

The state of healthcare communications

Keeping patients engaged, informed, safe, and happy



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This report is intended for informational purposes only. Readers should consult local healthcare laws and regulations regarding consumer privacy and marketing in their respective regions before implementing any communication strategies.

INTRODUCTION

The vital signs of healthcare communications

Few things are more important than a person's health and wellbeing. That's why healthcare customer communications are not only essential to the patient experience, but they are also a lifeline that provides valuable information and helpful advice while protecting privacy.

To better understand what's working and where there's room to improve, Sinch surveyed 2,800 global consumers and more than 400 healthcare business leaders. What we found is simple: Customer communication done right builds trust, confidence, and stronger relationships. At Sinch, we believe you accomplish this through messages that keep patients **engaged**, **informed**, **safe**, **and happy**. Those are the **four pillars of customer communication**.

In healthcare, personalized preventive care reminders, relevant health tips, and marketing messages keep patients engaged. Appointment reminders, billing notices, and prescription notifications keep them informed. Messages that protect patient accounts keep them safe while helpful support communications make them feel seen and keep them happy.

Throughout this report, you'll discover what people expect from healthcare communication. This includes areas where organizations are succeeding as well as where there are both challenges and opportunities. Most importantly, we'll show you how healthcare leaders can enhance patient communications to build trust, improve outcomes, and deliver care that feels connected at every step.



Engaged Marketing campaigns

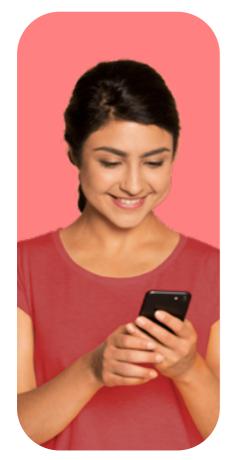
Drive revenue through relevant, timely, and personalized campaigns.





Boost operational efficiency and satisfaction with helpful notifications and alerts.





Safe
Identity and Verification

Easily verify credentials with one-time passwords and multi-factor authentication.

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Customer service

Increase loyalty with five-star pre- and post-purchase support on any channel.





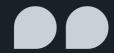


Challenges and opportunities in healthcare

A lot of communication takes place between healthcare appointments. Just as a patient might assess a doctor's "bedside manner," the people who choose your healthcare company are evaluating messages they receive to see if you truly care.

Delivering healthcare communications that meet patient expectations is critical - and those expectations keep growing. Whether it's personalized advice or timely reminders, you need to navigate everything from channel preferences to privacy regulations.

Let's begin our exploration of the state of healthcare communications with a look at the bigger picture. That includes identifying opportunities to enhance and expand digital communications as well as understanding the roadblocks you're navigating on the path to keeping patients engaged, informed, safe, and happy.



People expect the same level of speed, clarity, and personalization from healthcare providers that they experience in other parts of their lives. Meeting those expectations is essential to building lasting trust and delivering better outcomes. The future of healthcare isn't just about better treatments. It's about better connections and an improved patient experience."



James Ovens

Account Director, Sinch



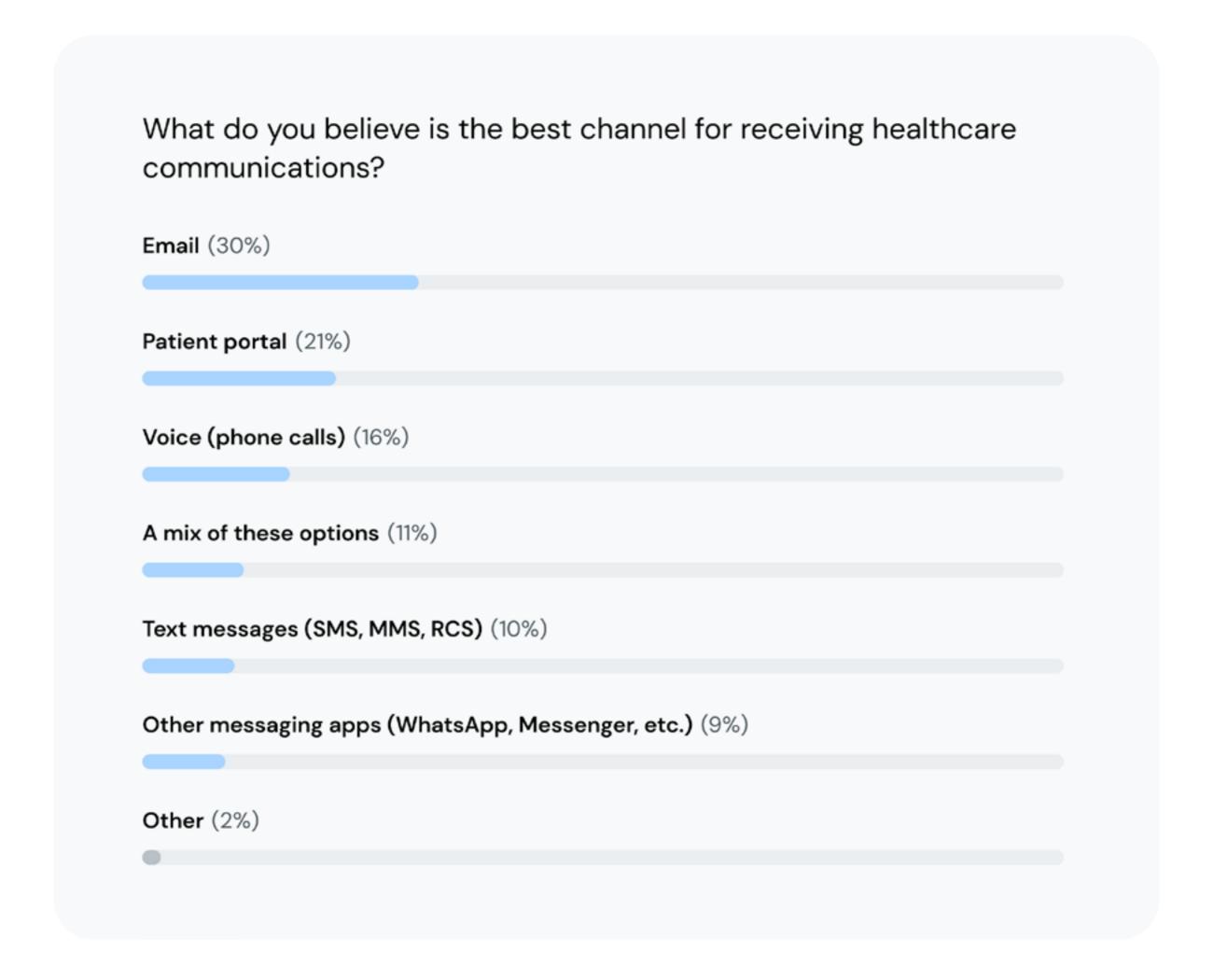






Patient communication preferences

Just over half of consumers in our global survey would choose either the email channel (30%) or messages on a patient portal (21%) as their preference for healthcare communications. Another 16% would prefer using the voice channel for healthcare conversations.



Around one out of 10 consumers would choose either text messaging or OTT channels such as WhatsApp and Messenger from Meta, which we described as other messaging apps in this survey.

A slightly higher percentage (11%) want a mix of these communication channels. The truth is, that option reflects the reality of patient communication. Different types of messages are best delivered on certain channels at specific times. Furthermore, patients of certain ages may have different preferences. Our research found younger consumers are more likely to want customer communications via text or other mobile messaging apps.

This is why healthcare organizations must diversify their communication strategy across multiple channels.



What channels are used in healthcare communications?

Because people have a variety of preferences, and because certain channels support different situations, most healthcare companies rely on several options for patient communications.

Our survey of 400+ healthcare industry respondents found around **75% or more are using email, voice, and SMS** to keep their patients engaged, informed, safe, and happy. Those three channels are reliable mainstays of customer communication. In–app messages and patient portals (68%) are also common in healthcare. However, other options are emerging and present opportunities to connect in new ways.



Al-powered chatbots (45%), RCS for Business (36%), and other messaging apps (24%) like WhatsApp and Messenger may play a role in patient communications as well.

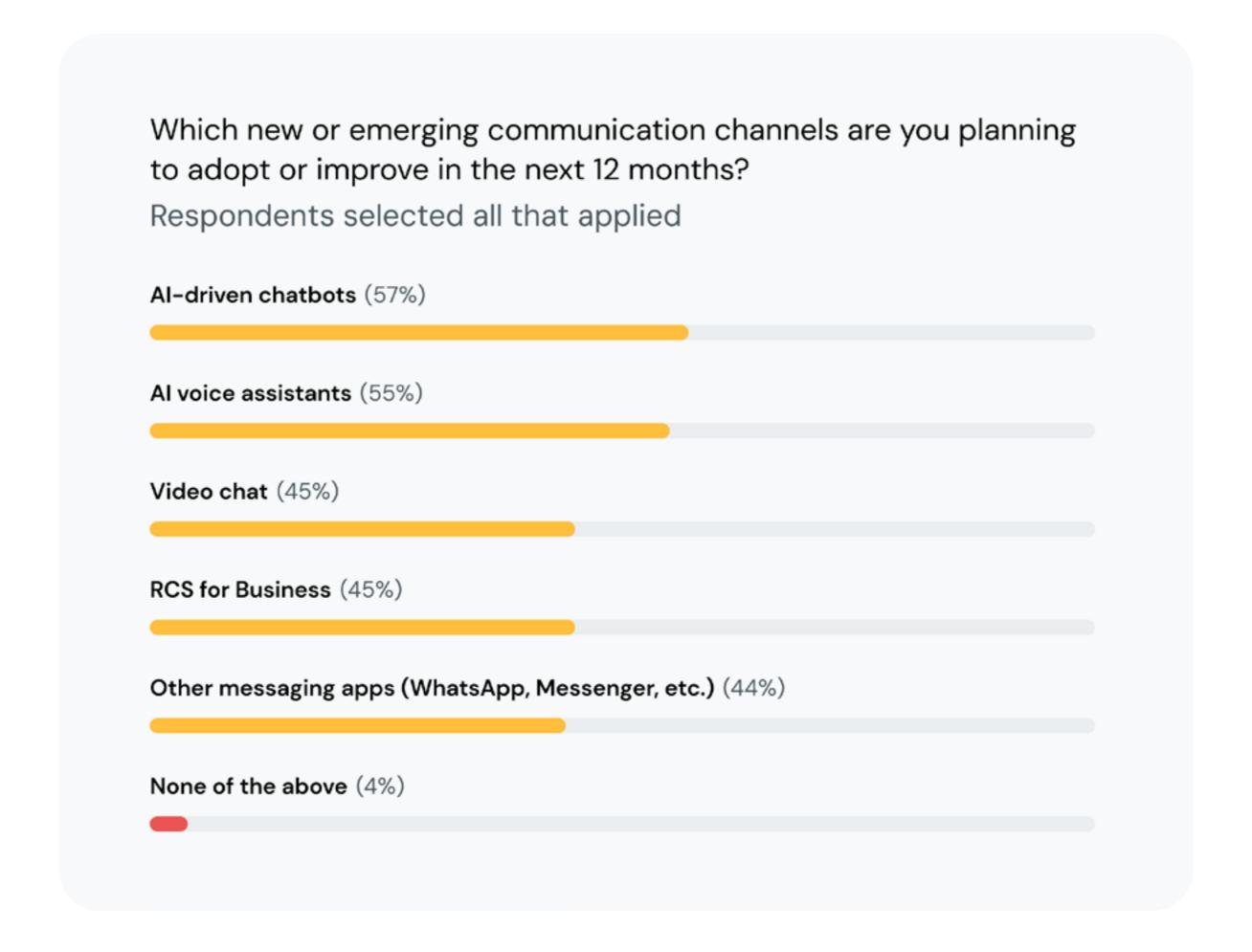
In fact, our research shows many healthcare organizations plan to adopt these emerging channels in the near future.



Emerging channels in healthcare communications

Over the next year, 96% of healthcare respondents say they plan to invest in new communication strategies in some form. Just 4% have no plans to adopt or improve emerging channels.

Sinch's survey found that many healthcare companies will focus on implementing artificial intelligence. 57% plan to invest in Al-driven chatbots while 55% will do so with Al voice assistants.



Around 45% of healthcare respondents will focus on video chat and communication through other messaging apps, and the same number have plans to use RCS for Business.

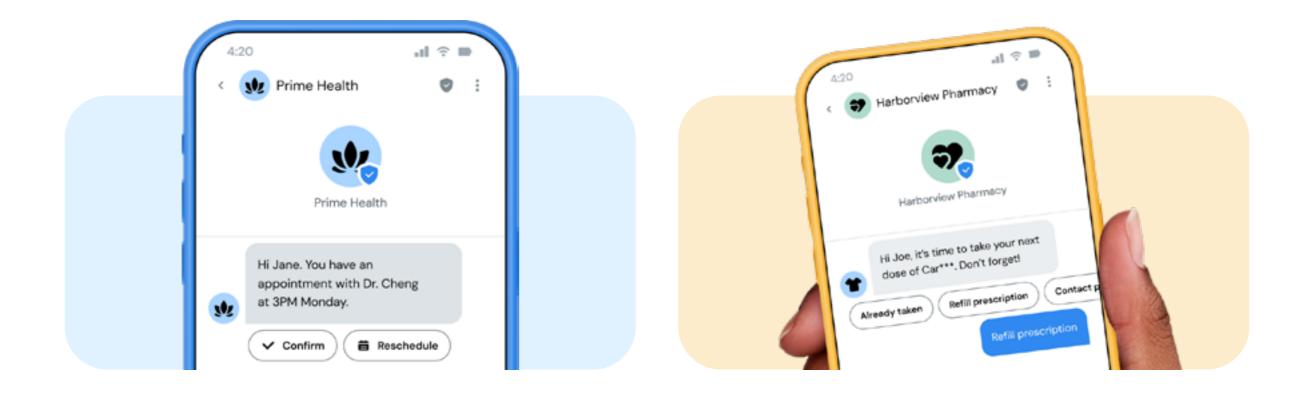
Rich Communication Services (RCS) is revolutionizing customer communications by turning basic text messages into interactive experiences that promote brand recognition and trust. Learn more about this emerging channel when you **visit Sinch's RCS hub**.



Views on RCS in healthcare communications

Now that <u>RCS is supported on iPhones</u>, it's expected to take off in the U.S. and other markets where Apple devices are popular. Our survey found **90% of healthcare respondents were at least somewhat familiar with RCS** while 10% haven't heard of it yet.

RCS messages enable personalized, app-like experiences that are delivered directly to the native messaging application on a contact's mobile device. Here are two examples:



One of these illustrates how a healthcare appointment reminder might look with RCS. It's branded with a logo and features buttons to confirm or reschedule the appointment. The other RCS example shows a branded medication refill reminder along with suggested replies.

There are many ways to benefit from RCS messages in healthcare communications. However, the first steps involve <u>registering and setting up an RCS agent</u>. After that, you can start taking advantage of branded messages and move on to more advanced RCS features.

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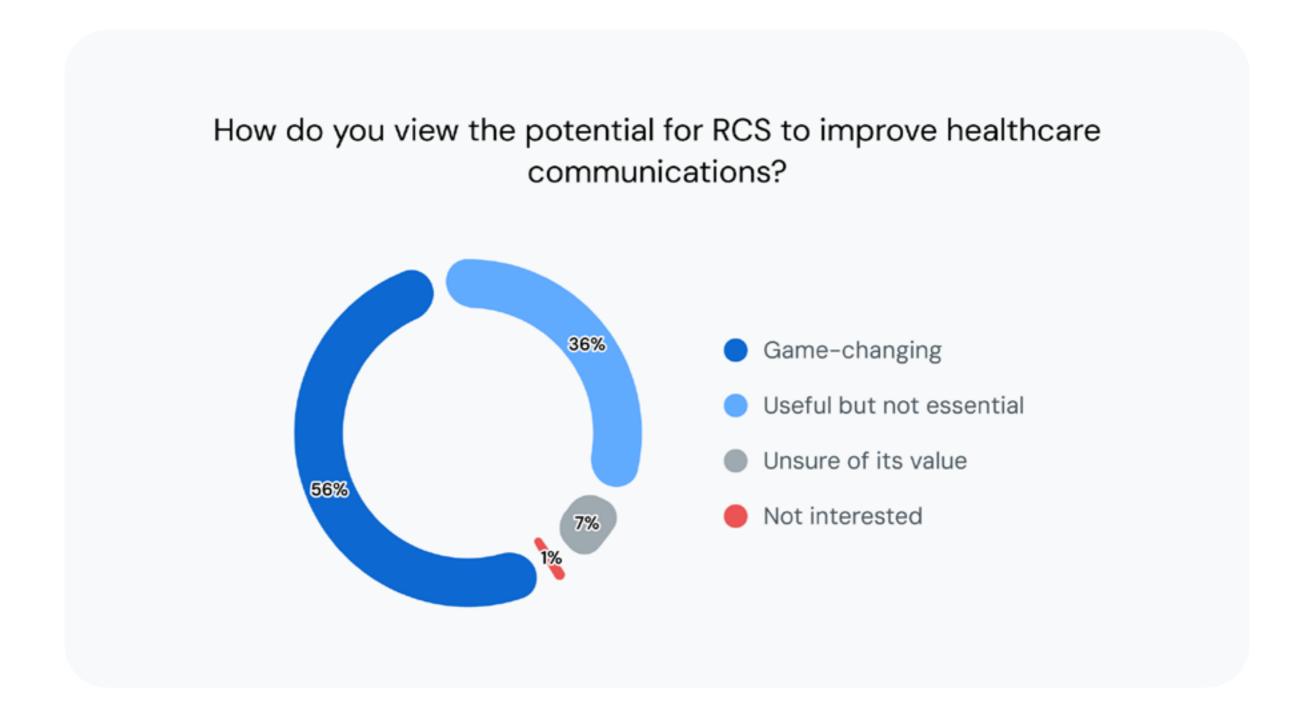
"One of the cool things about RCS is that you can do so much with it. A lot of businesses start with fairly simple messages, by converting their existing SMS over. That works well for improving security with the verified RCS Agents, the branding, and the delivery and read receipts. And once you start seeing it working, you start to move on to more advanced use cases."





It's clear that most healthcare respondents who are familiar with RCS think it will make a significant impact on patient communications. Our survey found that 56% would describe RCS messaging as "game-changing" for healthcare communication.

