

Overcoming barriers to hearing aid adoption & in-clinic success

Business as usual vs. new approaches
for the hearing healthcare practice

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Introduction

Low hearing aid penetration in the consumer marketplace remains a hot topic, and a great deal of energy is expended via surveys, think tanks and industry associations in search of a silver bullet solution.

The general consensus is that the industry should focus on two areas to boost satisfaction levels and market penetration:

- Increase awareness of the issues created by untreated hearing loss
- Improve the quality of the amplified listening experience

Yet, despite increasingly advanced and attractive hearing devices, sophisticated online marketing strategies and industry awareness efforts, the average age of a first-time wearer remains where it has always been: in the late 60s to early 70s. In addition, successive MarkeTrak surveys have shown little improvement in penetration levels over the past decade, with the only significant increase appearing in the latest survey, and this has been largely attributed to a change in methodology.

While many aspects of hearing healthcare and hearing aid technology have dramatically improved during the past decade, one essential element has stayed relatively unchanged: the patient experience.

Is there a correlation between stagnant market penetration and the experiences delivered by hearing healthcare providers? Is it time to rethink established practices and consider new strategies, tactics and tools for achieving clinical and business success?

These are the questions to be examined in this white paper. Specific areas of concern include:

- Establishing trust with prospective patients
- Motivating individuals to try amplification
- Creating exceptional patient experiences in the short term
- Maintaining relationships with patients and refitting them with new hearing aids
- Generating new appointments through effective marketing
- Satisfying patients who purchased a lower level of technology than they needed
- Improving operational efficiency and profitability

In discussing each of these areas, this paper will touch on the fundamental shortcomings of conventional approaches to hearing healthcare.

Finally, the discussion will focus on open platform technology and why it may offer a better alternative to satisfying the practice owner's objectives in each of the areas outlined above.

Why conventional approaches fall short

Consider the present state of affairs in hearing healthcare, as presented in MarkeTrak 9:

- Of all the people who visit a hearing healthcare provider and who have a treatable hearing loss, only about 30% wear hearing aids.
- About 35% of hearing-impaired individuals who visit a hearing healthcare clinic decide against amplification, contrary to the provider's recommendation.
- Of those who do make a purchase decision, 10% will return their hearing aids for a refund.
- More than 20% of hearing aid owners said they would not repurchase from the same provider.

These and other metrics indicate definite room for improvement. And yet, despite evidence of an unsustainable business model, a large segment of practice owners consider this “business as usual.”

The question: Can providers break free from conventional thinking to achieve a more sustainable business model, one that increases hearing aid adoption and sets the stage for long-term clinical success?

The answer is yes, it is possible. But first it helps to understand why conventional approaches fall short at critical junctures in the patient journey and why they prevent the realization of key business objectives.

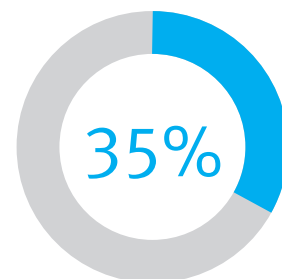
Challenge #1: Establishing trust

The delivery of hearing healthcare is inherently based on trust. Providers hope hearing-impaired individuals will trust their expertise, hearing aid recommendations and ability to deliver service after the fitting. Unfortunately, prospective patients tend to be skeptical by nature. This mistrust, especially among non-wearers, stems from a fear of the unknown:

- “Is this the right provider for me?”
- “I’m not sure my hearing is really that bad.”
- “Will these hearing aids live up to the provider’s promises and my expectations?”
- “Why should I pay this much? Are these hearing aids really worth it?”
- “What if I’m not happy with the hearing aids and want to return them? Will I get a refund?”

To a large extent, providers cannot answer these questions to the patient's satisfaction. So the initial relationship is based on blind trust (if it starts at all). Of course, providers use certain tactics, such as the in-home trial period or in-office demo, in an attempt to offset the apprehension. But these tactics have serious flaws.

Traditional trial periods allow the patient to be fit with hearing aids from the provider's stock and then wear the devices at home and in other everyday listening environments. However, this common tactic means holding stock, which restricts cash flow and stresses the business. More importantly, it fails at a number of levels to build trust with patients.



