

The New Children's Hospital will pilot a digital customer feedback system that all of HUS introduced in 2019. The child's guardian will automatically receive an SMS the day after the treatment visit asking for feedback. The most common themes in the feedback received are the flow of information, the length of queuing time in urgent care, and how people are treated personally.

"This system has been a tremendous step forward, and the feedback rates are several times higher than before. We receive more than a thousand open feedback submissions per month. We also need to be able to process the in-

NPS 75-80

formation we collect, and that is why we have created an internal process for what is done with the information," says Lahdenne.

"An operating model based on customer experience must be implemented throughout the entire organization, even sideways. The goal is a state of continuous improvement."

Pekka Lahdenne, Project Manager for major construction projects, HUS

Feedback reaches every operating unit, like care units or day surgery. If there is something in the feedback that stems from the unit's own policies, the policy can be changed immediately. Once a month, the idea is to come up with a development proposal for some major change based on the feedback, which can be discussed by the higher levels of the organization, management team included.

"An operating model based on customer experience must be implemented throughout the entire organization, even sideways. The goal is a state of continuous improvement. Becoming aware of the entire customer experience through systematic feedback collection and analysis has contributed to staff understanding its significance. This has been a big cultural change. In public healthcare, the customer experience has not been very high on the priority list," says Pekka Lahdenne.

The customer experience also seems to have improved. This is illustrated by the NPS metric which the New Children's Hospital uses as one of its tools to measure customer satisfaction. In it, the value has risen from a good level of about 60 points to an excellent level of 75–80 points. The metrics are also used as a management aid in comparing operational units.

The New Children's Hospital also uses new digital tools in its customer work. One example is self check-in upon arrival at the hospital. The idea is an avatar character chosen by the child themself, which controls the whole visit digitally. Another recent example is the increase in the number of remote visits.

"When the coronavirus hit, we were able to move almost a third of elective appointments to be held remotely. Feedback for remote visits was just as good, if not better than that of in-person visits. We were convinced that remote visits should continue to be one possibility," says Lahdenne.

This is how a digital avatar helps the customer experience

The child and their parents come to the hospital for a routine check-up, which is pre-booked online. In the entrance hall, the family is greeted by the warm colors and playful details of the interior. They head towards the self-service terminal, where check-in is done simply by showing the child's Kela card.

At the terminal screen, the child ponders which animal to choose as an avatar this time. What appears to be a hummingbird is chosen. Its image appears on the printout provided by the terminal, which also contains information about the floor of the two different treatment locations and the numbers of the waiting lobbies and the reservation number 123. Check-in has been completed. At the same time, the doctor sees that the patient has arrived.

The family enters a waiting lobby, where several avatar characters bounce on a screen. The child also notices their own hummingbird there. The family chats about the characters and follows them. When the appointment time comes, the hummingbird starts flashing and the room number appears below it. The nurse does not enter the hallway and announce the child's name. A mere avatar links the right patient. The family steps into the doctor's office.

Towards a customer-centric future

How fantastic that you've read until this point! Now, you may be wondering what happened to the main headline's claim that "the future is individualized". True, so far no direct position has been taken on the argument. Of course, service in healthcare does not, and doesn't have to, tailor an individualized operating model and treatment process to each individual every time a person contacts them. This is not the case now nor will it be in 2025. So what does the argument mean?

The entire content of the guide above explains why the future of healthcare and the customer experience are individualized. It's not a utopia and it may sound obvious.

"**When a service really manages to produce a good customer experience, then it is personalized in the mind and heart of the customer.**"

When a service really manages to produce a good customer experience, then it is personalized in the mind and heart of the customer. Every individual experience is personal and concerns only them, for better or worse. They expect and hope for individual treatment for their needs and concerns as they encounter healthcare professionals, as well as the entire organization and its services.

No one wants to feel treated as part of a faceless mass coming from some production pipeline on a conveyor belt. This feeling will never result in a good customer experience.

If, on the other hand, one thinks from the point of view of the staff, individuality is also applicable to them. When working to improve the customer experience, holistically, achieving results and making sure to avoid sub-optimization, professionals are able to take into account their patients, their situations and needs – individually.