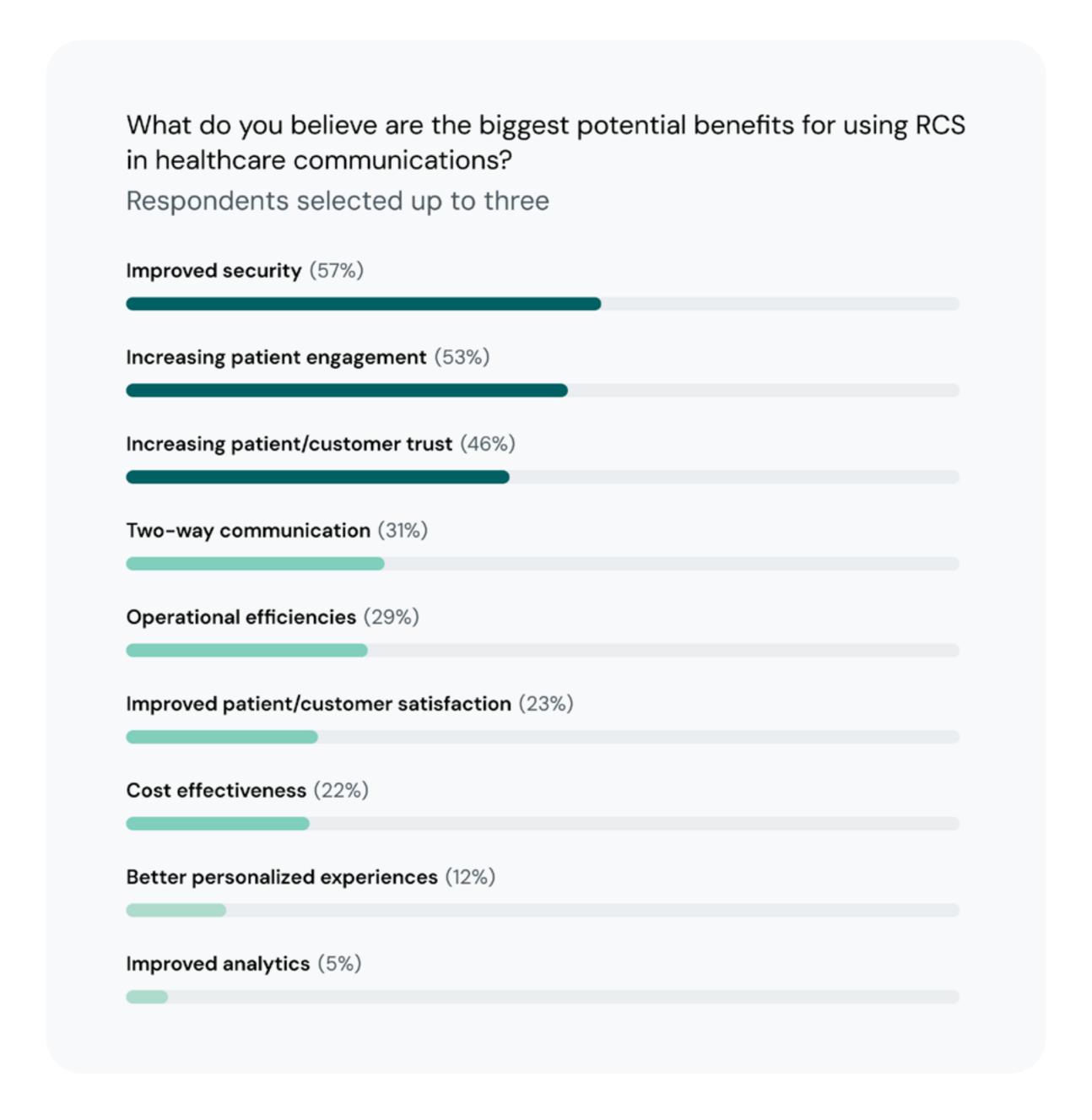
Another 36% view RCS as useful but perhaps not essential, and 7% are unsure of its value. Less than 1% believe RCS will not be useful to their communication strategy at all.



When asked to identify all of the potential benefits of RCS messaging in patient communications, the top advantages focused on safety and a more engaging experience.



Sinch's research shows 57% of healthcare survey respondents believe **improved security is a potential** benefit and 53% selected **increased patient engagement**. Another 46% believe RCS will help **increase trust** among patients receiving these messages.



Using AI in healthcare communications

Around 98% of healthcare business leaders who participated in our survey indicated they are already using artificial intelligence in their communication strategies.

Topping the list, 54% of respondents are using Al-powered chatbots to automate responses in patient communications. More than half are also using Al to help them accomplish tasks such as anticipating patient needs and analyzing data, which helps deliver a more relevant and personalized experience.



Just under 40% of respondents are using an AI solution such as a chatbot to provide any sort of health advice to patients. Even fewer are using AI for more mundane tasks such as automating the scheduling of healthcare appointments (32%).

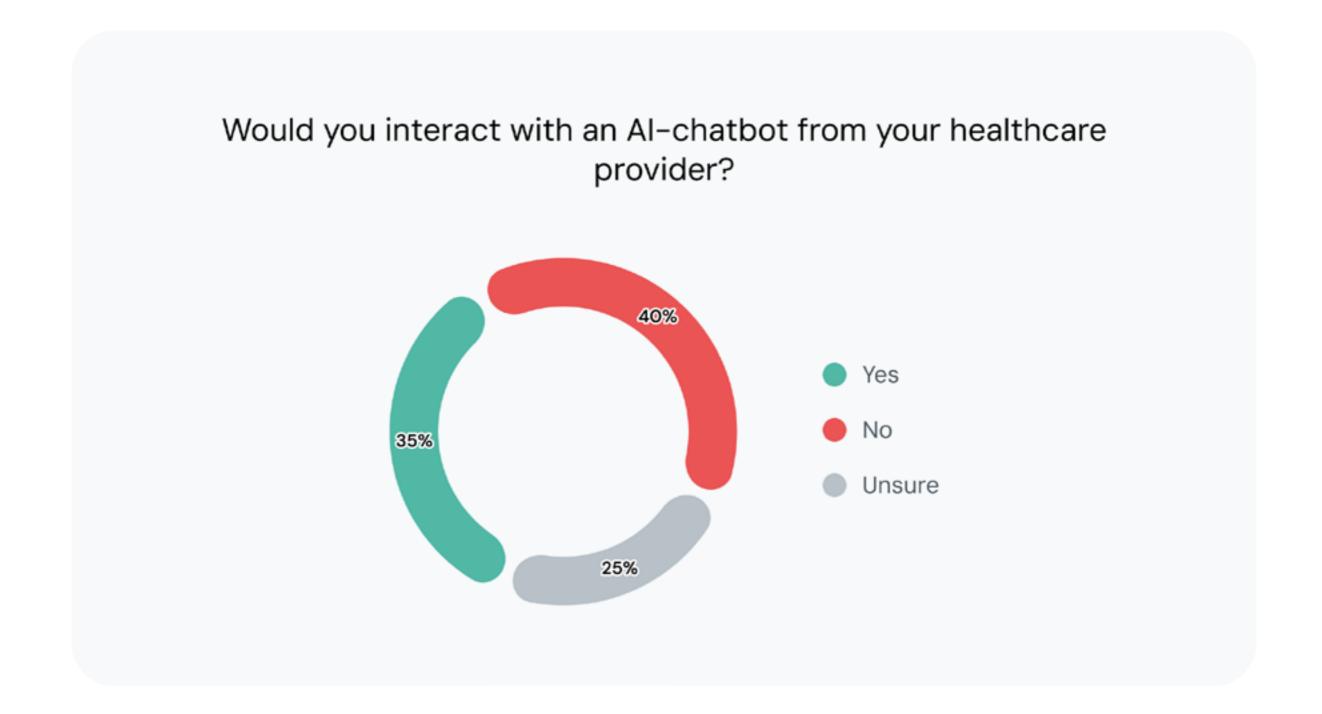
There are many ways that artificial intelligence could transform healthcare communications. However, your patients also need to be ready and willing to interact with Al-powered solutions.



Patient views on AI in healthcare communications

What's the level of comfort that consumers have with Al interactions that concern their healthcare experience? Sinch's research suggests that 35% of respondents would be willing to interact with an Al chatbot built by their healthcare provider.

Another 25% are unsure about the idea while 40% say they wouldn't be comfortable using AI in this way.





It's worth noting that the age of the patient may impact their attitudes toward AI interactions. Our research found more than half of Gen Z and millennial respondents are willing to use AI chatbots in healthcare (answering "Yes"), but that percentage decreases among those of older generations.

53%

of Gen Z respondents would use an Al chatbot from a healthcare company.

34%

of Gen X respondents would use an Al chatbot from a healthcare company.

52%

of millennial respondents would use an Al chatbot from a healthcare company.

15%

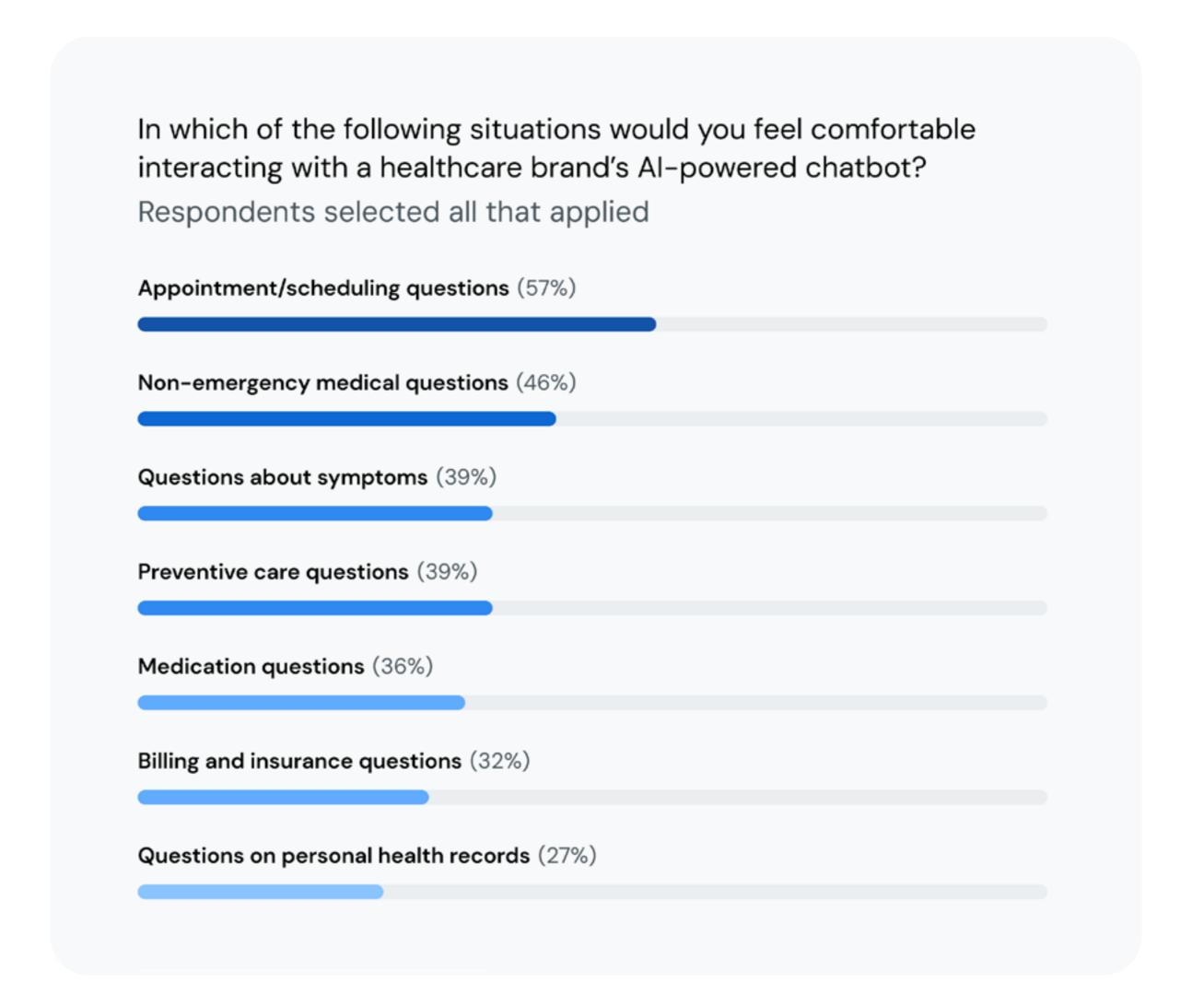
of baby boomer respondents would use an Al chatbot from a healthcare company.



Among those who feel comfortable or are unsure about interacting with Al, **57% would use a chatbot to help them set or reschedule healthcare appointments**. That could be a missed opportunity. We've already noted that less than a third of healthcare professionals (32%) say they are using Al in this way.

People who are comfortable using Al for healthcare purposes also indicated they'd use a chatbot for non-emergency medical questions (46%), questions about symptoms they are having (39%), preventive care questions (39%), and about their medication (36%).

This shows that, as the public perception around AI evolves, patients may be more likely to use chatbots for a variety of healthcare purposes, especially when it can deliver reliable answers.





As Sinch CEO Laurinda Pang states, Al is poised to revolutionize the way businesses support customers (or patients). That's why so many healthcare organizations are investing in Al solutions now.

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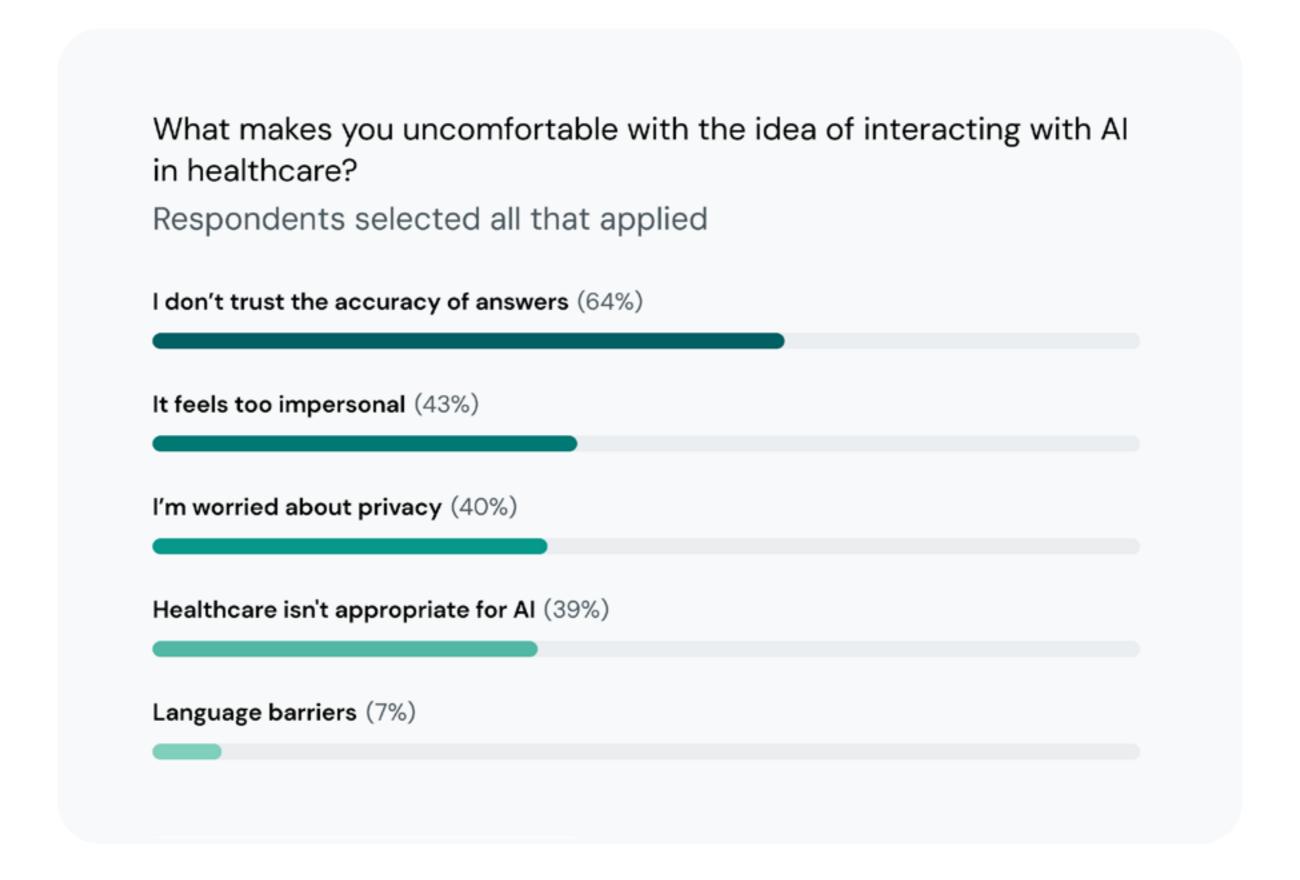
"Generative AI in communications enables companies to leverage their insights and information to instantaneously answer customers. I think compared to where we are today, in terms of customer care and customer service use cases, we're going to start to see AI handle 10 times the volume that it's already handling today."



Laurinda Pang CEO, Sinch

Concerns about AI in healthcare communications

Of course, there are still plenty of people who do not feel comfortable using Al. We asked respondents who wouldn't use an Al chatbot from their healthcare provider what their main concerns were. **64% said they didn't trust the accuracy of the answers**.

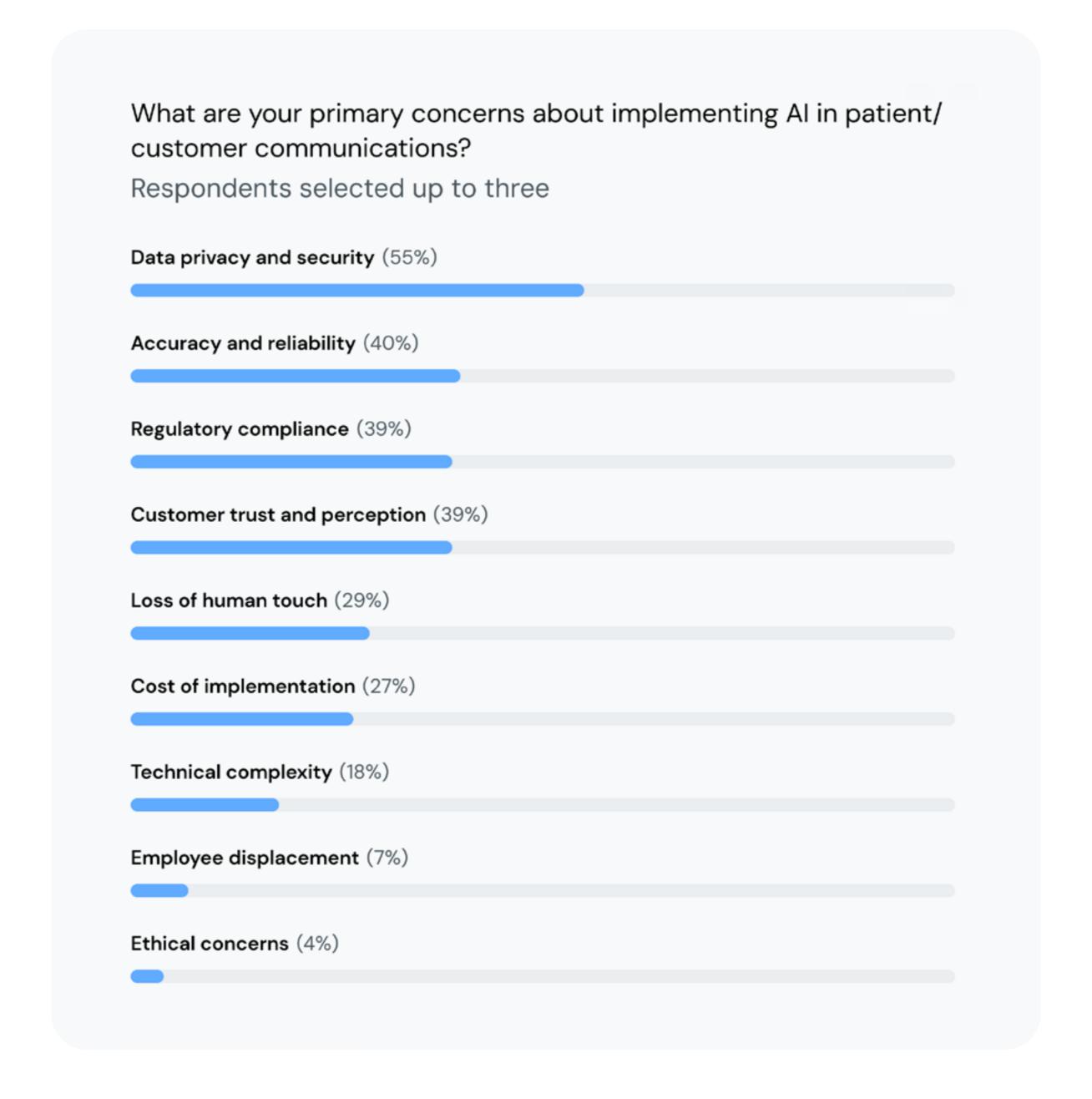


Additionally, around 40% had privacy concerns connected to using a healthcare chatbot. 43% of these respondents feel AI is too impersonal and 39% don't think healthcare is an appropriate use for AI in communications.

Healthcare business leaders share some of the same reservations as consumers. Like patients, 40% are concerned with Al's accuracy while 39% are worried about how people will perceive the use of Al in healthcare.

But another area may be even more of a concern for Al in healthcare. **More than half (55%) of healthcare industry respondents are worried about data privacy and security** while 39% are concerned about following regulations when using artificial intelligence.