About 35% of hearing-impaired individuals who visit a hearing healthcare clinic decide against amplification

First, this approach requires an upfront investment, even though the money will ostensibly be refunded if the patient is not satisfied. Secondly, the refund often falls short of 100% due to fitting fees — contributing to the consumer’s instinctive suspicion of money-back offers. Lastly, the reassurance that “if these hearing aids don’t work for you, you can always return them” actually plants a seed of doubt in the patient’s mind. It’s little wonder that the value of the conventional trial period has become diluted.

Alternatively, providers may offer an in-clinic demonstration, using “demo aids.” In some cases, patients may be allowed to take these products home. The problem is that manufacturers typically supply providers with “premium” hearing aids, despite the fact that four out of five patients end up purchasing lower priced products. Providers then face the unenviable task of creating realistic expectations for the selected product level while trying to motivate patients to purchase. Because of these disadvantages, many providers have abandoned demos altogether.



Four out of five patients end up purchasing lower priced products

Challenge #2: Satisfying new patients

In most cases, it’s clear to the provider when amplification is the right choice for their patients. Yet, assuming a patient agrees with this recommendation — and this is no sure thing — the provider’s job is far from over. As MarkeTrak 9 reveals, 10% of fitted patients return their hearing aids for a refund. This points to an irreconcilable dissatisfaction with the hearing aids. But what about the other 90% who keep their instruments?

On the bright side, 95% of hearing aid owners responding to MarkeTrak 9 said they were satisfied with hearing healthcare providers seen in the last five years. But only 81% expressed satisfaction with their current hearing aids — meaning nearly 20% are less than satisfied.

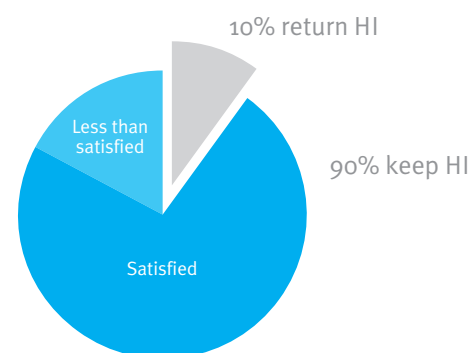
Why does this happen? Shouldn’t advances in technology practically guarantee patient satisfaction and reduce the incidence of buyer’s remorse?

In reality, a large number of patients begin to question their purchase almost as soon as they leave the provider’s office or shortly after they resume their daily routines.

The top two reasons for returns, according to MarkeTrak 9, are physical discomfort and the perception that hearing aid performance did not meet the wearer’s expectations. Other common contributors to buyer’s remorse include:

- A feeling that the provider was more interested in “making a sale” than finding a solution (also a perception among one in four non-owners in MarkeTrak 9)
- A perception that the hearing aids cost too much
- Selection of the wrong technology and features
- Incorrect programming of the hearing aids

In summary, a large percentage of patient dissatisfaction occurs because of a disconnect — largely between what patients thought they were getting and what they experienced in their everyday environments and situations.



Challenge #3: Long-term patient retention

On average, more than 20% of a provider's patients say they will go elsewhere when it comes time to repurchase, and up to 50% forget where they bought their hearing aids in the first place. This indicates a lack of loyalty to the provider among a sizable portion of the patient population. But why? After all, hearing aid fittings are supposedly built on trust and relationships!

Patient defections can be a continuation of the issues described in the previous section. Specifically, patients may feel that:

- Their provider didn't truly listen to them and doesn't have their best interests at heart
- They paid too much for the hearing aids relative to the benefits derived
- Their hearing aids never performed up to expectations

Providers put themselves at risk by over-fitting or under-fitting their patients. Over-fitting means selling patients a higher level of technology and more features than they really need — often because the provider simply didn't take the time to get to know them or was using high-pressure sales tactics. Under-selling happens when patients go home with a lower level of technology or fewer features than they need; this frequently happens when the provider capitulates to patient objections over price.

To be fair, most reputable providers attempt to rectify issues through reprogramming or other modifications. However, if the patient is not wearing a suitable product, these efforts usually fall short, and the provider may need to start the fitting process from scratch. In these situations, it's not surprising that patients lose confidence in their providers.

Challenge #4: Generating new business

Most hearing healthcare providers will agree: It's getting more and more difficult — and increasingly expensive — to bring prospective patients through the door. When the flow of appointments slows down, many providers react by launching marketing initiatives, including direct mailings to rental lists and mass advertising in the newspaper and other media.

