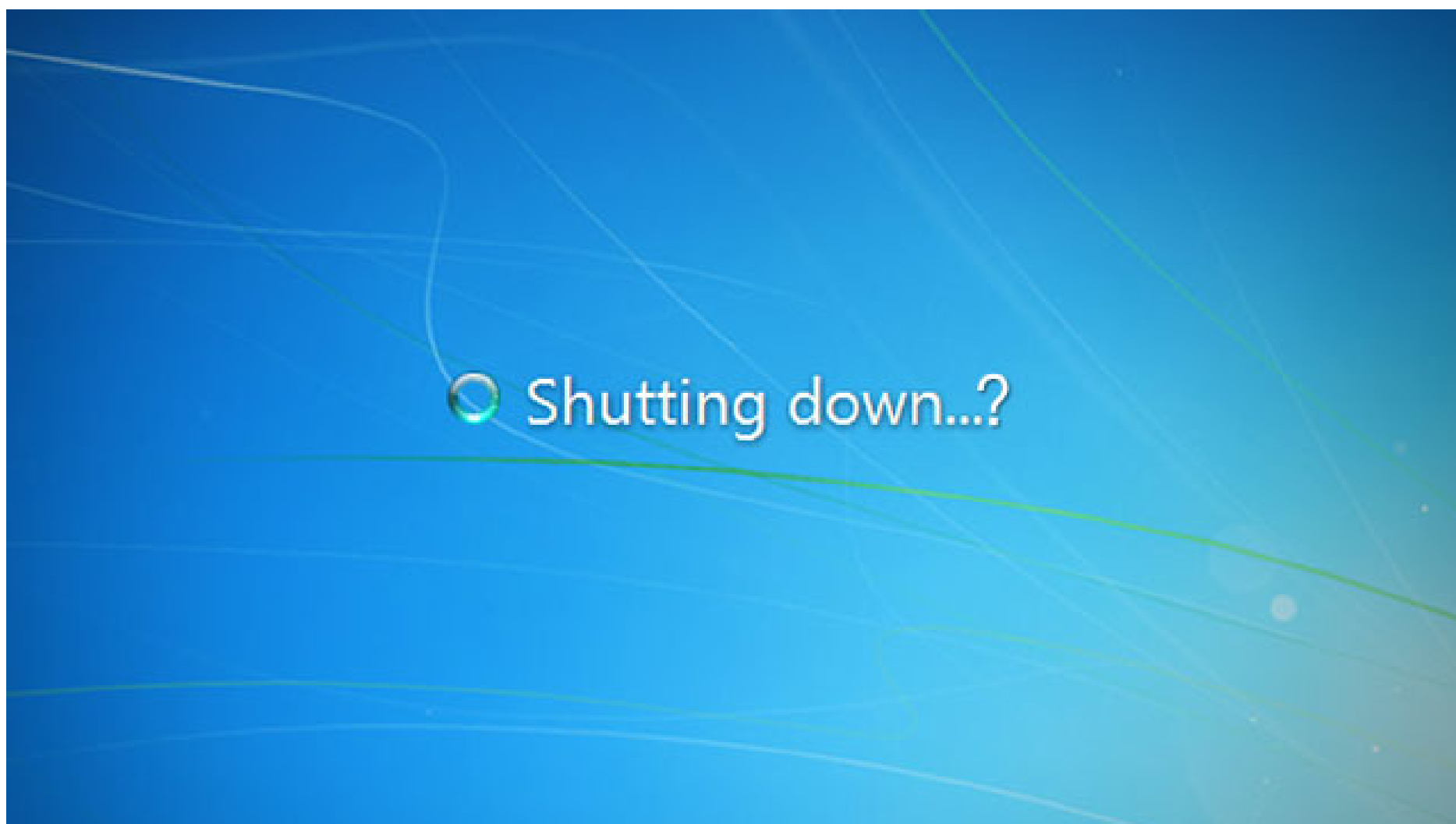


# 7 Dos and Don'ts of Cutting Costs in Urgent Care



It's no secret that urgent care operators—like most business people—have to keep a close watch on the dollars being spent and saved at their centers. In fact, research has shown in recent years that medical practice costs are growing about twice as fast as the consumer price index, according to figures from the Medical Group Management Association. Cutting costs may seem like the easiest and most logical step when looking to improve the bottom line, but it's not always cut and dry.



Top-line revenue in urgent care, which is the number of visits times

reimbursement per visit, can be difficult to control because visits are subject to factors ranging from competition to the presence of a flu epidemic while reimbursement is controlled by third-party payors. Thus, it's easier to control expenses.

Business leaders across various industries will point to low-hanging fruit, such as office supplies, equipment, and energy costs. The best overall advice for saving money at your facility is to think outside the box. Consider the following areas for potential savings.

## Staffing

Even though urgent care patient volume can be unpredictable, staffing needs to be kept to a minimum, said Logan McCall, CEO of Zipinic Urgent Care. Overstaffing can be a chronic problem if the center isn't monitoring patient flow and volume, and making adjustments where needed. "We monitor patient volume carefully in order to predict what staffing model financially makes the most sense," McCall said.

## Medical supplies

It's important to keep track of what's sitting on the shelves in your supply rooms. Most vendors will deliver supplies almost daily, so you should be able to avoid holding large stockpiles of medicines and other materials. You don't want to buy in bulk thinking you will save money and then waste a portion of the stock.

### office supplies Office supplies

Reusing and recycling can pay off over time for urgent care centers. You should also explore ordering promotional items, such as business cards and postcards, through online vendors instead of traditional print centers. And, unlike with medical supplies, you usually want to order items like pens, paper, and folders in bulk to save money.

### Leadership

To get employees in the cost-cutting mindset you should lead by example. Make sure employees understand the value of comparing prices with different vendors, comparing quotes on clinic needs, and running expenses by management for approval, McCall said.

### Cleanliness and Décor

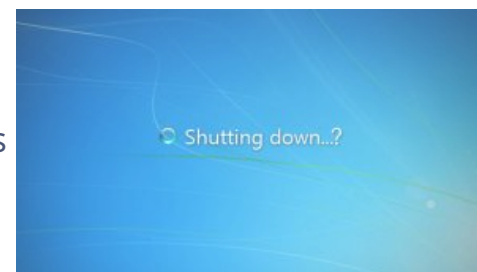
One area not to skimp in is clinic cleanliness. It's very important to keep the center well-maintained and clean at all times. You only have one chance to make a first impression with a patient. And since the urgent care business is so competitive, you don't want to risk turning a patient off from your center for good.

### Space

If the urgent care center has significantly more space than needed, you may consider renting out a portion of the facility. There may be complementary business service that could co-locate at the facility, potentially drawing in new patients. Or, collecting rent from a tenant could help offset other expenses for the practice.

### Energy

Don't assume you're saving money by holding on to outdated computers



or other

electronic devices. They might be costing you more in energy expenses than you realize. Do the math and decide if it makes sense to upgrade at your center, especially since it could endear you to staffers. And work with employees to ensure everyone is shutting down monitors and computers at night, and turning off lights when rooms aren't being used.

While it makes sense to instill a culture of frugality, you don't want to hurt staff morale or impact the quality of care for patients. In some instances, expenses for an urgent care are actually investments toward better service and flow. The best approach to cutting costs is researching how money is being spent and if certain expenses have risen dramatically. You may also consider engaging staff in the process by creating a contest surrounding idea generation for savings strategies.

This resource was first published prior to the 2019 merger between DocuTAP and Practice Velocity. The content reflects our legacy brands.

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