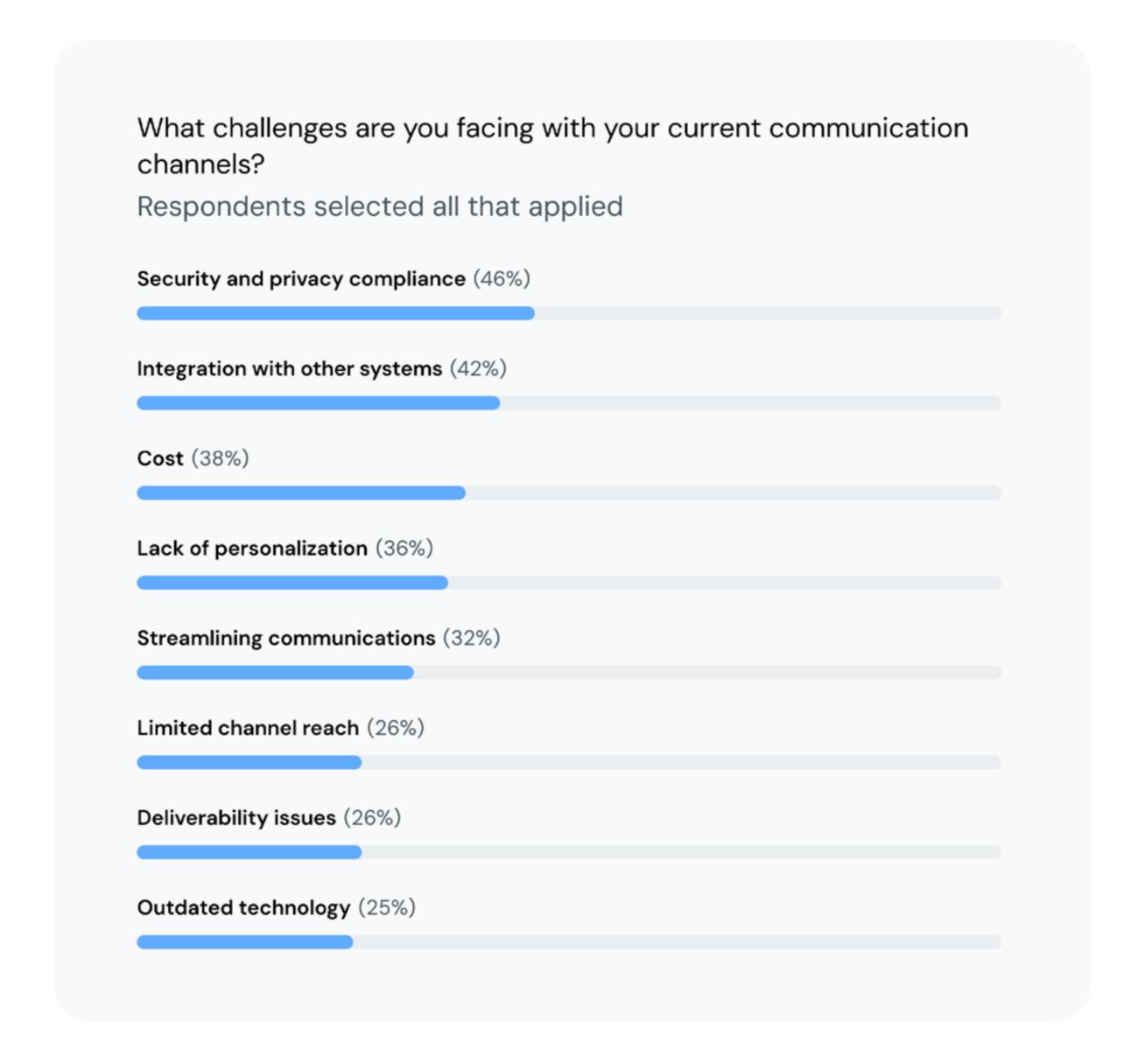
Healthcare organizations have to comply with regulations <u>such as the GDPR</u> in Europe, California's CCPA, and HIPAA in the United States, making the situation complex and serious.

In fact, more than 80% of healthcare survey respondents told us they are very or somewhat concerned about these laws when choosing the right channels for patient communications. As our next section reiterates, security and compliance are also among the biggest challenges.



Healthcare communication challenges

Security and compliance (46%) topped the list when we asked respondents to select all options that applied to their overall challenges with customer communication. This reinforces the concerns around privacy and regulatory compliance.



Each of the challenges we presented in the survey was chosen by at least 25% of healthcare respondents. This suggests that organizations face a wide array of issues as they look to improve patient communications. Challenges could include everything from associated costs (38%) to poor deliverability of messages on key channels (26%).

After security and privacy compliance, the next most commonly chosen healthcare communication challenge involved integration with other systems (42%).



There are actually three ways communications may be integrated:

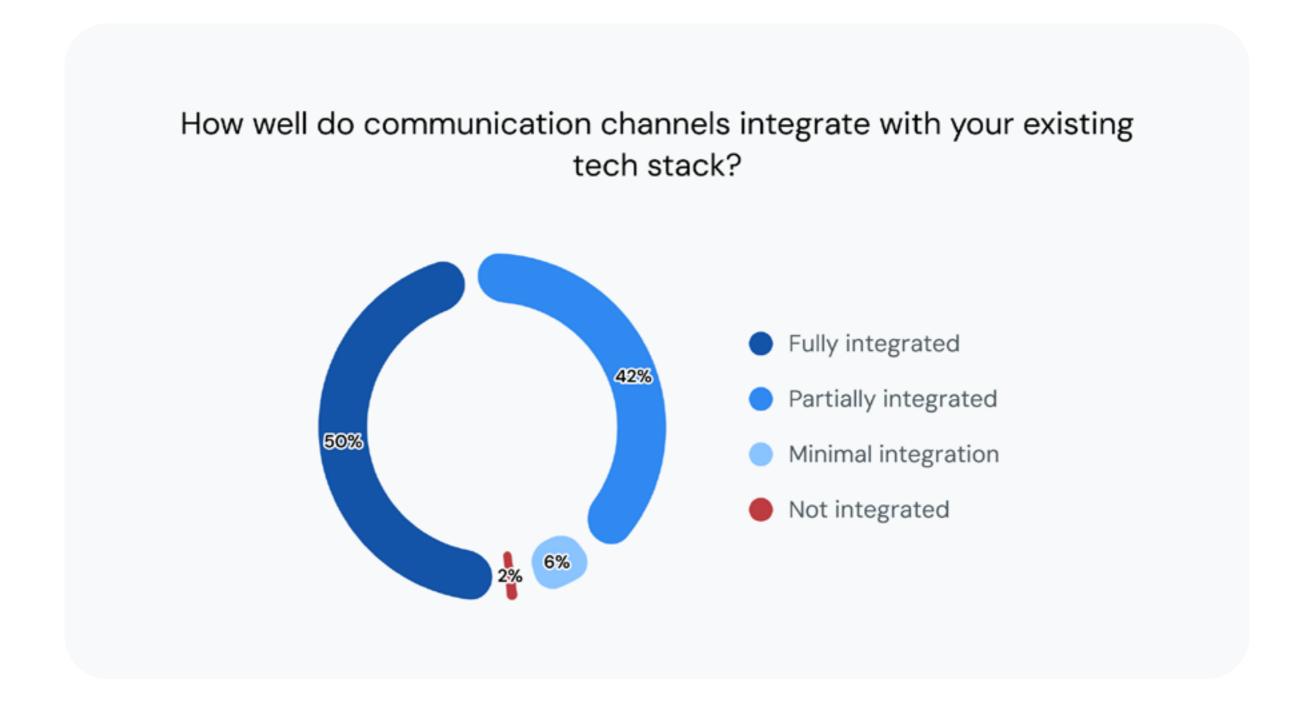
- 1. Integrating communications with the tech stack.
- 2. Connecting different communication channels.
- 3. Integrating communications channels with a customer-facing app or client portal.

Let's take a closer look at the state of integration in these three areas.

Connecting healthcare comms with the tech stack

Healthcare companies may need to connect patient communications to other technology, including patient relationship management (PRM) software as well as electronic health/medical record (EHR/EMR) systems and patient billing programs.

When asked how well communication channels integrate with these systems, 50% of healthcare respondents said they were fully integrated and 42% said they were partially integrated. A combined 8% said patient communications and their tech stacks were minimally integrated or not at all.



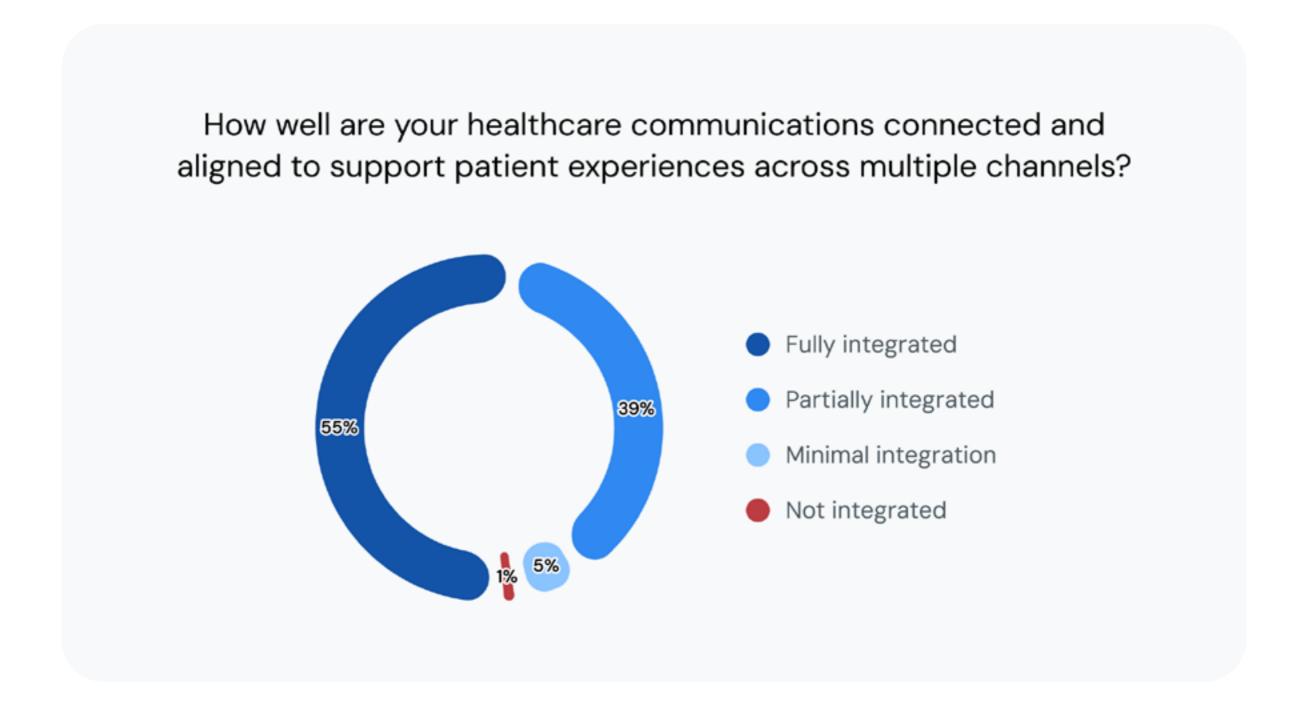
Even though half of healthcare companies may have fully integrated technology and communications, that still leaves another half that has room for improvement. As you'll see later in this chapter, achieving full integration is a priority for many healthcare organizations.



Connecting patient communication channels

The channels you use to communicate with patients also work more effectively when they are connected to each other. This supports the overall patient experience because it improves consistency and reduces the need to repeat information when having conversations about care.

Healthcare respondents are a bit more connected in this situation compared to their tech stack integration. 55% say the communication channels they use are aligned and fully integrated to support a multichannel experience. 39% claim to be partially integrated while 6% have minimal channel integration or none at all.



Connecting communications can have big benefits. Siloed communication systems across departments are expensive, error–prone, and frustrating for both patients and staff. Unifying communication channels cuts duplication, reduces manual follow–up, and frees up healthcare teams to focus on delivering better care. This is where a **communication platform as a service (CPaaS)** solution can help.

For example, <u>Sinch's Contact Pro</u> delivers multichannel support experience across email, SMS, web chats, the voice channel, and OTT messaging applications like WhatsApp and Messenger.

Integrating communications with healthcare applications

One of the most important ways to integrate communications is with the applications and platforms patients use to interact with their healthcare providers. This includes health-related mobile apps and patient portals.



Even when these secure platforms have their own inboxes for healthcare messages, they still need to integrate with other channels for purposes such as one-time passwords (OTPs), multi-factor authentication (MFA) and many other notifications.

Of course, creating this kind of connection isn't always easy. When we asked healthcare business leaders to choose the *single biggest challenge* with this type of integration, security and compliance once again topped the list.



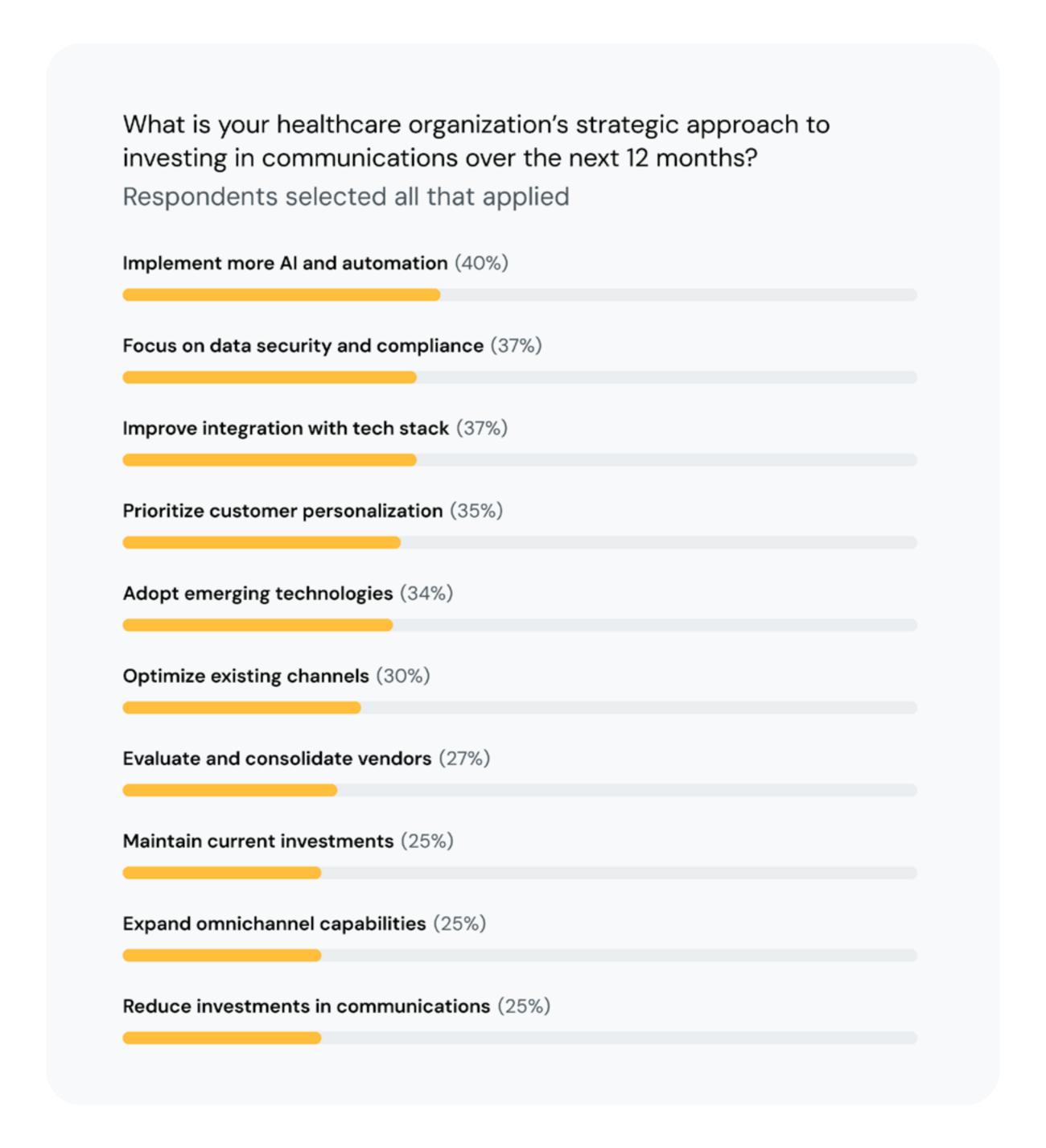
However, while 1 out of 5 respondents feel security is the biggest challenge, the results were well distributed across the other potential problems. Whether it's the 15% who cited cost of implementation, the 12% who have issues with a lack of expertise and resources, or the 11% struggling to meet patient expectations – it's clear there are plenty of challenges to address. The right technology partner can help you build the right solution.



Investing in healthcare communications

Where is healthcare communication heading in 2025? Implementation of AI (40%), a focus on security and compliance (37%), and improving the ways communication integrates with the tech stack (37%) are the top three ways healthcare companies plan to invest in communication this year.

More than a third also plan to prioritize personalization and adopt emerging technologies, including chatbots, RCS for Business, and other messaging apps.



Despite the clear link between communication quality and patient experiences, our research found health-care organizations are more cautious than other industries when it comes to investing in communication.



While 25% of healthcare respondents plan to reduce investments in communications, the industry may be an anomaly. Our separate surveys in retail, finance, and technology found less than 3% planned to cut back on communication investments in 2025. In healthcare, financial pressures, system complexity, and a historical underestimation of communication's strategic value may be contributing factors.

Tackle challenges and seize opportunities with Sinch

Healthcare organizations face no shortage of communication challenges. Thankfully, there are excellent remedies that can turn many of those challenges into opportunities.

That's where Sinch comes in. As a trusted partner to more than 150,000 businesses worldwide, Sinch helps healthcare organizations modernize patient communications without compromising security, privacy, or compliance.

Communication solutions like our Messaging APIs, reliable email sending from Sinch Mailgun, and Chatlayer for Al-powered conversations enable real-time, multichannel engagement across SMS, email, RCS, WhatsApp, and more. Get it all with seamless integration into existing healthcare systems, workflows, and patient-facing applications.



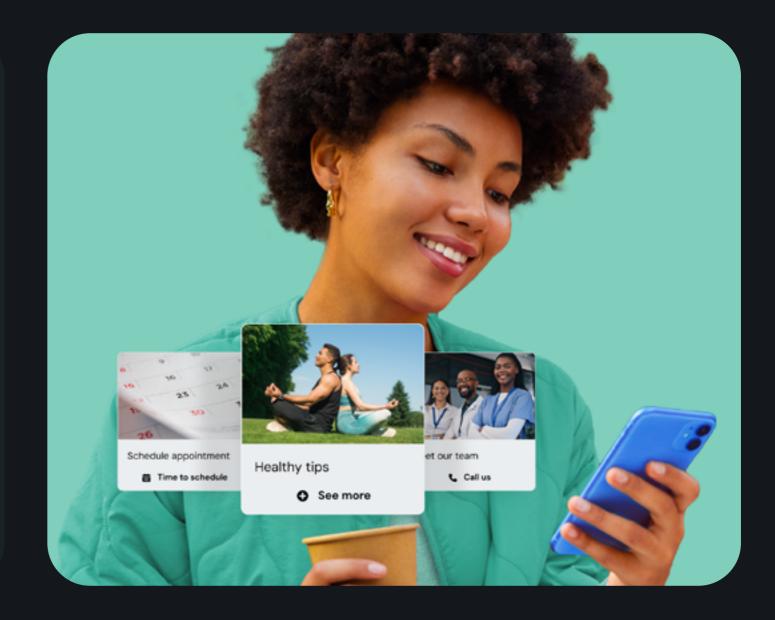
For teams focused on compliance and risk reduction, Sinch offers built-in safeguards like data residency options, message encryption, and enterprise-grade delivery controls. Whether you're looking to reduce operational overhead, launch smarter campaigns, or build trust with every message, Sinch gives you the tools to make it happen.

Discover Sinch for Healthcare





Keeping patients engaged



Sinch surveyed just over 2,800 people around the world to find out how healthcare organizations can keep their patients engaged, informed, safe, and happy. These four pillars support communication throughout the patient experience.