The problem is, marketing may not produce the results it once did, and it can even be counterproductive. Following are few of the most common marketing practices and why they often do not yield a good return on investment.

Price advertising can generate a lot of interest, but it raises two perplexing questions:

- What percentage of patients will be good candidates for a low-cost entry-level product? This strategy may even create the appearance of bait-and-switch advertising. For patients who insist on buying the advertised product, a less-than-optimal outcome may await them, contributing to an erosion in trust.
- For providers who do sell a large quantity of heavily discounted product, how long can they sustain this business model? A large number of these businesses eventually experience financial troubles.

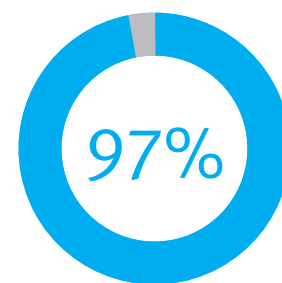
Product advertising is difficult to execute effectively, even when a distinct advantage exists. Many of today’s consumers simply don’t comprehend why one hearing aid is better than another.

Service advertising might seem to be a good strategy for smaller, independently owned practices, especially when going up against discount club retailers. However, “level of service” is hard to quantify and by itself does not create a compelling reason to choose one provider over another. (It’s worth noting that the “big guys” are sensitive to the service issue and have elevated their game in recent years.)

Online advertising is a necessity in hearing healthcare, but it no longer gives providers a clear-cut competitive advantage, as it did from the mid-1990s through the early 2000s. Even today’s smallest practices have a website and use email marketing.

Patient referrals form a solid foundation for some of the country’s most successful practices. Moreover, 97% of the recommendations for a provider come from family members, coworkers and friends, according to MarkeTrak 9. Unfortunately, many referral programs don’t live up to provider expectations. Often the incentive for patients to provide referrals is a financial or other reward and is not based on patient satisfaction. In many of these clinics, there is a high reliance on lead-generating activities.

A steady flow of referrals from ENTs and other physicians is the “dream scenario” of nearly every hearing healthcare provider. After all, what better way is there to create credibility and trust than to earn the recommendation of a person’s doctor? However, building relationships with physicians can be a difficult and slow process. Many primary care doctors are now part of large medical groups, and getting their attention requires significant effort. In addition, most ENTs have taken hearing aid dispensing in-house.



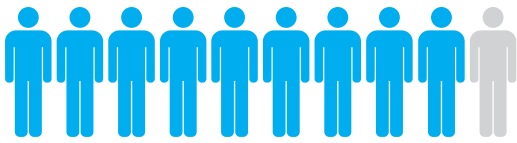
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Challenge #5: Increasing profitability

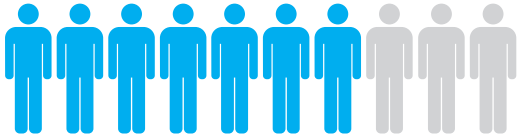
Increasing patient fittings is desirable, but it doesn’t necessarily translate to increased profits. Certain factors, such as rent, equipment and wages are an unavoidable (and often unalterable) part of the cost of doing business. But profit erosion also occurs for reasons that may be at least partially within control of the hearing healthcare provider. Examples include:

- Too many hearing aid returns
- Low average patient spend (APS)
- Ineffective advertising
- Costs associated with a large demo aid inventory

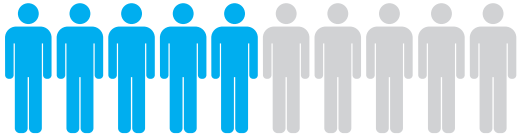
As any hearing healthcare practice owner knows, hearing aid returns and APS can significantly affect profitability. These issues are also intertwined. In the MarkeTrak 9 survey, nine out of 10 wearers who purchased what they perceived to be a higher end product reported satisfaction with their hearing aids. By contrast, about half of wearers with a perceived “lower end” product and three quarters of those with a “moderate” level product said they were satisfied.



