

# MEDTECH: YOUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON DESIGN

## OVERVIEW: DESIGN CREATES ROI

In the past, device companies have mostly designed products for clinicians and expert care givers, but as people have started receiving care remotely or have different expectations brought on by mobile technology, device companies must make sure every voice in the ecosystem is heard and addressed with a design strategy.

Everyone, from surgeons to patients, should be treated to a consumer level experience.

Device companies should think more like consumer brands, creating loved, fuss-free products that work seamlessly across the entire healthcare spectrum, from procedure to clinic to patient.

## THINKING LIKE A CONSUMER COMPANY

The traditional medical product development process begins with a technology that addresses a medical need.

In the new era, consumerization has started to take hold. Successful companies have technology that addresses a medical need, and design is baked into the product so procedures are safe and efficient; clinicians can program the devices (in-clinic or remotely) with ease; and, the device fits into the habits and ceremonies of the patient while also delighting them, like an excellent consumer product. As consumerization takes hold, device companies must re-configure their design process around the needs of all these “consumers”. Moreover, beginning with the consumer and looking broadly at their health needs—physical, emotional, and logistical—will help companies respond to meaningful problems with even more innovation.

In the last five years, we’ve seen the consumer mindset, with an emphasis on delivering what end users actually need and want, begin to bleed into medical product development. The goal of consumer-driven product innovation is to create an emotional connection between users and brands—a delightful experience or perception that keeps people coming back.

However, most medical solution companies look at users in terms of physical and cognitive usability. Certainly, these are important and necessary considerations for product safety and regulatory approval. But this is only the beginning.



While products must be holistic--device makers must address implantation, follow up, and patients--we believe many device companies are not as strong in understanding the patient needs. We believe there are three additional dimensions that will help companies develop a qualitative understanding of health consumers and their motivations—emotional, social, contextual, and developmental. Exploring these dimensions at the front end of the product development process will reveal what patients need, and enable companies to respond with meaningful innovation that gains adoption and changes health outcomes.

### WHAT MAKES A DESIGN CONSUMER-DRIVEN?

- **Emotion:** Just like any other area of life, health consumers want to feel heard and responded to. People bring a wide range of emotions to their healthcare journeys, from negative feelings, like anger and fear, to positive ones, like pride.
- **Social:** People's behaviors and decisions don't happen in a vacuum. They are influenced by the people around them, both peers and those in authority. It's important to understand who your customers are listening to and learning from as they select your product. Take a cue from consumer platforms, like Amazon, that actively solicit and learn from consumer feedback.
- **Contextual:** How people adopt a product has less to do with the solution itself than with the setting in which it is used or accessed. If a product does not match with the user's habits and ceremonies and the constraints of their environments, then it cannot stick.



Companies providing solutions in the home need to consider all of the activity that happens in that context—movement, heat, water, and interaction with family members and pets.

### **THINK BEYOND PRODUCT. FOCUS ON EXPERIENCE.**

Successful consumer companies take their brands very seriously. They realize that the brand extends far beyond the product that people buy. It's a relationship that begins the first time someone sees or learns about their product. Each subsequent interaction is a chance to build on that relationship. Procter & Gamble has created a science around the First Moment of Truth—the first three to seven seconds after a shopper first encounters a product on a store shelf, in which they're making snap judgments based on their senses, values and emotions— and the Second Moment of Truth, when a customer takes a product home and forms opinions based on their daily experiences with that product. Moments of Truth have become gospel in consumer marketing and offer a best practice to differentiate medical solutions. A poor customer experience makes it hard for a solution to gain adoption. In a world where outcomes are only part of the overall health experience, ancillary elements like communication, customer service, and convenience carry significant weight for a brand. It's important for solution providers to think more broadly than the pure functionality of their product and look at the way it makes users feel.

- **Improve Convenience:** Consumers today are accustomed to convenience. We expect the world to operate at the speed of a Google search, with the customizability of meal planning on sites like Plated or Blue Apron, and the responsiveness of booking a ride



on Uber. Healthcare rarely works this way, but forward-thinking companies are creating change, and doing so with innovative features that make solutions accessible to both end users and the healthcare system.

- **Offer Support:** When people are going through a health challenge, whether a lifestyle goal, an acute illness, or a chronic condition, they want to feel like they have support. Your solution can stand out by being there when people are emotionally fragile. Even if a physical cure is weeks or months away, the process toward emotional relief can begin immediately.
- **Aim to Delight:** Delight may seem like a word out of context in healthcare. But creating delight, even in small doses, can transform an experience and build relationships that keep customers engaged with your brand.
- **Help Consumers Make Informed Decisions:** Consumers have a great deal of choice, but they don't always have the tools they need to make informed, healthy decisions for themselves, whether that means seeking professional care or enhancing their daily self-care routines to live a healthy lifestyle.
- **Improve Access to Information in People's Daily Lives:** Often, once people leave the doctor's office, their health becomes a black box. Today's technology—with its ability to connect large populations, gather biometric data, and make sense of "big data"—has the opportunity to change that.
- **Provide Personalized Experiences:** Personalization is a growing trend in the consumer product world. Those at the forefront are using data to make predictions that anticipate customers' needs and desires. Entertainment platforms, like Netflix and Pandora,



make recommendations that introduce users to new content based on their previous consumption. In healthcare, targeted, personal experiences can be a tipping point to meaningful behavior change.

## CONCLUSION

Medical device makers need to think like consumer product companies, combining technologic advances with a designer's sense of people and how the device will work in every facet of the medical ecosystem.

- Start the entire process with design thinking (don't design a device and then figure how it'll fit into the ecosystem later).
- Consider how every stakeholder will use the product.
- The end goal: Fuss free, simplicity that works and delights.
- Strive for an emotional connection!

## REFERENCES

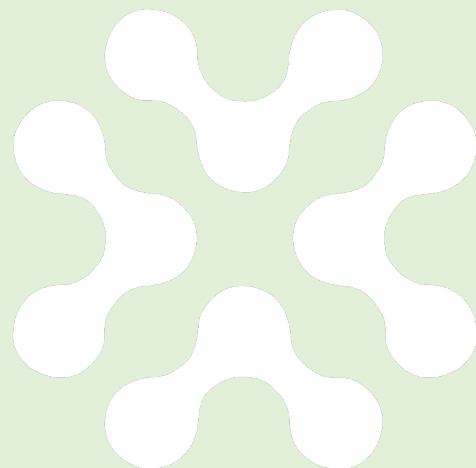
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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Stuart Karten

Stuart Karten is the President of the award-winning product design and innovation consultancy Karten Design (K:D) located in Marina del Rey, Ca. Since 1984, K:D has partnered with medical and consumer product companies to build their business through strategic design. K:D's work has won more than 100 of design's most important awards globally and has been featured in the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum.



## ABOUT DEVICEALLIANCE

DeviceAlliance is the only multi-disciplinary, non-profit, professionals' association serving the medical device industry in Orange County, CA. We strive to be the one-stop-shop at the center of the medical device ecosystem helping drive career development, community collaboration and innovation for all device professionals in Orange County, CA. We offer engaging educational programs, mentoring, collaborative events, knowledge sharing and much more.

As a result we're the ideal place to help support medical device professionals, of all backgrounds and educational disciplines, as they formulate start-ups, expand market share for a Fortune 500 corporation or grow their individual careers.

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