The engaged pillar of communication is closely connected to marketing messages. In healthcare, however, engagement goes far beyond promotions and grabbing attention. These messages may also encourage healthier decisions, foster trust, and help your organization deliver personalized care.

Patients expect more than generic outreach. They want communications that reflect their unique health journeys in a way that feels human and relevant.

Whether it's a campaign to encourage annual physicals, a message introducing a new telehealth option, or content that guides patients toward proper preventive care, engaged communication bridges the gap between healthcare providers and the people they serve. It's about making every interaction meaningful and timely, whether through email, SMS, or messages inside a patient portal.

In this chapter, we'll explore what people really want in personalized healthcare communications, highlight strategies that are making a difference, and show how emerging communication channels elevate your outreach strategy.



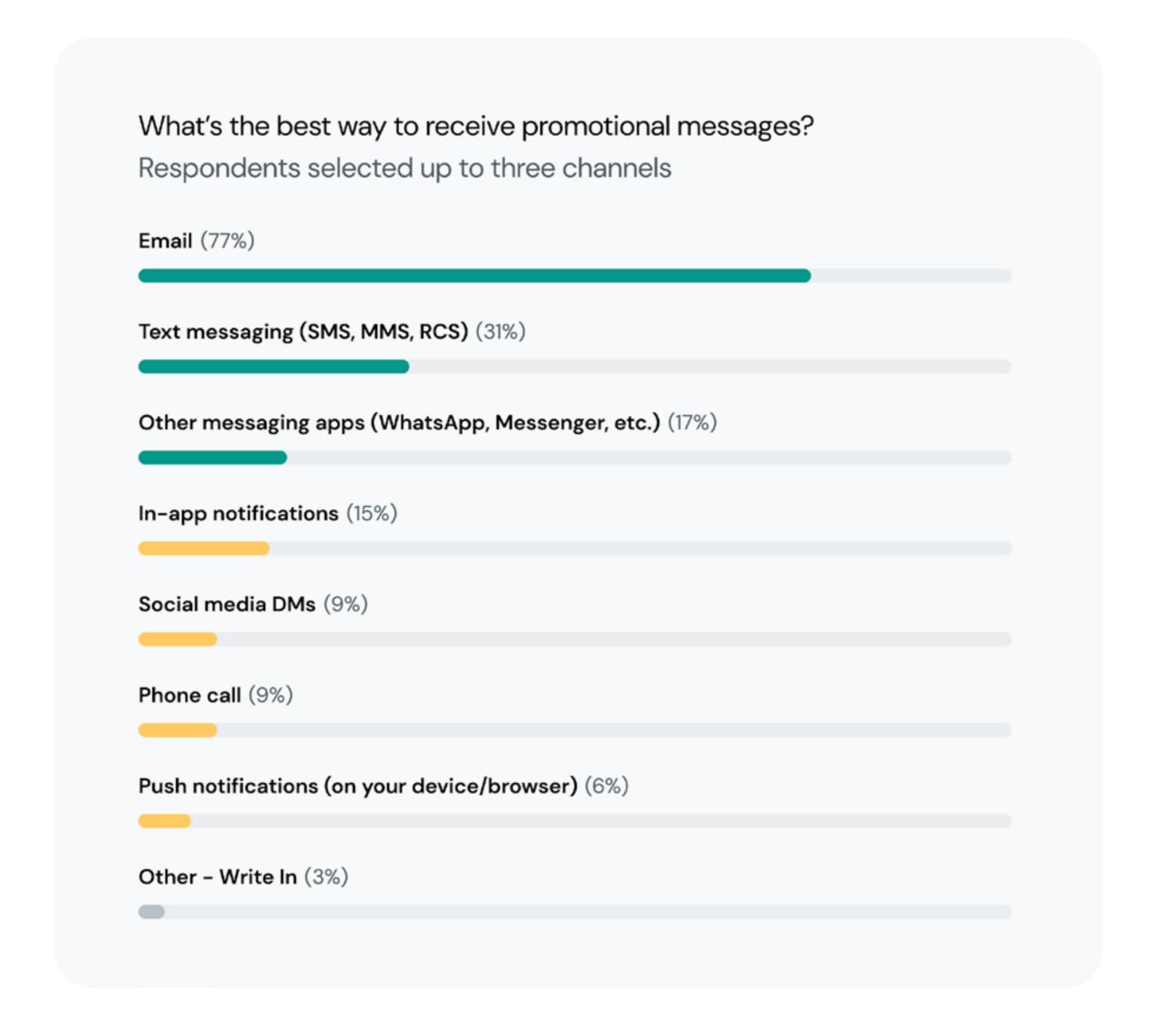




Patient preferences for promotional communications

While healthcare companies may not promote products, services, and solutions in the same way as retailers and other businesses, your marketing communication strategy keeps people coming back to you for care. That's especially important when your patients have other options.

Sinch's consumer research found email is by far the most preferred channel for any type of promotional message. When asked to select their top three channels, **77% chose email while** 31% picked text messaging, and 17% want promotions on other messaging apps like WhatsApp and Messenger.



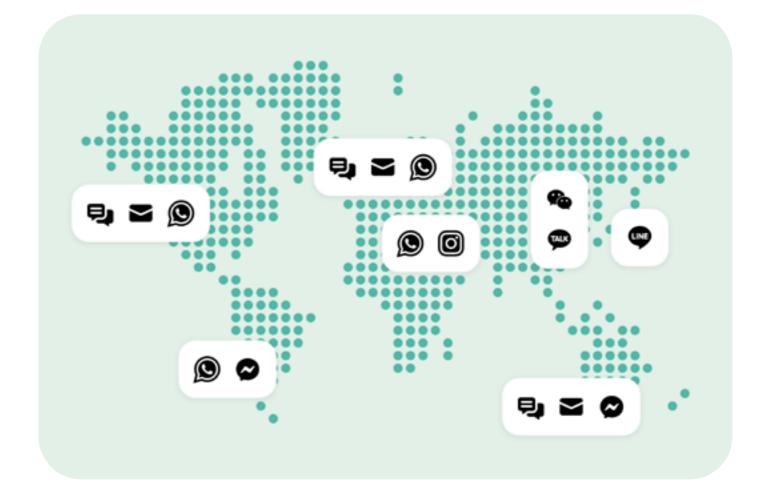
Email has evolved into a primary channel for receiving marketing messages. It's where most people expect to see promotions. SMS and other mobile messaging options are used more often for informational updates and transactional messages, but they're becoming more accepted as a place to engage with brands – including in healthcare.



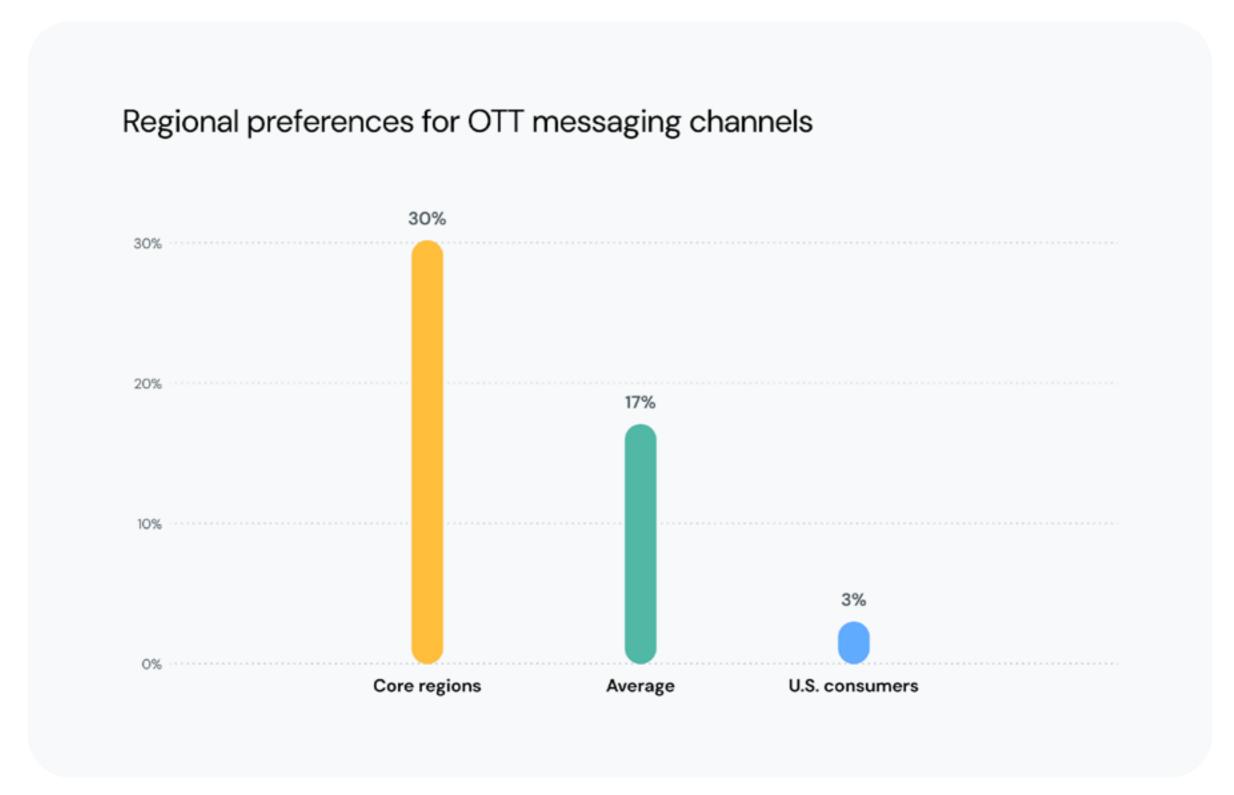
Global and generational preferences

Other messaging apps, including WhatsApp and Messenger tend to be much more popular in certain regions. We filtered results to include only survey respondents from countries considered "core regions" for WhatsApp users:

- India
- Brazil
- U.K.
- Germany
- Mexico
- Singapore
- Spain



Then we compared their preferences to the average results and those of U.S. consumers. Nearly 30% of these respondents selected "Other messaging apps" as a preferred option for promotions. That compares to just over 3% of U.S. consumers in our survey. But keep in mind – WhatsApp usage in the United States is growing.



Note: In April, Meta paused the ability for U.S. businesses to send marketing messages through WhatsApp. However, WhatsApp is still available for user authentication and utility messages in the U.S. It can also be used as a channel to provide customer support.



The age of your ideal customers may also impact how they prefer to receive marketing messages. When we segment channel preferences by generation, there are some interesting distinctions:

41%

of Gen Z consumers want promotional text messages. 28%

of millennials and Gen Z want promotions on messaging apps like WhatsApp.

5.5%

of baby boomers want promotions over voice – the lowest of all generations. 14%

of Gen Z consumers want promotions over voice – the highest of all generations.

While 41% of the youngest consumers prefer promotions delivered via text, Gen Z is also the generation most likely to prefer promotions over the voice channel (14%). Only 5.5% of baby boomers chose that channel.

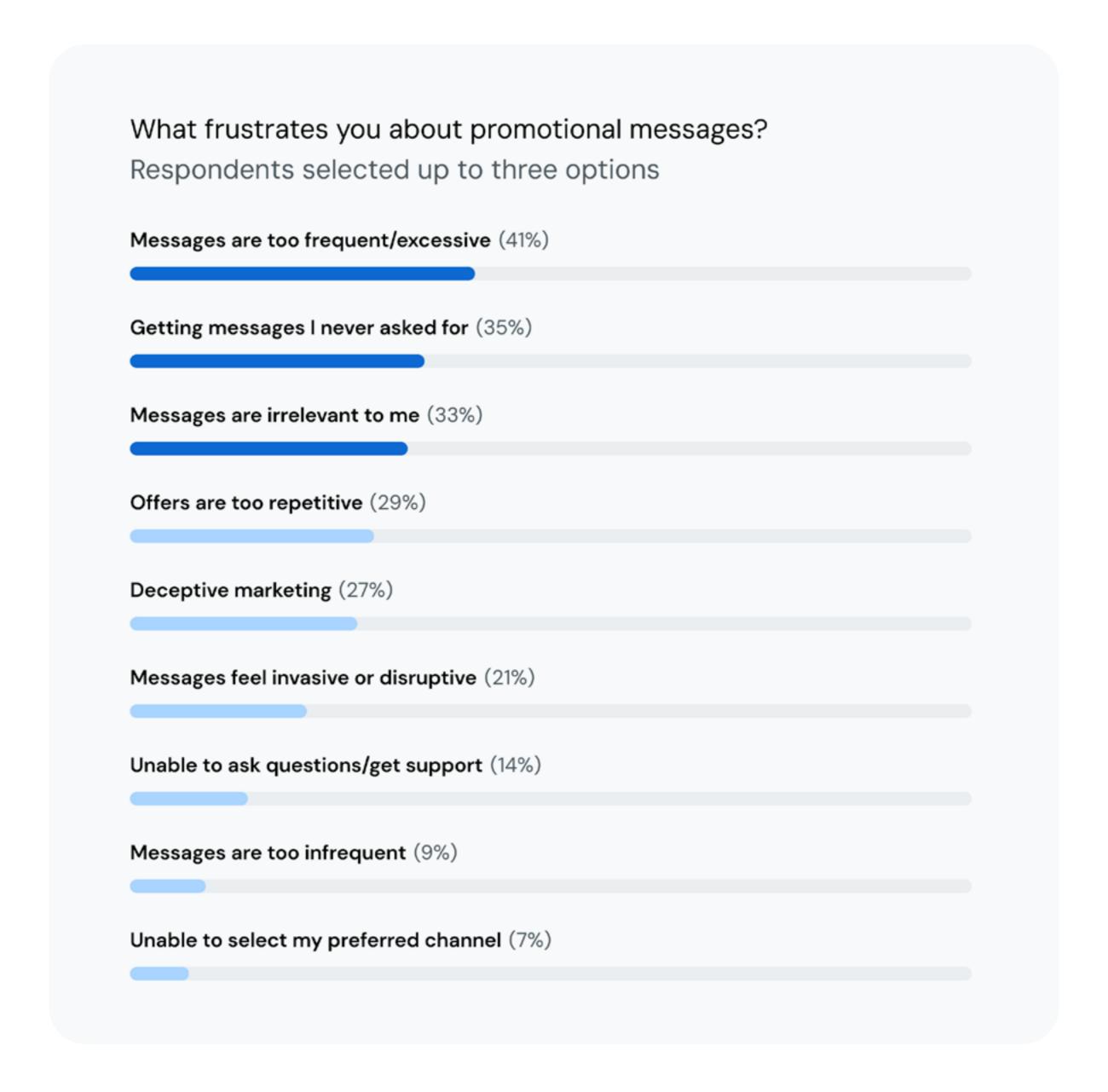
The truth is, determining the "best communication channel" is much less about averages than it is the patient's personal preferences.

Promotional messaging pain points

While your patients may have a small number of healthcare organizations sending them messages, competition for their attention goes beyond your industry. Whether it's email, SMS, or any other channel – inboxes are cluttered with promotional campaigns.

We've all experienced this. So, it should come as no surprise that Sinch's research found that 41% of consumers get frustrated with frequent and excessive marketing campaigns, making it the top issue with promotional messaging.

Yet, it's more than the frequency of these messages that are considered pain points. Getting messages that they never asked for (35%) and irrelevant messages (33%) may also be a frustration for your patients.



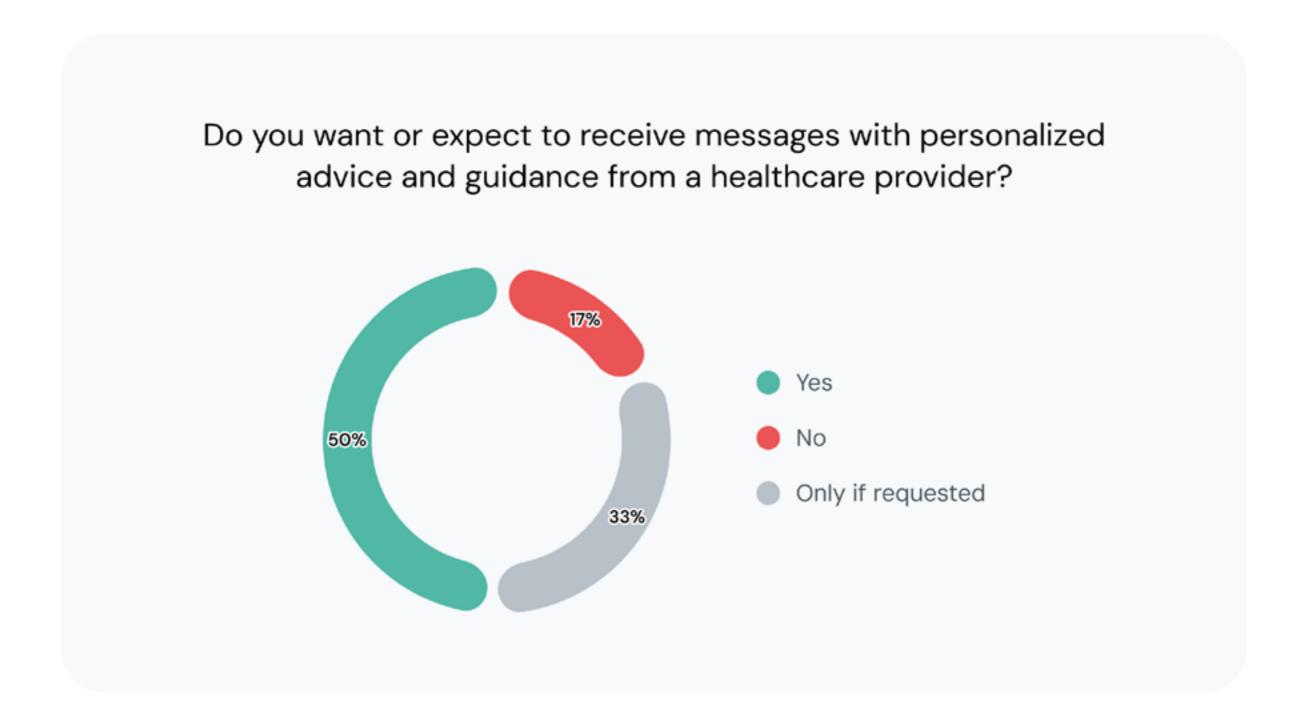
The main takeaway from these findings is very straightforward: **Don't send healthcare marketing messages that annoy your patients**. The best ways to do that are by giving patients the power to choose how you communicate with them while delivering relevant, personalized healthcare campaigns.



Healthcare communication personalization

While healthcare providers obviously need to keep patient privacy top of mind, personalized messages will certainly enhance the experience.

Sinch's study found that a combined 83% of consumers want or expect to receive messages with personalized advice and guidance from a healthcare brand. That includes 50% who answered "Yes" and another 33% who want personalized communications if requested.



There are very few aspects of an individual's life that are more personal than their health and wellbeing. That's what makes healthcare experiences a perfect opportunity for engaging communications that offer helpful advice while keeping protected health information (PHI) safe and secure.