Nine out of 10 wearers who purchased what they perceived to be a higher end product reported satisfaction with their hearing aid



Three quarters of wearers who purchased what they perceived to be a moderate level product reported satisfaction with their hearing aid



About half of wearers who purchased what they perceived to be a lower end product reported satisfaction with their hearing aid

From this, one can reasonably conclude that a higher end product equals a higher price point (think APS), and increased patient satisfaction means fewer returns. The question then becomes: How can providers create an environment where better technology decisions ultimately translate to a healthier bottom line?

While this objective is largely elusive across the industry, many practice owners are embracing a new paradigm that drives business success by elevating clinical success.

Open platform opens the door to a new approach

Advancing the hearing aid adoption rate beyond 30% will clearly require fresh ideas, strategies and tools. But that's not enough. Hearing healthcare providers also need new ways to strengthen relationships with their patients and to run their businesses more efficiently and profitably.

In 2012, Unitron saw an opportunity to deploy the long-discussed “open platform device” concept in a way that would empower providers to offer prospective wearers an improved — and revolutionary — experience. The result was Flex:trial™ and Flex:upgrade™

Flex:trial demonstration devices are set to the technology level desired by providers, in their clinics, with a few simple clicks in the fitting software. Providers also choose the length of the trial period and set the devices to beep repeatedly when the trial period expires. Patients return to the provider's office, where they can choose to walk away without amplification or purchase new hearing aids that are programmed to the exact specs of their Flex:trial devices. Because it comes without risk or obligation, the Flex:trial experience establishes trust between patients and providers. It also eliminates the need for the clinic to carry a large inventory of stock to cover all possible technology levels.

Flex:upgrade enables providers to instantly upgrade hearing aids already fitted and sold whenever a patient's issues or complaints cannot be solved by fine tuning alone. Providers simply connect the aids to the fitting software, select the new technology level and define the trial period,

just as they would do with Flex:trial devices. Upon returning to the clinic, patients can choose to purchase the upgrade, at significantly less cost than new devices, or return their hearing aids to the original settings. With Flex:upgrade, providers no longer need to “force” premium-level products on patients who clearly need this level of technology. Instead, patients may purchase at the level where they are most comfortable, without remorse; later they may understand the need for more advanced technology and can try an upgrade with their existing devices.

More recently, Unitron launched a new software feature, called Log It All, that enables comparisons of technology levels based on the wearer’s actual listening lifestyle. Log It All provides clear evidence that a technology upgrade would better match up with the patient’s real-world needs. For patients who have financial constraints, comparisons of the technology levels can help manage expectations. These comparisons also may be useful for determining the selection of manual programs to help remediate an issue. In short, Log It All brings a unique level of transparency to patient counseling, resulting in a deeper sense of trust and loyalty, as well as the potential for shorter refitting cycles.

A deeper examination reveals just how profoundly Flex, coupled with Log It All, has transformed the delivery of hearing healthcare.

Flex:trial — gateway to stronger relationships and business growth

Since its deployment in hearing healthcare practices nationwide, Flex:trial has become much more than a trial period. Besides boosting the number of test-loss patients who purchase hearing aids, Flex:trial has contributed to enhanced patient satisfaction, stronger provider-patient relationships, higher average patient spend (APS), decreased returns and increased long-term patient retention.

Breaking through the adoption barrier by building trust

Flex:trial is a proven trust builder. The provider simply asks patients to wear the Flex:trial devices for one to two weeks, emphasizing the fact that there are no upfront costs, no commitment and no fine print. Any discussion about a refund is eliminated.

In a recent Unitron survey, hearing healthcare providers using Flex:trial agreed with an average score of 8.5 (on a scale of 1-10) to the statement that offering Flex helped them build trust with their patients.

According to the MarkeTrak 9 survey, a large percentage of hearing-impaired individuals said they see their initial appointment with the hearing healthcare provider as an opportunity to get information, not to purchase hearing aids. Moreover, survey respondents think providers should allow them to take “small steps” — whatever they’re most comfortable doing.

Flex:trial offers exactly the small step many consumers are seeking. Freed from financial concerns (i.e., the refund process), patients and their families can devote their attention to the benefits of amplification.

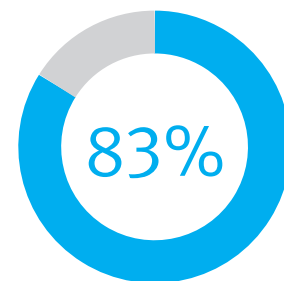
“It is important to have enough Flex:trial aids to fulfill every opportunity to have both new patients and previous purchasers hear the difference.”

