

## FIVE STEPS FOR WINNING OVER MILLENNIALS IN URGENT CARE

**Urgent message:** Millennials constantly get a bad rap for “ruining” tried-and-tested ways of doing business. While it’s true that widespread consumer interest and demand have radically altered the way products and services must be offered, that isn’t necessarily a bad thing. For urgent care owner/operators, Millennials can actually be a huge component of a center’s success.

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As the nation’s perceptions of healthcare, and particularly primary care physicians, continue to change, more and more people are seeking out urgent care for their health needs. From a demand for quick service to an emphasis on preventative care to valuing high-tech facilities, Millennials (defined by Pew Research as anyone born between 1981 and 1996) are a driving force in the healthcare market.

With the Millennial generation now entering their prime “work and family” years, designing urgent care centers that appeal to their needs is crucial. These five strategies do just that.

### Convenience

Technology has revolutionized the world in almost every way. Although it isn’t necessarily a direct connection, the way that Millennials utilize technology has also increased their desire for convenience. With food delivery services available at the tap of a button and online shopping overtaking brick-and-mortar retailers, Millennials are used to getting service “on demand.”

With that in mind, it’s not hard to see why the idea of waiting weeks for an appointment with a primary care physician seems laughable to this generation. Urgent care centers can capitalize on this by offering flexible, extended hours, locations that are close to home, and walk-in services with online appointment scheduling. Touting urgent care as quick, easy, and convenient makes it exponentially more attractive to Millennials who often put convenience above all else.

### Efficiency

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If convenient access to care is important, then the efficiency of that care is even more crucial. Millennials work and live in a social environment that moves quickly and puts an emphasis on getting things done. For urgent care centers, this manifests itself in everything from a desire for quality customer service to having clear billing policies.

The UCA's *2018 Benchmarking Report* shows that over 70% of urgent care patients wait less than 20 minutes to see a provider. That number jumps to 85% of patients who are seen in under an hour. Many urgent care centers already focus on getting patients in and out in 30 minutes. For a young person that is constantly on the go, the knowledge that an urgent care visit will likely consume less than an hour can convince them to seek out care when they otherwise wouldn't.

### Face Time

Using the Internet comes as second nature to most Millennials. As such, many of them are more knowledgeable about the healthcare system than ever before. Nonetheless, Googling symptoms can only get you so far. When Millennials do turn to urgent care for treatment, it's important for physicians and other members of the team to provide patient-centered care.

Millennials want doctors who take the time to listen to their concerns and discuss them rather than just prescribing a quick fix. While it might seem that this would be more attainable with a primary care physician, most young healthcare consumers don't want to be tied down. In fact, most don't care if they see a different doctor each time they seek care, so long as they believe the interaction is meaningful.

Ultimately, Millennials want to believe they made the right choice by seeking out care. Urgent care physicians can help meet this goal—and bring Millennial patients back in again down the road—by listening to their concerns and thoroughly explaining treatment options.

### Appealing Facilities

Another advantage that urgent care centers have over primary care offices is the facility itself. In many cases, urgent care centers boast technologically advanced waiting rooms, treatment rooms, and on-site diagnostic testing capabilities like x-ray machines and labs. Millennial patients treat their healthcare visits just like they do experiences with other retail locations. As such, offering an attractive facility is a great way to draw Millennials in.

For example, most patients in this generation will have their phone or tablet with them in the waiting room. If you make free Wi-Fi available in the waiting room, patients can access their favorite apps and even stream shows without burning through their data subscription. As a result, their devices will absorb their attention and ultimately make their wait time seem shorter.

Meanwhile, the more services your center can offer, the better. If Millennials see an urgent care center as a “one-stop shop” for any healthcare needs that might arise—offering additional services that are directly relevant to the Millennial consumer—they will be far more likely to stop in.

### Relationship Management

Despite having increased knowledge of healthcare thanks to the Internet, many Millennial patients are relatively inexperienced in seeking care on their own. This puts urgent care in a terrific position, as many of them will likely seek it out as a first resort. From there, urgent care providers can help patients build relationships with specialists by making referrals for services that can't be completed at the center. This makes it more likely that a Millennial patient will return to urgent care next time they have a concern, thanks to the trust that is built.

### Conclusion

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It's clear that winning over Millennial customers is key to the success of the urgent care industry. *Research from Business Insider* shows that 45% of all Millennials don't have a primary care physician. As such, urgent care centers have the potential to capture a huge portion of that untapped market by directly appealing to younger consumers. On top of this, keeping the younger generation healthy in a patient-centered way helps stop health concerns from escalating and is good for healthcare's bottom line in general.

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