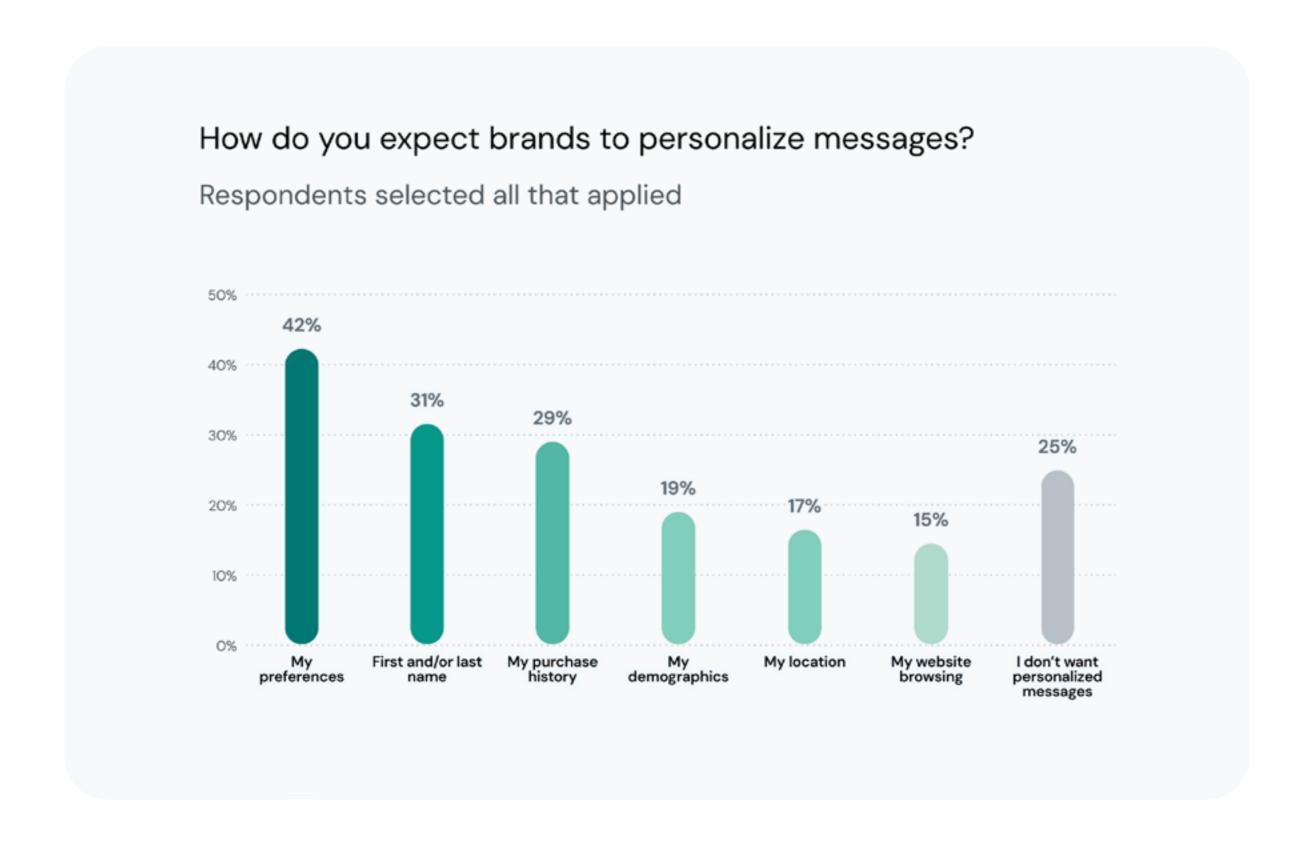
For truly personal healthcare communications that deliver meaningful messages, your strategy needs to go beyond inserting the patient's name. Personalized healthcare campaigns can use demographic information, general health goals, educational content, and more to improve relevancy without compromising privacy.



Personalization expectations

When Sinch asked consumers how they expect brands to personalize messages, 42% want those communications personalized based on their preferences and 29% expect their purchase history will be used.

Of course, personalization in healthcare is different. Depending on the business in question, purchase histories and preferences may not apply.



While healthcare personalization doesn't use typical retail data like purchase history, providers can still deliver highly relevant communications by focusing on patient expectations, care history, and digital engagement. The key is balancing tailored messaging with privacy and regulatory compliance.



Here are a few examples:

- 1. Instead of personal preferences, use a patient's personal health goals to deliver relevant and engaging content.
- 2. Send engaging follow-ups to patients based on previous care. A patient who undergoes physical therapy could receive follow-up messages with exercise suggestions.
- 3. Instead of website browsing, personalize the patient portal experience with in-app messaging based on how they've used your private platform.

An ideal patient experience puts them in charge of defining how messaging gets personalized. It starts with being available on the communication channels they use most, and it continues with relevant campaigns based on their needs and expectations.



Challenges and opportunities for healthcare personalization

Our industry survey found that 36% of healthcare professionals cite a lack of personalization as a top challenge. With more than 80% of consumers expecting personalized healthcare communications, this is a challenge worth tackling.

Here are some additional findings on personalization and healthcare:

43%

of healthcare respondents are using or plan to use AI to help personalize patient experiences.

35%

of healthcare respondents plan to prioritize improving personalization as part of their communication strategy in the next year.

46%

of consumers who feel comfortable using AI in healthcare would ask a chatbot non-emergency medical questions.

12%

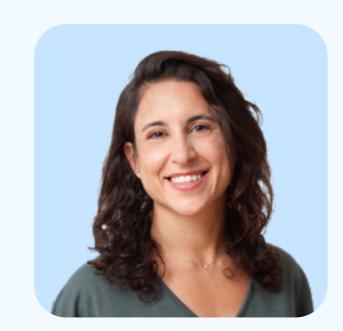
of healthcare respondents see improved personalization as a benefit of using RCS messaging.

In retail, a common use case for engaging with Al-powered solutions is a chatbot designed to be a personal shopping assistant. In healthcare, instead of a shopping assistant, **an Al-powered health coach could enhance the patient experience**. Imagine a digital coach that's available for questions, tips, and encouragement any day at any time.

Only 12% of healthcare industry respondents chose improved personalization as a benefit of adopting RCS for Business. While many healthcare organizations are already using RCS to deliver trustworthy, branded messages as a verified sender, that's only the beginning of what it can do.

Sinch

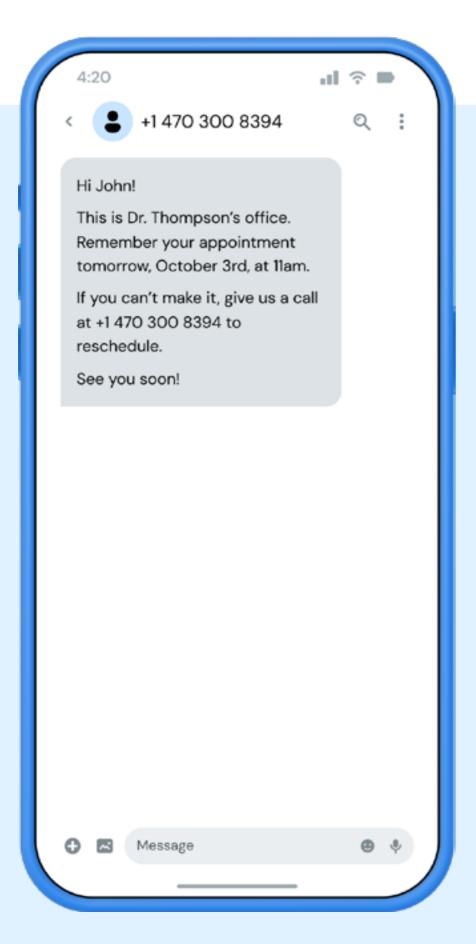
"You can use RCS for many experiences within the healthcare space. But you need to be very careful not to do anything with a patient's protected health data (PHI), because RCS is not HIPAA compliant. You can use it to share information, provide videos, or to offer incentives. There is a lot of things you can do that don't require HIPAA compliance. Many of those things are done with SMS today, but it's going to be even better on RCS."

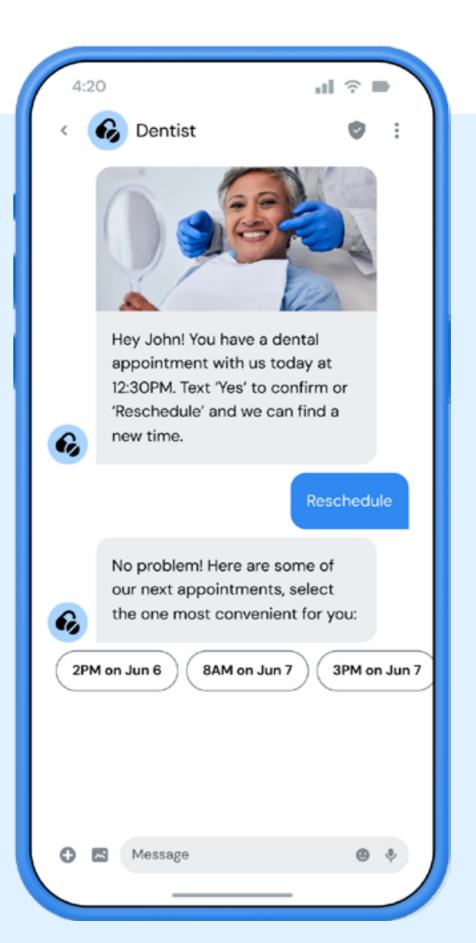


Miriam Liszewski

RCS Commercial Product Manager, Sinch

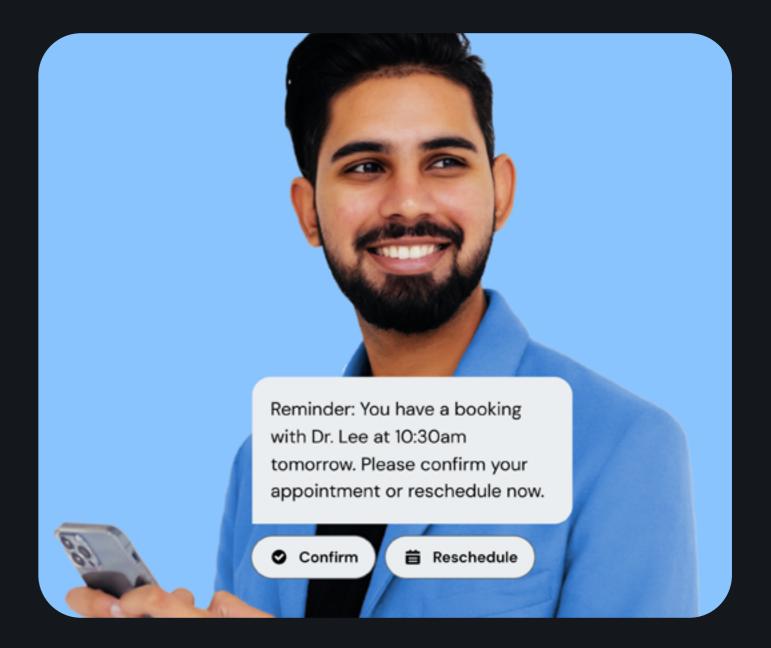
SMS







Keeping patients informed



Timely and accurate communications are essential to patient experiences. In fact, it's fair to say that many of these messages are part of the care itself. Whether it's a reminder about an upcoming appointment, a follow-up on lab results, or a notification about a prescription refill, keeping patients informed isn't just about logistics. These messages establish trust while helping healthcare organizations run smoothly.

When patients know what to expect and when to expect it, they're more likely to stay engaged in their care, show up for appointments, and follow treatment plans. For providers, that means fewer missed appointments, more efficient workflows, and better patient outcomes.

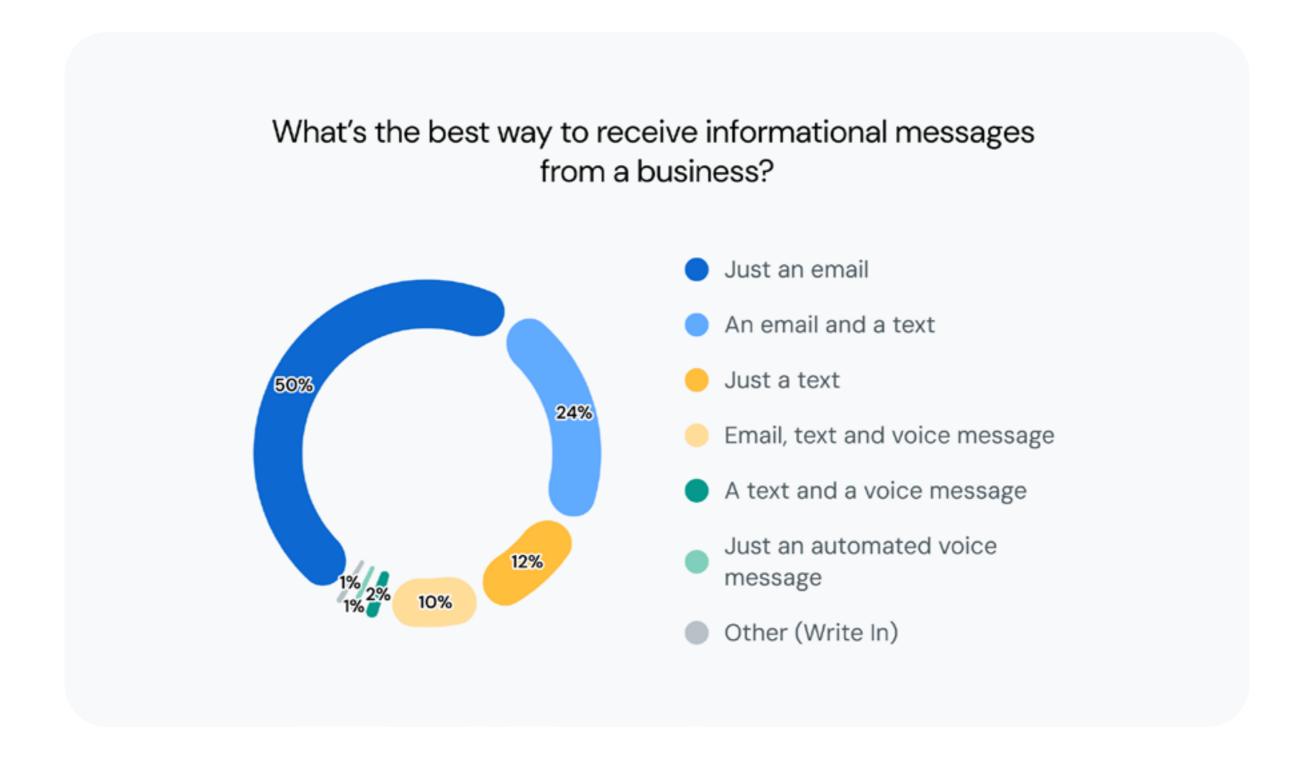
Your communications are like a connective tissue that ties every stage of the health-care experience together. An SMS update can notify a patient when their test results are ready, reducing anxiety and preventing unnecessary calls to the office. An automated email can ensure that patients remember to book their next checkup. And for critical times, such as during the COVID-19 crisis, keeping people informed may even save lives.

Patients who receive consistent, well-timed updates feel more in control of their health. This chapter explores how healthcare organizations can meet patient expectations and use messaging to bridge the gaps between appointments.

Channel preferences for staying informed

Email, SMS, and voice are the three channels most commonly used to keep consumers informed. When asked to identify what they believe to be the best way to receive informational messages from businesses, half of consumers chose email.

36% of survey respondents want to receive updates and notifications on more than one channel, including nearly a quarter who want informational messages via email and SMS.



In healthcare, the situation is unique. People are likely to view your organization as more than just another business. You provide essential care and handle sensitive personal health information (PHI). Let's take another look at the most-preferred channels for healthcare comms, which we covered in Chapter 1.



What consumers call the best channels for healthcare communication

30%

of respondents chose email as the best place to receive healthcare messages.

21%

of respondents say patient portals are the best place to receive healthcare messages.

16%

of respondents want to use the voice channel for healthcare communication.

11%

of respondents say a **mix of channels** is best for healthcare
communication.

While just 10% of people we surveyed believe SMS is the best channel for receiving healthcare messages, many informational patient updates do come through via SMS. That includes everything from appointment reminders/confirmations to prescription refill status updates.

Even though patient portals provide a secure platform for healthcare communication, people still need to know when to visit the portal. SMS and email are used to notify people when there's important information to review in patient portals.

That's why the 11% of consumers who understand a mix of channels is the best option are on to something. Healthcare communications need to be built around multichannel messaging experiences.

c sınch

"There is much more at stake in healthcare communications than with customer updates from many other industries. A multichannel strategy for keeping patients informed enables you to connect at the right moment in the way people prefer to receive messages. Beyond that, healthcare updates and notifications must be timely and reliable. Poor deliverability or delayed responses not only frustrate patients but can also put them at risk."



Kate Nowrouzi

VP of Deliverability & Product Strategy, Sinch



Informational communication pain points

Consumers in our survey identified information overload as the most common frustration with 48% citing communications that are too frequent or excessive.

Along the same lines, 31% find redundant informational messages frustrating. When automating patient updates, you need to understand expectations for the timing and frequency of those messages.



The inability to ask questions or get support is also a common pain point among consumers receiving informational messages.

In healthcare, answering questions isn't always easy. Many times, people need to speak to their actual provider. There are, however, situations where answers can be automated and even delivered conversationally through Al-powered communications.

Many of these situations are basic informational updates, including questions about appointments, prescription refills, or billing.



Automating healthcare communication with Al

Sinch's industry survey found that 98% of healthcare respondents use or plan to implement artificial intelligence as part of their communication strategies. Our research also shows that more than half plan to invest in Al solutions this year.

But it appears many organizations are missing out on some very simple ways to use Al chatbots that can add a lot of value.

When we asked consumers how they'd feel most comfortable interacting with a chatbot from a healthcare brand, 57% would use it for scheduling or asking questions about appointments. That option was selected more than any other. Yet only 32% of healthcare companies use AI for this purpose.

98%

of healthcare respondents will use Al as part of their communication strategy. 57%

of healthcare respondents plan to invest in Al chatbots in the next year.

57%

of consumers would feel comfortable using chatbots for appointment scheduling needs (the most selected option).

32%

of healthcare respondents are currently using AI to assist with appointment questions and scheduling.

The consumer survey found people are also likely to feel comfortable engaging with Al chatbots to inquire about non-emergency medical concerns (46%) or to ask questions about their symptoms (39%).

Those basic reminders, however, appear to play a significant role in patient experience. When we asked respondents to rank the importance of common healthcare messages, only test result notifications outranked appointment-related communications.

59%

say **test result notifications** are very important (32% call them somewhat important).

57%

say appointment confirmations are very important (36% call them somewhat important).

46%

say **appointment reminders** are very important (44% call them somewhat important).

36%

say appointment follow-up messages are very important (45% call them somewhat important).



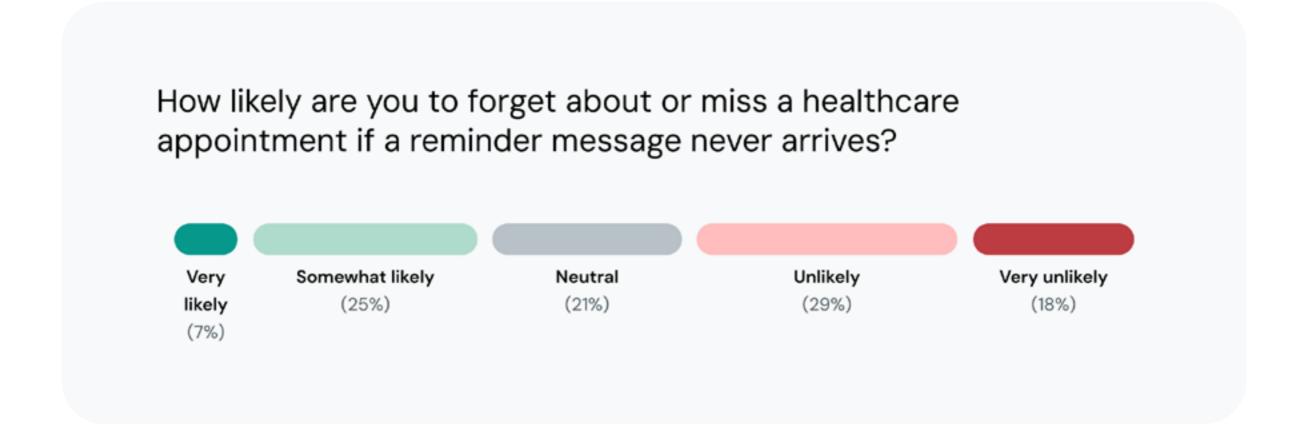
The impact of appointment reminders

When patients miss appointments, it can quickly have negative consequences. Many healthcare professionals already deal with packed schedules. Your organization needs to ensure patients show up for themselves and for others.

One missed appointment could have any or all the following consequences:

- Support staff spends extra time rescheduling.
- The patient's health declines because of the missed appointment.
- Other patients miss opportunities to receive care.
- Inefficient use of resources (such as medical imaging devices).
- The healthcare organization loses revenue.