~Flex:trial provider

As an added advantage, providers have found that Flex:trial eliminates or reduces the need to “sell” a particular product or technology level. They simply rely on Flex:trial and the Log It All software tool to validate their recommended level of technology. With less emphasis on the sales process, providers can focus more of their time and energy on counseling.

At one time or another, practically every provider hears a patient say “Let me think about it” or “I want to shop around.” Unitron has received a number of comments that Flex:trial helps counteract this indecision.

But does greater trust in the provider translate to tangible results? In a recent Unitron survey, 83% of Flex:trial providers reported that Flex:trial helped them increase their patient fittings.



83% of Flex:trial providers reported that Flex:trial helped them increase their patient fittings

A better patient experience = increased patient loyalty

The same Unitron survey found that 84% of Flex:trial providers believe the program improves the patient experience. This makes sense from a number of perspectives.

First, Flex:trial removes uncertainty from the selection and fitting of hearing aids. Here’s why:

- Flex:trial devices can be programmed (and reprogrammed repeatedly) to any level of Unitron North platform technology. The ability to program Flex:trial devices to the provider’s recommended technology level eliminates the performance disparity that can occur when patients make the leap from demo or conventional trial devices to purchased hearing aids.
- Much different than a controlled in-office demo, Flex:trial allows the patient to wear the hearing aids in the full scope of a patient’s everyday listening environments, from home and work to a variety of social events, including high-noise situations. And the Log It All software feature captures the information for the patient and provider to validate the technology selection. At the end of the trial period, there are no doubts about the hearing aids’ performance and benefits in all facets of the patient’s life.
- New hearing aids require an acclimation period to one degree or another, and it’s during this timeframe that many returns occur. However, the Flex:trial program gives patients a head start on the adjustment process, and it allows providers to address issues before hearing aids are ordered.

Ultimately, Flex:trial creates a unique patient experience and establishes a deep level of trust that reduces the potential for returns and leads to significantly more referrals — whether the patient chooses to purchase or not. In addition, the program helps reduce the risk of defections to competitors and sets the table for re-fittings when patients need new hearing aids.

Several providers are using Flex:trial as part of a “premium repair service.” Instead of stock demo aids, these practices loan their patients Flex:trial devices programmed to a higher technology than the hearing aids being repaired. In a number of instances, patients have been so impressed with

“My closure rates have never been higher.”
~Flex:trial provider

the Flex devices that they order new hearing aids upon returning for their repaired devices — without any sales pressure whatsoever.

In one instance, an Indiana-based practice reported that, in a single day, three patients came in with older hearing aids needing repair. “In about 10 minutes, I put Flex:trial devices on each one,” says the practice owner. “Two out of three later called to tell me they didn’t want their old hearing aids back.”

A point of differentiation and compelling marketing message

While price, product and other traditional advertising themes have yielded diminishing returns, Flex:trial is proving to be a big draw for a growing number of providers.

Flex:trial creates a significant point of differentiation in a crowded hearing healthcare marketplace. In addition, the message of an extended trial period with no upfront cost and no commitment resonates with consumers, many of whom have been reluctant to take the first step in addressing a hearing loss.

Unitron has tested several local marketing pieces over the past two years with much success. The popular Flex “Try it, wear it, love it” campaign is the company’s most consistently successful lead-generation piece. The average response rate to a 5,000-piece mailing has been .4% (20 calls), and the appointment and sales conversion rate consistently trend around 50% (10 patients in clinic, five of whom purchase).

Unitron has also incorporated Flex:trial messaging into other marketing programs geared to current wearers of older hearing aids. This includes Unitron’s unique “lunch-and-listen” event, targeting patients who own older hearing aids (e.g., more than three years old). The hearing healthcare practice invites these patients to a complimentary lunch at a local restaurant. Attendees receive individually programmed Flex:trial devices programmed to their audiogram that they wear during lunch (in the quintessential noisy environment), followed by a “test drive” for a week or two before returning to the clinic for a follow-up appointment.

The Flex Lunch & Listen program has proved to be very successful and affordable (investment usually less than \$400). On average, about 50 letters are mailed, followed by phone calls to recipients. This tactic yields 15% to 25% attendance at the event (eight to 12 patients). After the two-week trial period, there’s a 50%-plus conversion/purchase rate (four to six patients), generating sales of eight to 12 hearing instruments.