Sinch's consumer survey found that 47% of people believe they'd be unlikely to miss an appointment if they never got a reminder. A combined 32% said they'd be very or somewhat likely to miss an appointment without a reminder message.



That may not sound like much. But imagine if nearly one-third of patients failed to show up for scheduled appointments. Even if it were only 1 out of 10 patients, that would still cause a lot of logistical and operational headaches while wasting time and resources.

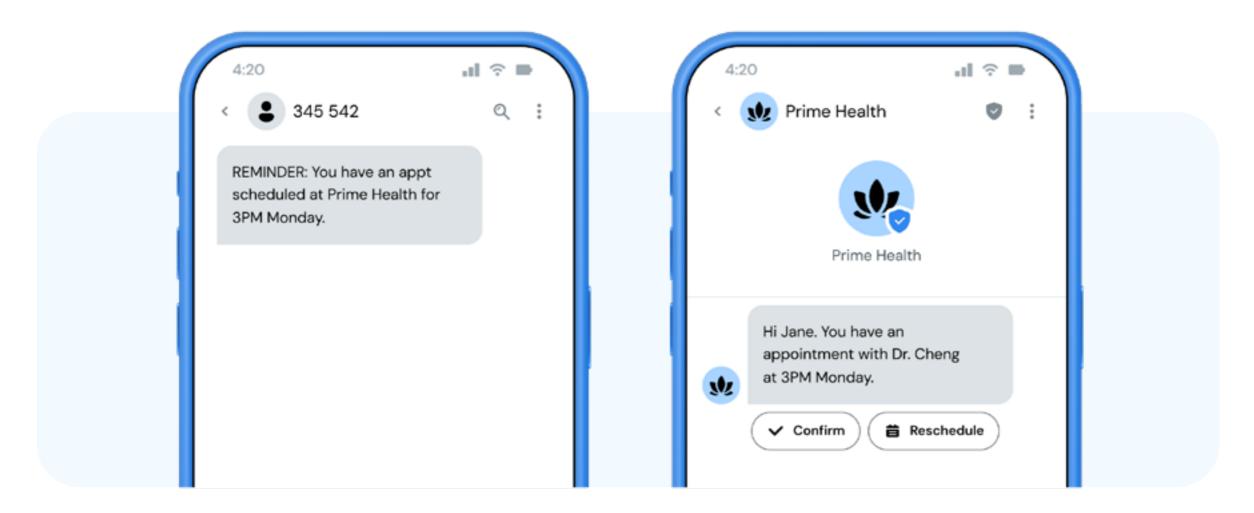
Sometimes the easiest ways to keep people informed can have the biggest impact.



Using RCS to keep patients informed

Healthcare companies can use RCS for Business features to provide engaging patient updates, including appointment reminders. When we asked consumers to select the healthcare messaging experience they liked best, most preferred RCS.

SMS vs RCS experiences



Basic SMS from an unfamiliar short code.

Branded RCS appointment reminder with buttons.

In Chapter 1, healthcare business leaders who were familiar with RCS messaging told us what they believe are the biggest benefits of using this emerging communication channel.

57%

believe RCS features can help improve communication security.

53%

believe RCS features will increase patient engagement with communications.

46%

believe RCS features can help increase patient trust in messaging.

31%

believe RCS features will help enhance **two-way communication** with patients.

The brand/sender name, logo, and checkmark, which verified senders receive when they qualify for an RCS agent, make messages from healthcare companies easier to trust. Buttons, such as those to confirm or reschedule appointments, enable an engaging form of two-way communications.

With RCS, patients can do all of this from the native messaging application on their smartphones.

Is important information reaching your customers?

While delivering messages in a timely manner is essential, what happens if your informational updates don't reach people at all? The worst possibility for those notifications is getting blocked or filtered as spam.

That's why retailers must prioritize deliverability on key channels like email and SMS.

Email deliverability

Since around 50% of consumers prefer email for informational messages, avoiding spam and achieving inbox placement should be a top concern. Separate **research from Sinch Mailgun** confirms that:

87%

of consumers would check their spam folder for a missing transactional email. *

33%

of consumers find it annoying or frustrating when emails they're expecting land in spam. *

10%

of consumers would lose trust in the brand or unsubscribe if messages kept going to spam. * 63%

of senders are not separating transactional and promotional email traffic (or are unsure). **

An effective way to improve your chances of reaching the inbox is to separate transactional and promotional email traffic on different subdomains or sending IP addresses. However, Mailgun's State of email deliverability report found 50% of senders aren't using this tactic. Another 13% are unsure if they separate email traffic for deliverability.

The reason separating promotional and transactional email traffic helps is simple. People are much more likely to report mass marketing messages as spam. That can hurt your reputation as an email sender and lead to transactional emails ending up in the junk folder.

However, if your informational updates come from a different domain, that domain's reputation is also different. This keeps reputations for transactional and promotional emails separate.



^{*} Email and the customer experience

^{**} State of email deliverability 2025

SMS deliverability

While email providers will filter messages into a spam folder, mobile carriers may block your SMS messages or flag them as spam if you're not careful.

SMS is often the fastest and most reliable way to deliver information to customers. But none of that matters if the message never reaches people.

Tips to improve SMS deliverability:

- Use a provider with direct carrier connections to ensure your messages travel through the most efficient and compliant routes
- Avoid link shorteners and spammy language that can trigger carrier filters.
- Maintain clean contact lists by regularly validating numbers and removing inactive ones.
- Follow carrier and regional compliance rules to avoid filtering or blocking.
- Monitor delivery reports to spot issues quickly and keep performance high.
- Avoid grey routes and suspiciously cheap SMS rates.

Deliverability isn't just a technical metric. It's a customer experience issue. Ensuring your SMS messages get through means customers stay informed, supported, and confident in your brand.



SUCCESS STORY

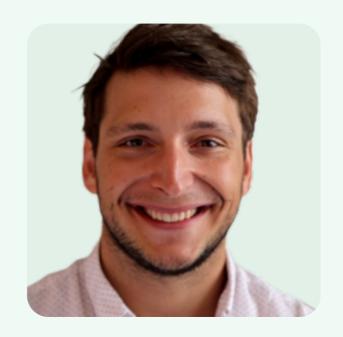
Staying compliant while keeping patients informed

Doctolib is a leading healthcare technology company based in France that (among other things) helps ensure more than 80-million patients receive appointment reminders. When text messaging volumes spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic, Doctolib needed a partner that could help them scale and maintain regulatory compliance.

With a reliable super-network and servers based in Europe to store sensitive data, Sinch turned out to be the perfect fit.

Doctolib

"Our main concern was data privacy, and our obligation was to have a GDPR-compliant provider that had all its servers located in Europe. This provider needed to be able to handle large messaging volumes, especially absorbing our spike of SMS. Sinch answered 100% of our must-have requirements."



Thomas Grobost

Product Manager, Doctolib

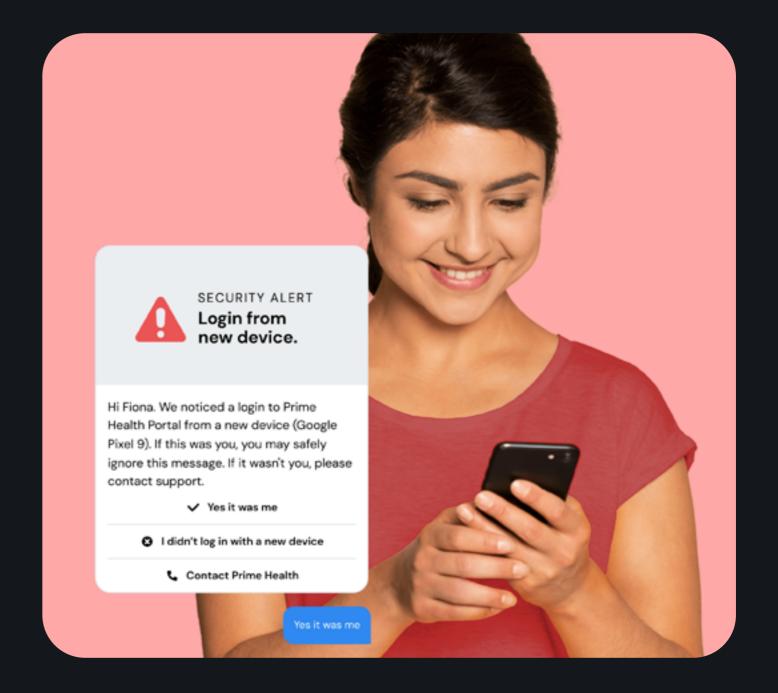


Get the rest of the story

Find out more about how Doctolib uses Sinch SMS to improve patient experiences when you check out the full customer story.



Keeping patients safe



When a patient checks in for an appointment at a healthcare facility, what's the first thing that happens? Usually, someone at the front desk asks a few questions to confirm who they are: date of birth, address, insurance card, etc. Patient identity verification is a critical process that avoids medical mix-ups, protects privacy, and prevents insurance fraud.

Digital communications in healthcare also need reliable verification methods. That includes one-time passwords (OTPs) and multi-factor authentication (MFA), which help control access to patient portals and sensitive health data.

For providers, these communications are a frontline defense against data breaches and identity theft, ensuring that only the intended recipient gains access to confidential information. For patients, the messages show their provider is committed to keeping their data secure and private. In high-risk scenarios, like password resets or payment method updates, user verification mitigates risk while reassuring the patient that everything is protected.

There are many reasons why security and privacy are top concerns for healthcare companies. The good news is that your communication strategy can be part of the solution that helps keep patients safe.





The importance of privacy, security, and compliance in healthcare

In the U.S., healthcare providers must comply with HIPAA regulations while GDPR protects people's privacy in the EU. Compliance with these laws is top of mind when making decisions around patient communications.

Sinch's survey found more than 80% of healthcare respondents are concerned about these laws when they're choosing the right communication channels. That includes 36% who said they are *very concerned*.

Here are some other findings illustrating how important security and privacy are in healthcare communications:

80%

of healthcare respondents are concerned about regulatory compliance when selecting communication channels.

46%

of healthcare respondents say security and privacy are among their top communication challenges.

55%

of healthcare respondents say data privacy and security are **primary concerns when implementing AI** in communication.

22%

of healthcare respondents say regulatory compliance is the biggest barrier to digital transformation in patient communication.

Beyond compliance, there's another reason why privacy and security are such a big deal. **Bad actors are looking for ways to deceive people with phishing scams that impersonate healthcare brands**. People tend to trust messages they assume are from their healthcare provider – but sometimes they aren't. Add a sense of urgency to a phishing attempt, and people are even more likely to fall victim.

By compromising patient accounts, attackers may gain access to broader healthcare systems, leading to more extensive data breaches or ransomware attacks. When a phishing attack exploiting a provider's brand results in unauthorized access to PHI, the provider could be found non-compliant with HIPAA or GDPR if they failed to implement reasonable and appropriate safeguards.

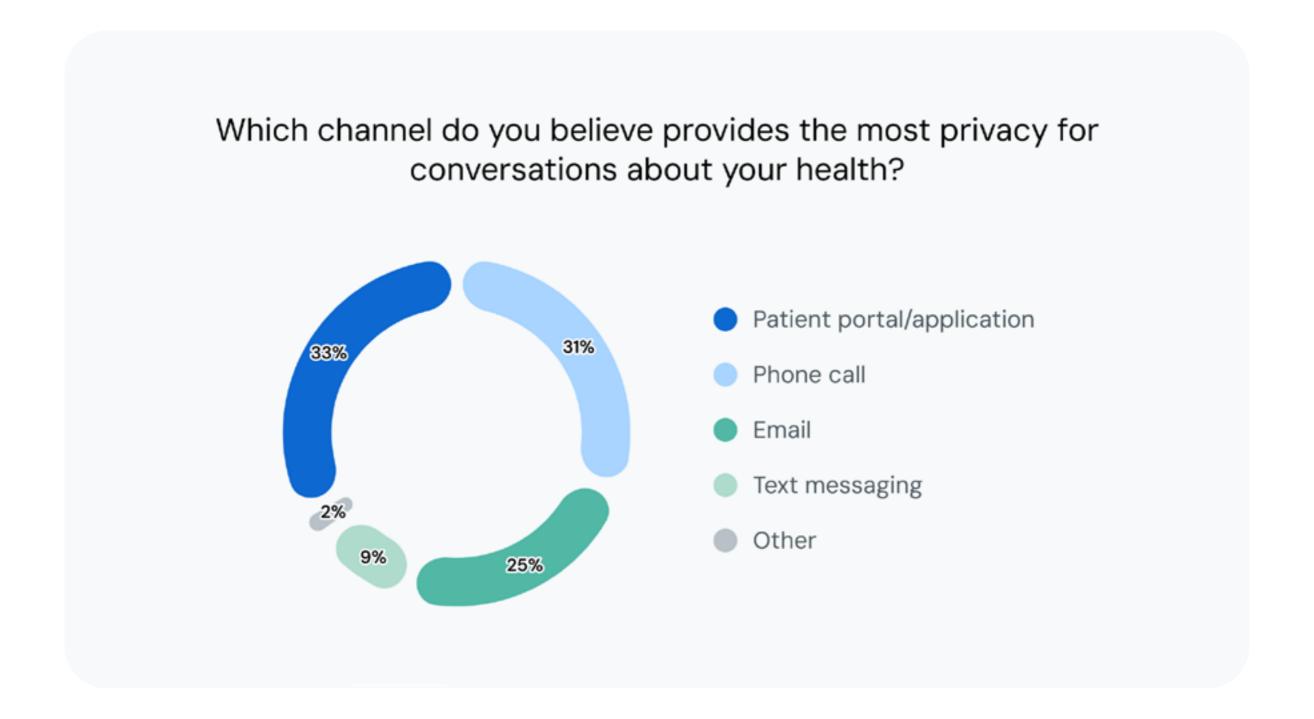
Your communications are among those safeguards. Messages that require additional steps for verification before providing account access make it much harder for bad actors to gain access.



Patient views on safe healthcare communications

Nearly half of the consumers in Sinch's research (49%) indicated they've felt concerned about their privacy when discussing health needs over common channels like email, text, and voice.

In this situation, a patient portal offers a sense of security for communicating sensitive matters. When asked about the best way to have secure healthcare conversations, one-third of consumers chose the patient portal as ideal for privacy, while 31% would prefer phone calls and 25% chose email.



Of course, it is often channels like email and SMS that notify patients when there's a new message for them in the patient portal. Plus, when it's time to log in to a patient portal, or you need to reset a password, other communication channels are needed to make that happen. Those user authentication messages are also designed to protect the patient portal and the sensitive data inside.



Flash calls for fast and efficient verification

Sinch pioneered a groundbreaking form of user authentication that requires nothing more than a missed phone call. It's known as a <u>flash call</u>, and it may provide your healthcare organization with an opportunity to improve efficiency and streamline verification.

A flash call lets your users verify their identity as the account owner without ever answering the phone. In some cases, flash calls may also be a more cost-effective solution than sending an SMS verification. **Lee Suker explains** how this patented Sinch innovation works.



"Flash Call® is an SMS OTP alternative. It works by sending a missed call to an end user, and instead of the one-time code being in the payload of a message or voice call, it's actually in the calling party of that missed call. The application that's authenticating you can process that incoming call, strip off the last six digits of the calling party number, and you've logged in."

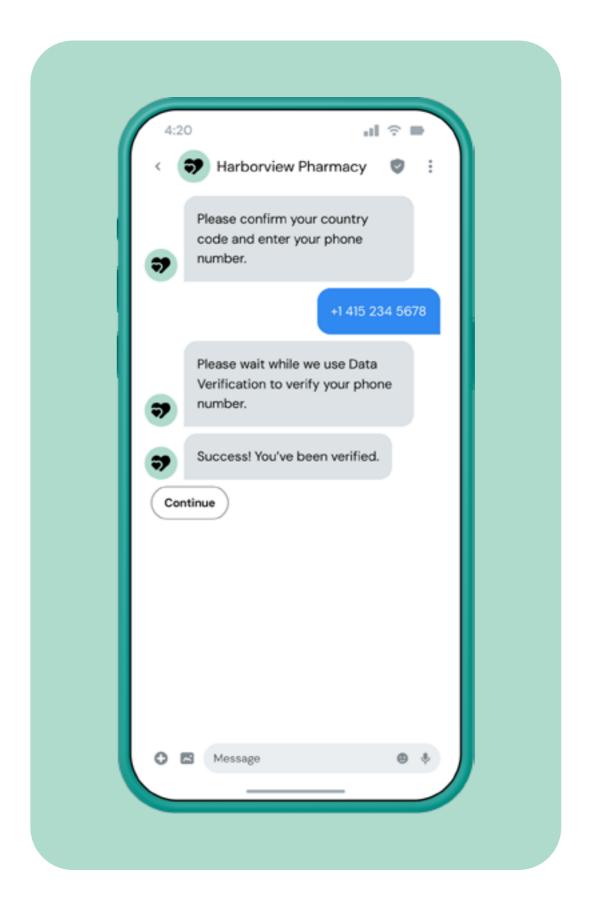


Lee Suker

Head of Authentication, Sinch

SMS prices have been on the rise. For larger companies, the cost of texting OTPs adds up quickly. Sinch Flash Call® helps control those costs. That's because the missed call doesn't carry any mobile terminating costs.

Lee Suker says companies can save as much as 50% using Sinch Flash Call over SMS. This option may be especially useful to the 25% of healthcare companies who are looking to reduce communication expenditures in the next year.





Is there a "safest" communication channel?

Many healthcare organizations spend time and money educating staff on the risks of phishing and how to spot it. Unfortunately, consumers don't always get the same education, which could make patients more likely to fall for scams.

When asked to choose the channel they thought would be *least likely* to be used for phishing attempts, nearly 35% of consumer respondents selected email.



Unfortunately, email is actually the most popular threat vector among bad actors with approximately **3.4** billion phishing emails sent daily. No channel is 100% safe.

Around 27% of consumers chose in-app notifications, such as those sent through a patient portal. That secure platform is certainly safer. However, in-app messages are only available once you're logged into the portal.

Just 4% of respondents selected RCS. But they may not realize the truth. This emerging form of messaging has significant safety benefits thanks to visual indicators that come only from **verified senders**.



How email authentication keeps patients safe

The most effective way to thwart phishing attempts via the email channel is with strong, properly configured email authentication protocols. They include:

- Sender Policy Framework (SPF)
- DomainKeys Identified Mail (DKIM)
- Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting and Conformance (DMARC)

These technical specifications are DNS records that help mailbox providers verify whether an email is coming from a legitimate sender/source or if they could be malicious.