Finally, Flex:trial has shown a high potential for driving patient referrals. A survey conducted by Unitron asked providers who use Flex:trial to rank their agreement with the following statement: “Flex:trial has a positive impact on building my practice by helping to create patient advocates.” On a scale of 1 to 10, the average survey response was 8.4 (within the “strongly agree” range).

This metric, coupled with the 84% of providers who report an enhanced patient experience, reinforces the value of Flex:trial as a powerful referral tool. One provider reports that 60% of her new patients come from

“There are much fewer returns for credit as a result, and conversion rates have improved across the board.”

~Flex:trial provider

“Our patients are happier with their better-performing products, and they know they have the right product because they have personally experienced it.”

~Flex:trial provider

positive word-of-mouth advertising; she believes this is the result of creating exceptional patient experiences, of which Flex:trial is an integral part. Another provider shared the story of a patient who decided against amplification, but was so impressed by his Flex:trial experience that he referred four family members to the clinic for hearing tests.

What's good for patients is good for business

It stands to reason that enhancing the overall patient experience — a Flex:trial hallmark — is good for the bottom line. In the simplest possible terms, happier patients are more likely to hold onto their hearing aids, recommend their provider to friends and family, and turn to the same provider when the time comes for a refitting.

A closer look reveals the many ways Flex:trial helps improve operational efficiency and profitability:

Closure rates — With more than eight out of 10 Flex:trial saying the program helped them convert more prospects into patients, the obvious result will be additional revenue.

Product mix/average patient spend — 82% of Flex:trial participants reported an improved product mix, meaning more fittings with premium-level products. One provider realized a \$78 per-unit revenue bump.

Product returns — Returned hearing aids negatively affect both the top line and bottom line. Among Flex:trial providers, 70% said the program contributed to reduced returns. One practice owner documented a 15.5% reduction in returns, and another reported more than an 11% reduction.

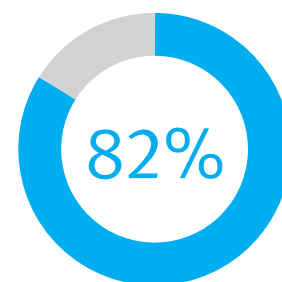
Advertising cost per unit — By increasing response and conversions, the advertising cost per hearing aid unit goes down. In addition, an increase in referrals from satisfied patients, as well as from physicians, may further offset advertising expense.

Based on early indications, Unitron expects Flex:trial to shorten the average patient repurchase cycle for many providers, further accentuating top and bottom line performance. This is attributed to a number of factors, including premium repair services, marketing campaigns to patients with older technology and Flex:upgrade fittings (discussed below). One provider in Texas routinely uses both Flex:trial and Flex:upgrade with her patients, conveying the message, in a low-key manner, that better technology is always available.

Another area that can significantly influence a clinic's cost is the management of an in-office demo or in-home trial program. Flex:trial hearing aids may be programmed again and again to every level of North platform technology. This eliminates the need to purchase a full stable of devices at multiple technology levels, and it reduces the ancillary costs, such as having to package up inventory and return it to the manufacturer to avoid paying for stock before it's sold. The following scenario illustrates the difference between a conventional in-home trial program and the Flex:trial program for a clinic that offers five technology levels:

“We just finished up two Flex:trial prospecting events that generated \$30K in revenue...AND are expecting another \$10K to close in the next week. These are the first campaigns we've done in years that have generated this kind of revenue.”

~Flex:trial provider



82% of Flex:trial participants reported an improved product mix, meaning more fittings with premium-level products

Conventional in-home trial program — To match the hearing losses and needs of all patients, not to mention multiple trials occurring simultaneously, providers typically must carry 20 or more devices. This is the equivalent of roughly \$15,000 tied up in inventory— money that is not available for other purposes, such as marketing initiatives, paying invoices for early discounts or simply earning interest in the bank. Besides negatively affecting cash flow, conventional in-home trial programs burden clinics with device tracking logistics, lost or unreturned instruments and the inability to sell devices with obsolete technology.

Flex:trial — One device can be programmed to all of Unitron’s available North platform technology levels, meaning the typical smaller clinic would only need to stock and maintain six to eight pairs of Flex:trial instruments. In other words, one Flex:trial device does the work of multiple conventional demo aids. As discussed earlier, Flex:trial devices can also do “double duty” as loaners for patients whose hearing aids are being repaired.

Flex:upgrade — transforming patient dissatisfaction into patient advocacy

Virtually every hearing healthcare provider has patients whose newer hearing aids (typically six to 18 months old) aren’t adequate for their needs. This happens for a number of reasons, including:

- Because of budgetary reasons or simple indecision, the patient chose a lower technology level and/or fewer features than what the provider recommended.
- A change in patient’s lifestyle or career necessitates more advanced hearing aids.
- A major life event, such as a wedding or vacation, causes the patient to seek better technology or more features.

In these and other situations, providers can offer their patients a step up in technology through Flex:upgrade, available with all Unitron North platform hearing aids. Instead of requiring the purchase of new hearing aids, Flex:upgrade works within the patient’s current instruments. Almost 70% of hearing professionals surveyed by Unitron say they successfully use Flex:upgrade as a feature when presenting their Unitron hearing solution to their patient. Several providers commented that it creates more value in the recommended hearing aids.

The idea of upgradeable consumer devices is not new, of course. A prime example is the television. Consumers routinely upgrade their cable or satellite packages without having to purchase a new TV. Upgradeability is expected nowadays, and Flex:upgrade fits into this model.

As with Flex:trial, patients can test drive the higher technology at home and in all of their life situations. They can then choose to purchase the upgrade or return the hearing aids to the previous settings.

Flex:upgrade represents incremental revenue for the clinic. Perhaps more importantly, according to providers who use Flex:upgrade, it creates opportunities to transform under-served or dissatisfied patients into advocates for the clinic.

“Our patients are buying higher technology products as a result of Flex.”

~Flex:trial provider

“The Flex:upgrade article in our newsletter prompted three patients to inquire and make appointments. Now all three patients are on upgrade trials.”

~Flex:trial provider

Log It All — further validation of the provider’s recommendation



About half of Flex:trial providers augment their program with the Log It All feature in Unitron TrueFit fitting software v3.0. When patients return from a Flex:trial or Flex:upgrade experience, the provider can see the percentage of time they’ve spent in seven diverse environments. This creates a foundation for evidence-based discussions about patient lifestyles and technology choices, leading to one of two possible outcomes:

- Patients have visual corroboration of how well the trial met their listening needs, reinforcing the provider’s technology recommendation and paving the way for a purchase decision.
- For patients who struggled in one or more areas during their trial period, the provider can use Log It All data to illustrate the need for a new trial at a higher technology level.

In a survey conducted by Unitron, providers expressed strong agreement that the combination of Flex:trial and Log It All enhanced their counseling skills, as well as their ability to build trust, motivate patients to pursue amplification and create advocates for their clinics.

“One of our patients was a first-time wearer who chose (Unitron) 600 level technology. At the follow-up visit, he said he was still struggling in noise. We pulled up Log It All data and showed him he could jump from 40% to 70% (speech-in-noise coverage) by moving up to the 700 level. When he saw the potential improvement in hearing, he had no problem paying for the better technology. It was the easiest sale ever because all we did was present the information, and the patient connected the dots.”

~Unitron customer

Key takeaways

Hearing healthcare providers today face a critical moment of decision. Will they stay the course, standing by as people fail to get the hearing help that could transform their lives? Will practice owners be satisfied with high rates of hearing aid returns, poor patient retention and continuing erosion of their business performance?

Or will innovative new thinking take hearing healthcare practices in a different direction, one that overcomes the barriers to hearing aid adoption, while driving in-clinic success, creating a fanatically loyal clientele and boosting the overall success of the practice?

Considering everything at stake, the choice couldn't be clearer.

For more information or to get started with Flex, please call your Unitron Account Representative at 800.888.8882.

About Unitron

Unitron is a global company that understands the hearing healthcare business is built on strong, personal relationships. We work closely with hearing healthcare professionals to improve the lives of people with hearing loss. A member of the Sonova Group, Unitron has a proven track record of developing hearing innovations that provide natural sound with exceptional speech understanding. Headquartered in Canada, Unitron distributes its full line of hearing instruments to customers in more than 60 countries. For more information, please visit us on the web at unitron.com.