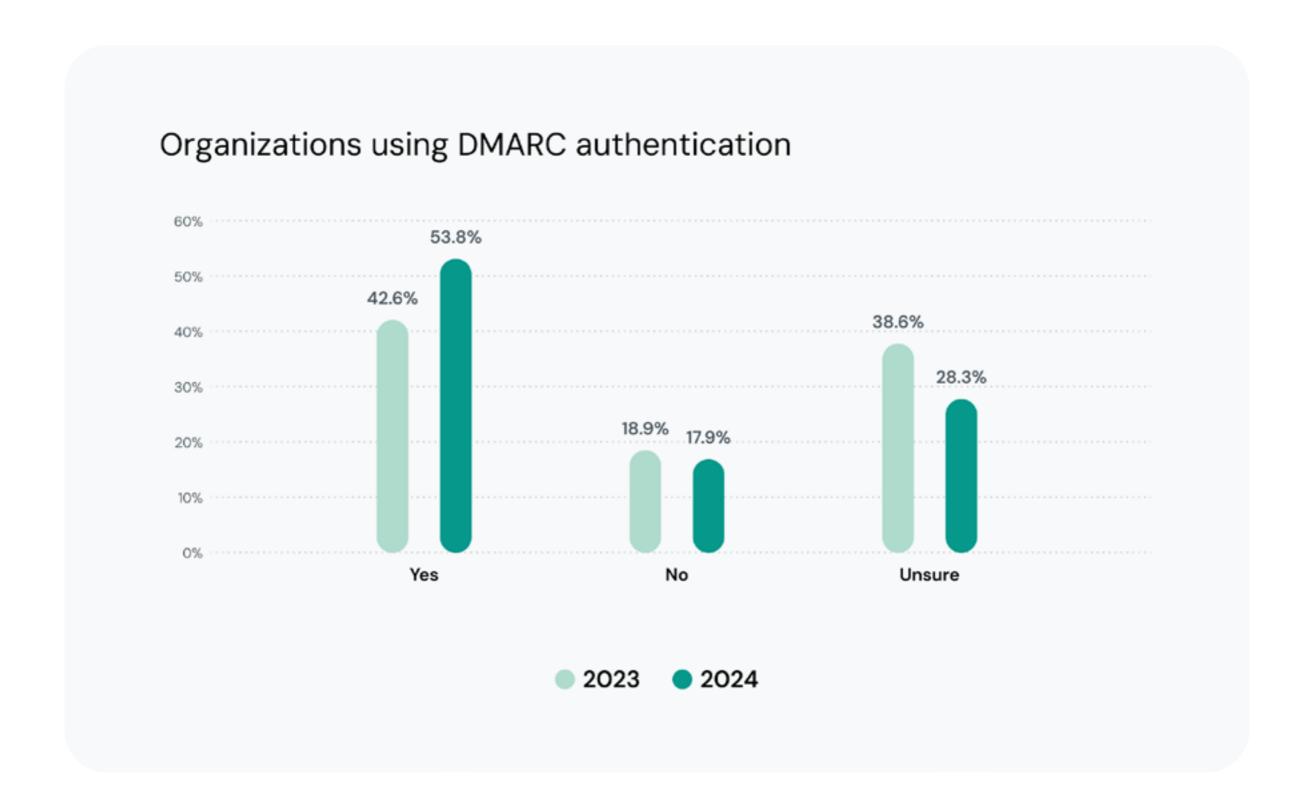
"SPF, DKIM, and DMARC all work in synchronization across the board simply because they cover different aspects of what you're trying to do with email authentication. But at the end of the day, it's a way for you as the sender to say, 'I own this domain, emails for this domain should be coming from these locations.' And then be able to sign that."



Jonathan Torres
TAM Manager, Sinch

DMARC ties your authentication protocols together and it is considered the best way to keep others from fraudulently using your domain to send email.

Sinch Mailgun's <u>State of email deliverability 2025</u> report found an 11% increase in DMARC adoption. However, 18% of those surveyed still aren't using DMARC, and another 28% are unsure.



Even among senders who are using DMARC, many have yet to implement a policy to either quarantine or reject emails that fail to pass authentication. **Weak email authentication leaves an opening for bad actors to infiltrate inboxes**.

Find out more about **email authentication best practices** from the team at Sinch Mailgun.

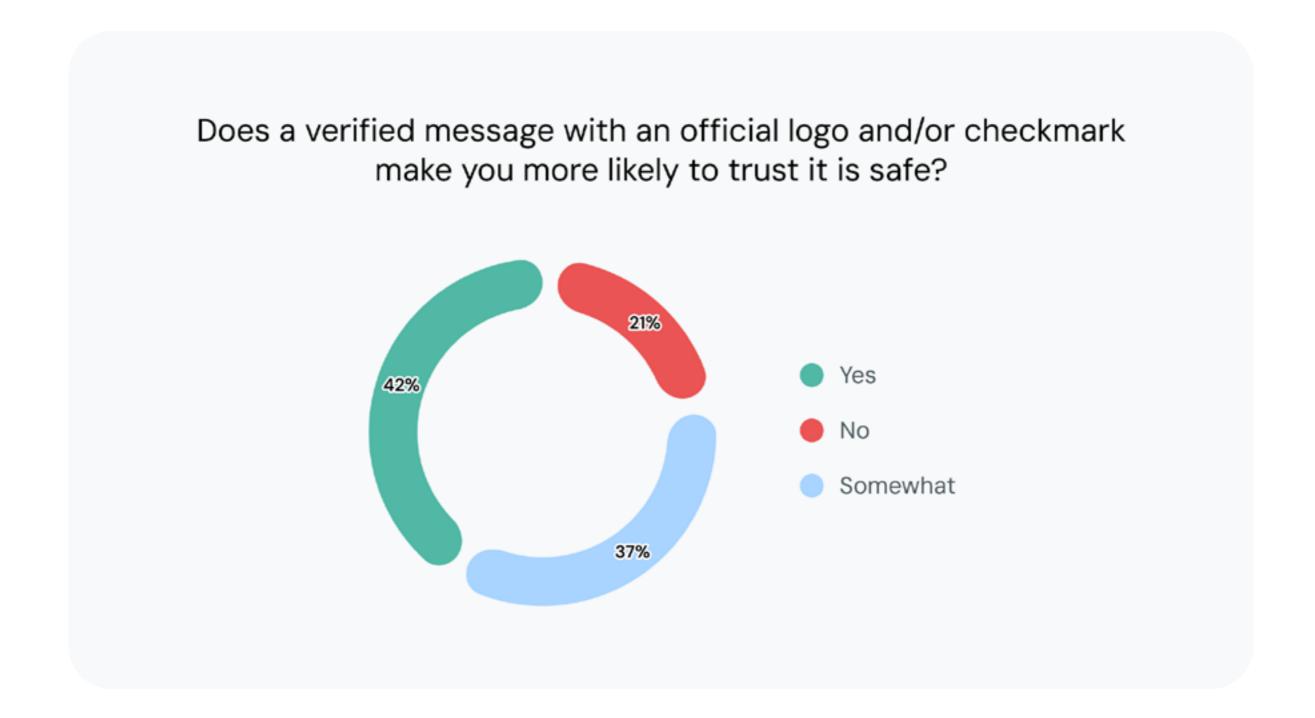


Deliver trustworthy mobile messages with RCS

RCS for Business messages include an **official logo and checkmark**. These visual indicators not only support branding, but they also serve as a sign that the message came from a verified sender. This involves a third-party review to confirm you are a legitimate business that is allowed to send RCS business messages.

Nearly **42% of consumers said these elements make it more likely they'd see the message as safe**. Another 37% said they'd feel somewhat safer, which means these components increase trust for nearly 80% of consumers.

Younger consumers place even more trust in logos and checkmarks. Generation Z (71%) and millennials (59%) were more likely to view these messages as safe.



Keep in mind, RCS messages are not considered HIPAA compliant. RCS is encrypted during transit but only provides end-to-end encryption (E2EE) through peer-to-peer (P2P) Google Messages.

However, if your healthcare organization wants to increase patient trust in your communications, the basic features of this emerging channel can help you accomplish that. It's one reason why 36% of healthcare respondents in our survey are already using RCS in patient communications.



SUCESS STORY

Secure, compliant fax communications

Spruce Health is a leading healthcare communications company in America, specializing in offering HIPAA compliant solutions. That includes a channel that might seem a bit outdated... the fax machine.

While it may be uncommon for provider-to-patient communications, fax is still a way that organizations transmit information between each other. For example, a pharmacy may fax a doctor's office when a patient needs their prescription refilled.

But faxing still needs to comply with HIPAA. That's why Spruce Health worked with Sinch to integrate our <u>Fax</u> <u>API</u>, which meets security standards for HIPAA, SOC 2, and GDPR. They chose the Sinch cloud-based service for its ease of use, intuitive API, and fax status dashboard. But that's not all...



"We selected the Sinch Fax API because we recognized their quality of service and the dedication of their team. Their customer support is phenomenal, and we've come to think of their support team as an extension of our own. With their help, we've been able to provide a higher level of service to our clients, one which helps keep our platform successful."



Kunal Jham

CTO, Spruce Health



Get the rest of the story

Find out how Sinch helped Spruce Health integrate our API in less than one week and why it became a selling point for their platform when you **read the rest of this customer story**.



Keeping patients happy



In healthcare, "bedside manner" often defines the experience a patient has with their provider. The empathy, clarity, and attention brought to that experience extends beyond physicians or even face-to-face interactions with patients. Every message you send is a reflection of your organization, especially customer service and support communications.

Messages that keep your patients happy are rooted in the idea that interactions between appointments should feel seamless, human, and thoughtful. Whether it's a friendly reminder about a wellness program, a quick response to a prescription question, or a real-time chat to resolve an issue, these touchpoints create lasting impressions.

Communications that promote happiness should reduce patient frustrations while fostering trust, loyalty, and long-term engagement. Delivering this kind of experience means being reachable on the channels patients prefer, responding quickly, and personalizing messages whenever possible.

The belief in treating patients with kindness and respect goes all the way back to the Hippocratic Oath, and it's more relevant than ever. Let's explore how to support modern patient expectations in the digital age.

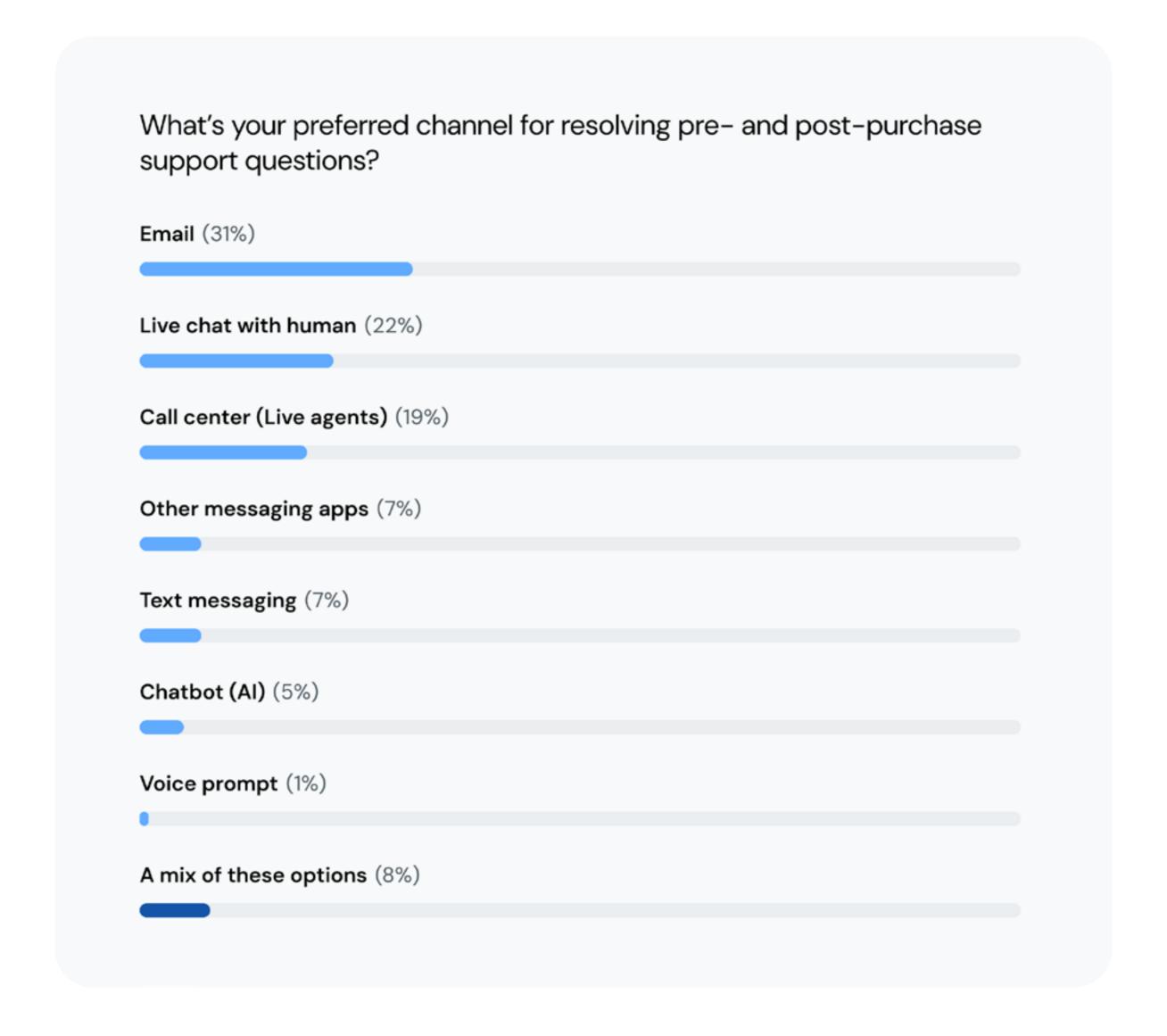




Which channels work best for customer support?

Sinch's survey on digital customer communications asked consumers around the world which channel they felt was best for receiving support.

Results show that even though email is still the most preferred channel, it's not by much. 31% of consumers selected the email channel as ideal for support, but live chats (22%) and call centers (19%) with human agents were the next most preferred options.



This question asked consumers about preferences for pre- and post-purchase support. It's important to note that patient support in healthcare is quite different. In the last chapter, we found that **patients tend to prefer** the secure portals and the voice channel (phone calls) for sensitive conversations about their healthcare.

However, one thing that is universal about interactions with support is the fact that conversations regularly happen across multiple communication channels.



Easing frustrations with connected communications

Whether a patient is switching communication channels or being transferred between different representatives, a common pain point among consumers is the need to repeat information while they seek help.

Our survey found a combined 81% of consumers have a negative reaction to that situation:

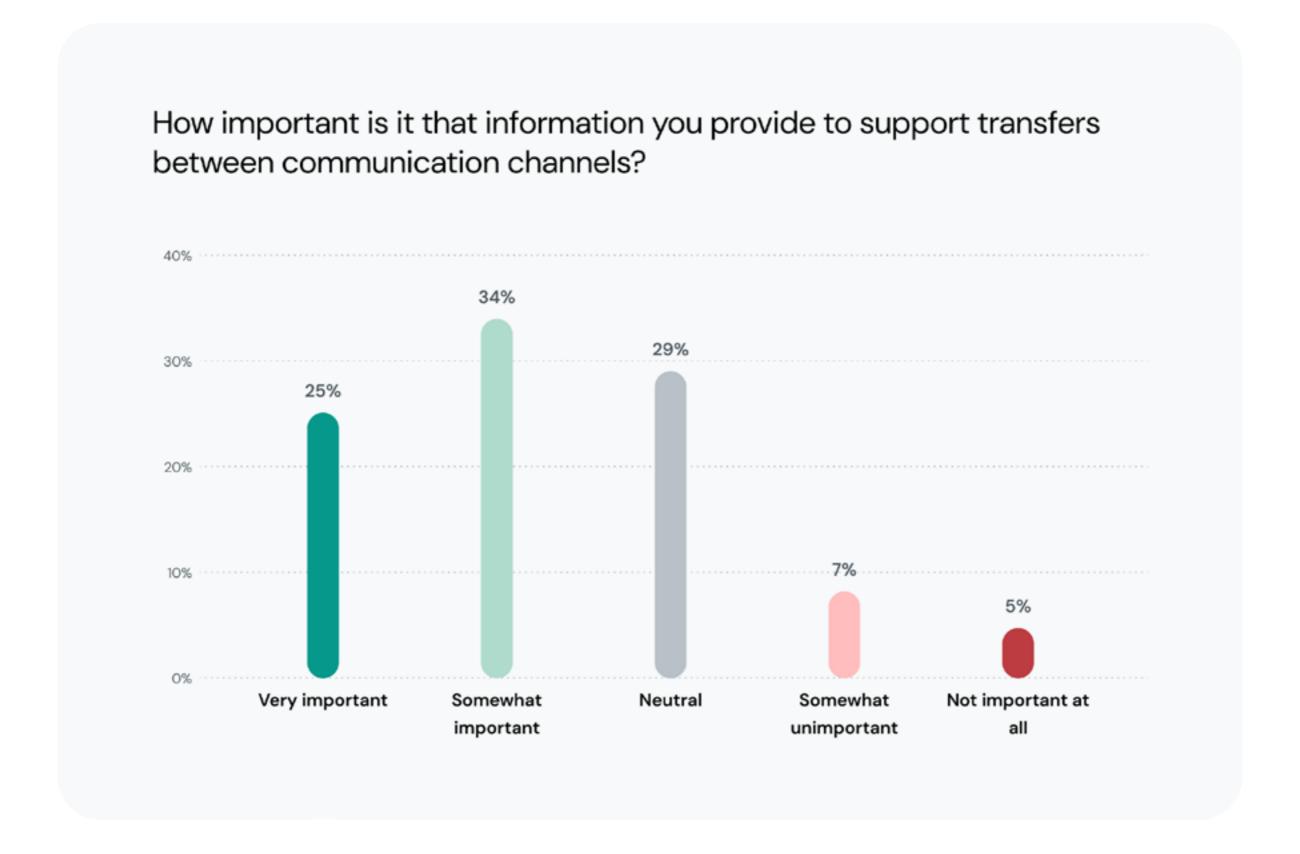
- 42% said it's frustrating.
- 24% said it wastes their time.
- 15% lose trust in the business as a result.

While 14% of consumers expect to repeat information to customer service, only 5% said they don't mind doing so.



In a separate question, a combined **59% of consumers indicated it's very or somewhat important that information they provide flows between channels**, like live chats, email, text, and voice.





In the first chapter, industry research revealed 55% of respondents claim their primary communication channels are connected. That still leaves 45% of healthcare organizations with channels that are only partially, minimally, or not integrated with each other at all.

This is where a <u>Communication Platform as a Service (CPaaS)</u> solution is often the answer to the problem. A CPaaS solution can provide omnichannel support as customer information transfers seamlessly between channels and representatives. For example, <u>Contact Pro from Sinch</u> is built to enable cohesive communication across email, SMS, mobile messaging apps, chats, and the voice channel.

Sinch CTO Brett Scorza explains why those communication connections are essential.



"As the number of interactions between consumers and companies grow, there's massive volumes of data. So, companies need to think about how to leverage the data they have and collect to make meaningful insights that make engagements with customers better."

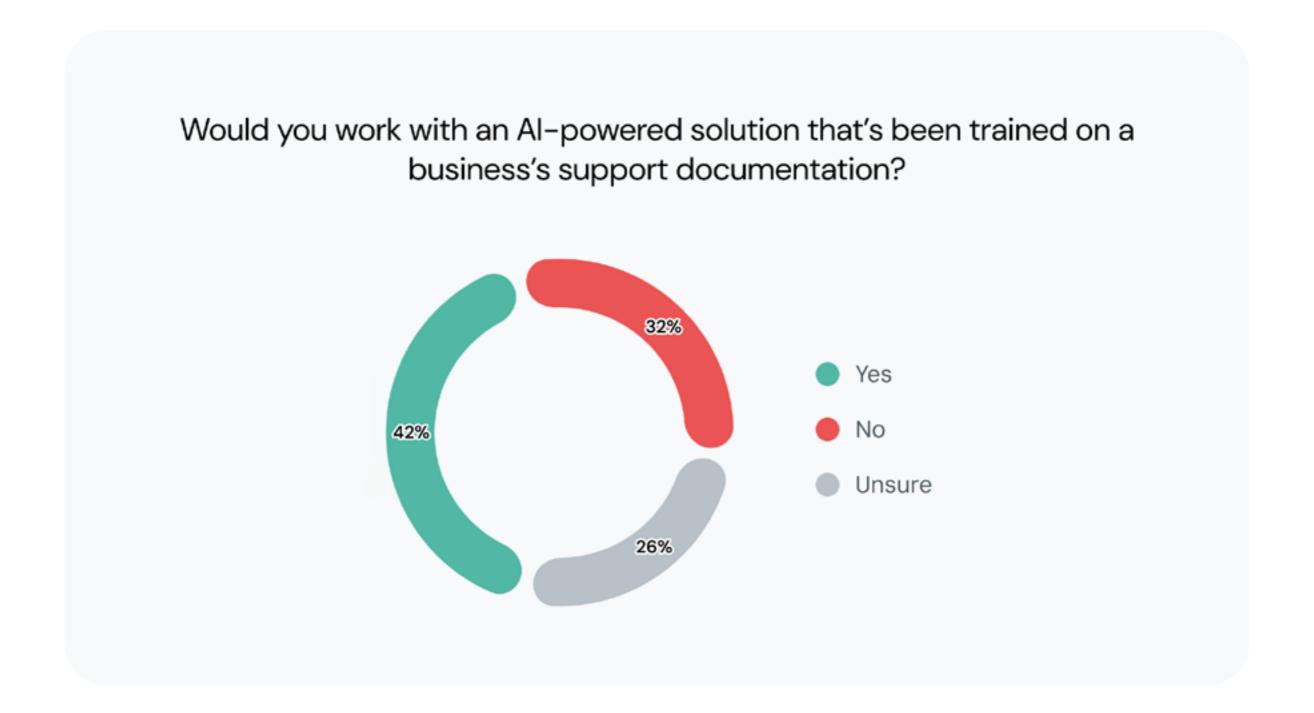
Brett ScorzaChief Technology Officer, Sinch





Using artificial intelligence for healthcare support

When asked about their willingness to engage with a chatbot trained on a business' support documentation, 42% of consumers said they'd be comfortable doing so while 32% are not and 26% are unsure.



However, in the first chapter we revealed that people are a bit less comfortable than this when it comes to engaging with an Al chatbot from a healthcare brand. In that context, 35% of consumers would be willing to interact with Al while 40% are uncomfortable and 25% are unsure.



Among those comfortable with using AI for healthcare communication, these scenarios represent ways people would be likely to use the AI solution for healthcare support.

57%

would use Al for **appointment scheduling** and related questions.

46%

would use AI to ask non-emergency medical questions.

32%

would use AI to ask questions about billing and insurance.

39%

would use AI to inquire about symptoms or to get basic preventive care advice.

Among consumers who feel uncomfortable using Al, concerns about accurate answers (64%) and the feeling that Al is too impersonal for healthcare (43%) were the biggest objections.

These objections can be overcome, however, when organizations mindfully and strategically build AI solutions that address the concerns.

For example, careful testing and training of chatbots on a specific knowledge base will lead to confidence in its accuracy. An Al chatbot trained to be empathetic and patient may change the minds of skeptics who fear it would be too impersonal.

It's also important that AI solutions understand when they're no longer helpful so that they will transfer patients to live support agents.

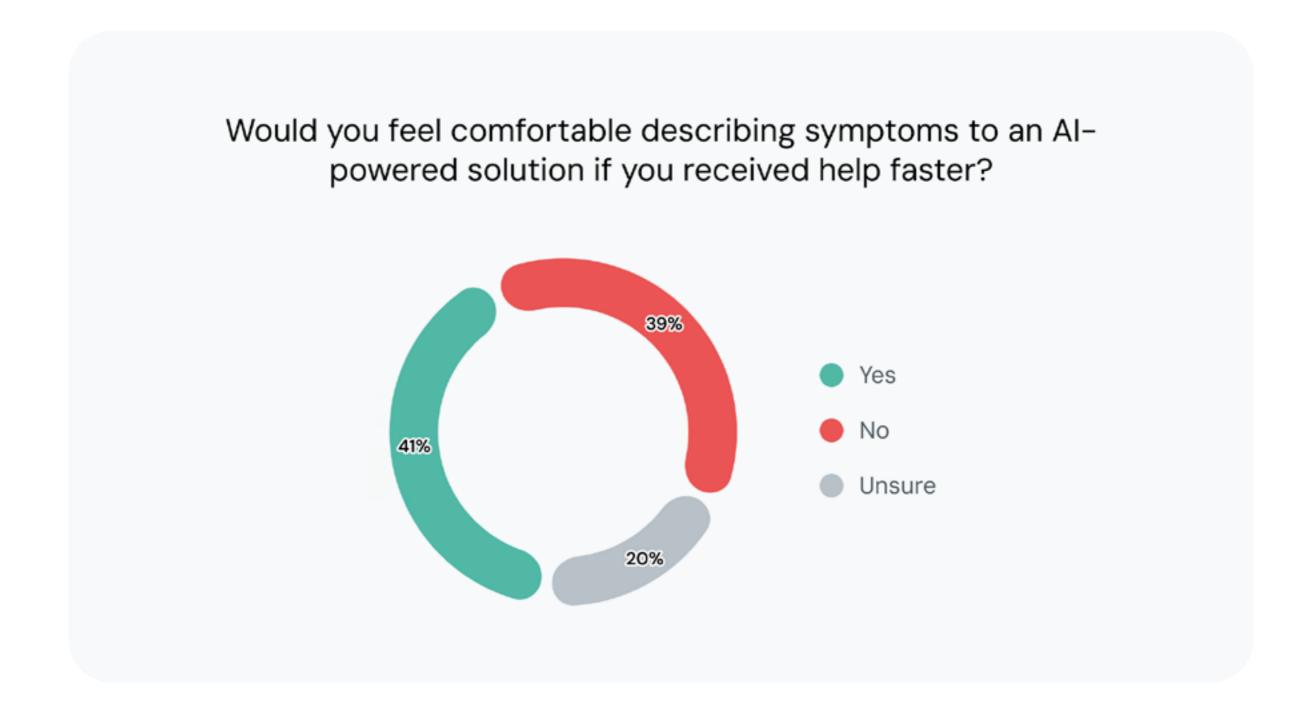


Convenience is crucial when providing support

Another factor that may convince more patients to accept AI interactions is the ability to get answers and support without the wait.

Al chatbots are available 24 hours a day. That means no waiting on hold for the next available representative if all you need is an answer to a basic question.

Our survey found that comfort levels with Al took a bit of a jump when we it came with the benefit of receiving care faster. In that case, 41% of consumers would use Al, even if they were doing something as sensitive as describing their symptoms to a chatbot.



Whether it's something as basic as rescheduling an appointment or as imperative as automating patient triage, the healthcare industry is just beginning to understand how to best use Al in communications. For support purposes, it can reduce strain on staff, so humans have more time to focus on helping humans.

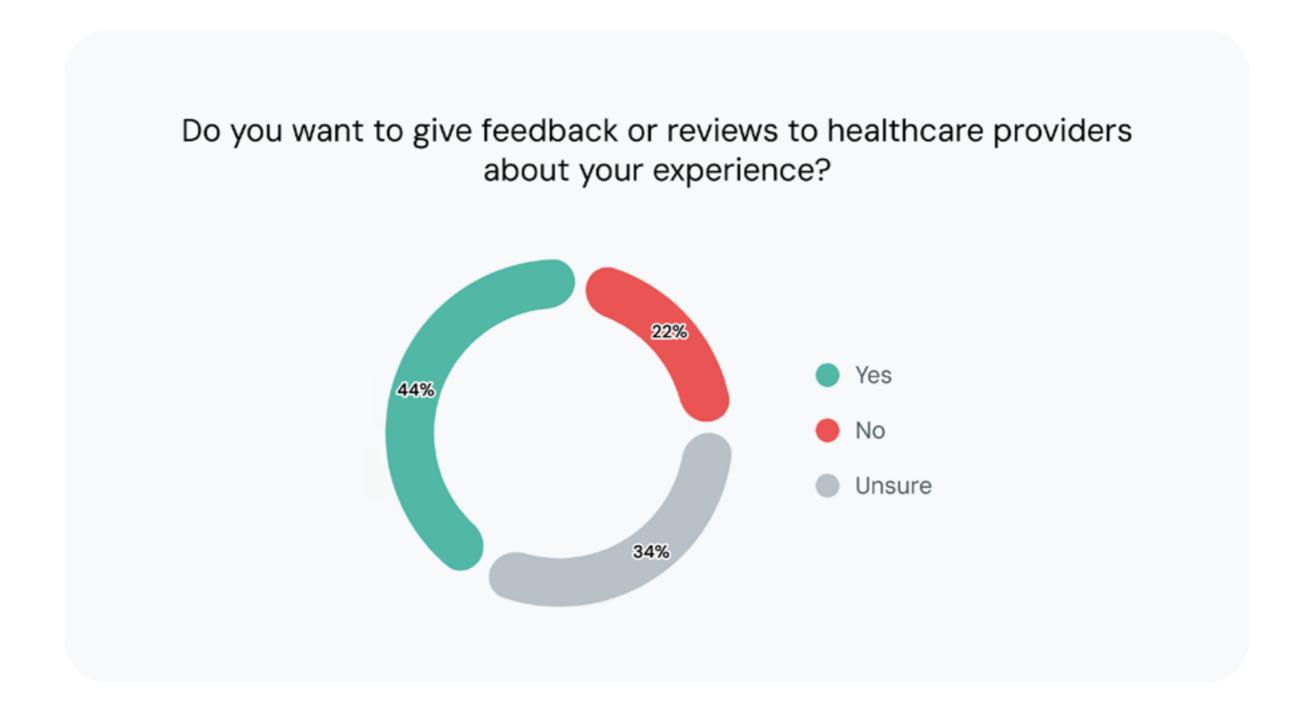


Two-way communication to keep patients happy

Receiving feedback from the people you serve is one of the most effective ways to learn how to improve their experience with your organization.

Tactics such as follow-up surveys can provide specific insights after a patient's appointment or conversations with support staff. Most people want to be given the opportunity to provide their opinions.

Sinch's research found 44% of consumers said "Yes" they'd want to give feedback about their experience with a healthcare company. Another 34% want to offer their feedback at least some of the time. That's a combined 78% of people who are willing to give you valuable information about the patient experience.



What better way to uncover ways to keep patients happy than to hear it straight from them?

Don't forget that patient communications should flow both ways. While getting your message across is part of the strategy, you also need to make sure your patients feel seen, heard, and understood. Those are the hallmarks of an ideal support experience.



SUCCESS STORY

Increasing happiness with an AI voice bot

One of the ways many healthcare organizations expect to enhance communications is with Al voice bots. 55% of survey respondents plan to invest in that technology this year.

A healthcare tech company in the Netherlands is already supporting patients with AI in this way. Moet Ik Naar De Dokter (MINDD) translates to "Should I see a doctor?" Their product helps people understand whether they need medical attention, and it assists the provider by gathering information and triaging patients.

MINDD's Geertina Hamstra has been working with chatbots for around 20 years. She knew a voice bot project would be more complex but would ultimately help with patient prioritization. What she didn't expect was how the bot would reduce wait times and improve the patient experience.



"This means the conversation goes a lot faster. The shorter the conversation, the more phone calls you can handle and the more time you have for the more severe cases.

Starting a project like this comes with its fair share of unknowns and surprises. It's been a great experience working with Sinch because feedback flows both ways. They think deeply about the problem we're trying to solve."



Geertina Hamstra

Project Manager, MINDD

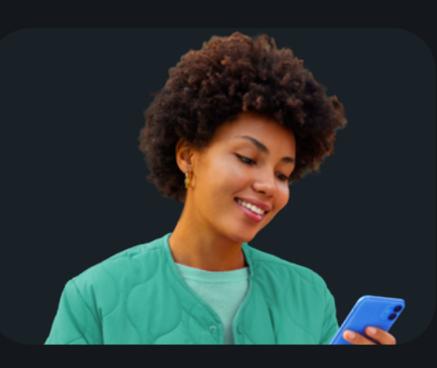


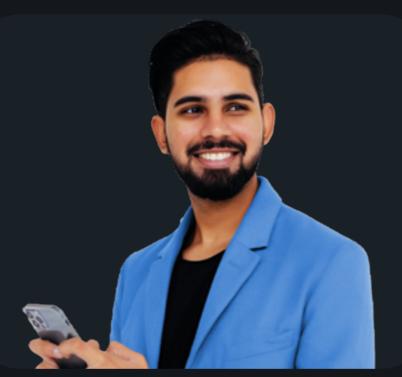
Get the rest of the story

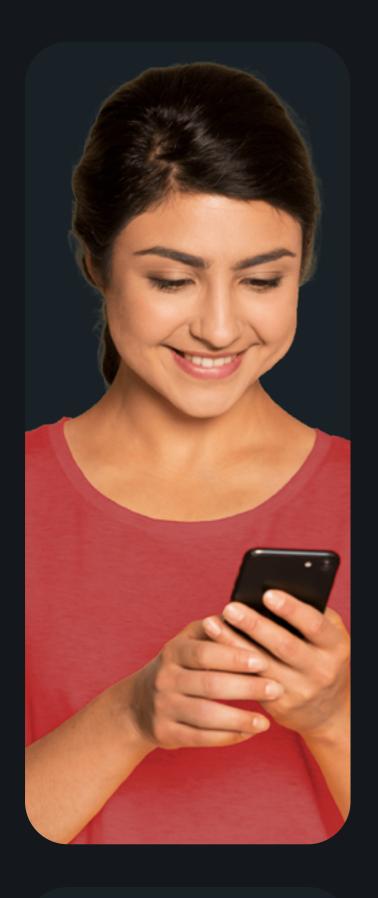
Find out how MINDD worked with Sinch to create a conversational experience for patients driven by an innovative AI voice bot. Read the customer story and watch a video to hear about the process from Geertina's perspective.



Make every message matter with Sinch









Your patients want clear, compassionate messages, timely updates, and confidence that the healthcare companies they choose will provide responsive and reliable communications.

Sinch helps healthcare organizations strengthen patient relationships through smarter communication strategies. With the industry's most complete suite of messaging, voice, email, and verification solutions, we make it easier to deliver care experiences that keep people engaged, informed, safe, and happy.







Engaged

Reach patients with personalized outreach that drives action – from promoting preventive care to encouraging signups for wellness programs. Use SMS, email, RCS, and other messaging apps to deliver relevant offers and content that sparks interest while increasing participation.



Informed

Make it easy for patients to stay on track with timely updates and clear instructions. From appointment reminders and lab result notifications to pre-visit instructions and prescription refill alerts, Sinch enables multichannel communication that keeps patients in the loop and reduces no-shows.



Safe

Protect sensitive health data with verification tools designed for compliance and confidence. Our SMS OTP, flash call, secure email sending, and number validation solutions prevent fraud, secure access to patient portals, and ensure the right person is on the receiving end of every message.

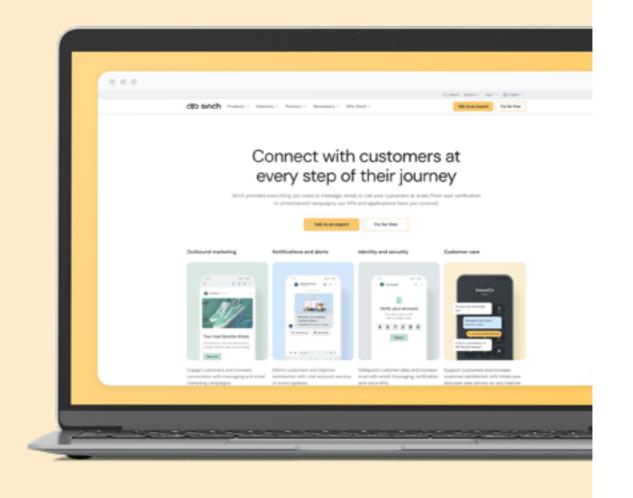


Нарру

Support patients with communication that feels responsive and human. Use intelligent chat, two-way messaging, and integrated voice to streamline operations, resolve common questions quickly, and reduce the burden on your support team.

Make every customer interaction count.

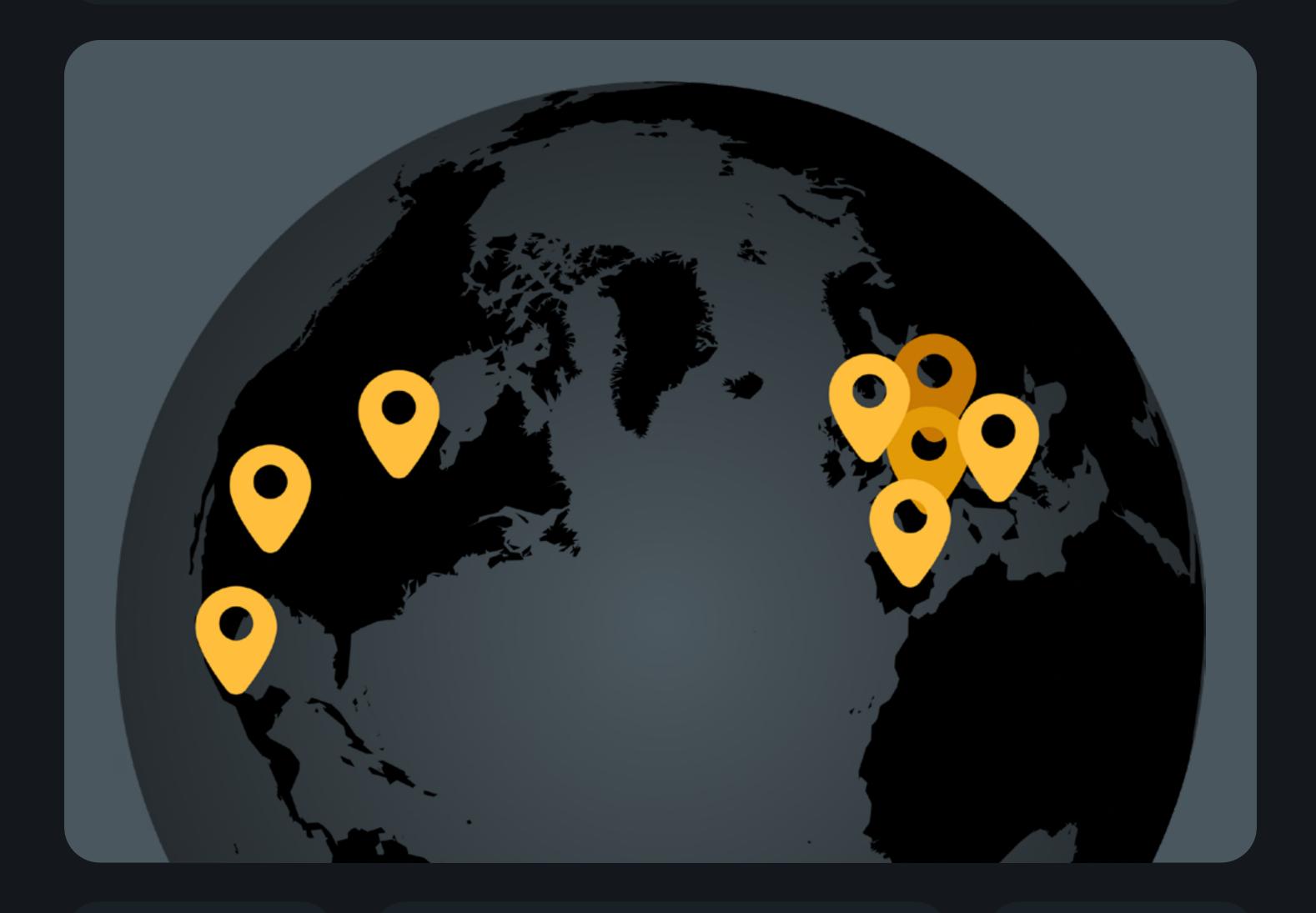
Get started today at Sinch.com



About the survey

Sinch fielded this research with two separate surveys in January and February of 2025. It included a global consumer survey and an industry survey covering healthcare respondents.

The consumer survey consisted of 2,800 participants from 12 countries. The industry survey consisted of 400+ participants from the United States. Results in this report are occasionally rounded to the nearest percentage.





Consumer survey breakdown

Countries	Gender	Age group
United States: 25.2%	Female: 53.4%	Before 1946: 3.0%
India: 9.4%	Male: 46.1%	1946-1964: 31%
Brazil: 9.2%	Non-binary (or no answer): 0.4%	1965–1980: 27.1%
United Kingdom: 9.1%		1981-1996: 28.6%
Australia: 9.0%		1997-2012: 10.3%
Canada: 7.4%		
Germany: 7.1%		
France: 7.1%		
Mexico: 5.4%		
Singapore: 3.7%		
Spain: 3.7%		
Italy: 3.6%		

Healthcare industry breakdown

Company size (by headcount)	Annual revenue	Job roles
51 to 200: 22.8%	\$10M - \$50M: 25.0%	C-suite executive: 24.0%
201 to 500: 26.0%	\$50M - \$100M: 26.0%	VP-level executive: 25.0%
501 to 1,000: 25.2%	\$100M - \$500M: 25.2%	Director: 26.0%
More than 1,000: 26.0%	More than \$500M: 23.8%	Management: 25.0%



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