# 7 keys to digital transformation in the healthcare sector

**Personalized healthcare is one of the main challenges facing the sector as it undergoes digital transformation.**



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The healthcare system, focused on delivering results, sometimes lacks the human touch. Digital transformation is an opportunity to change that and to improve relationships between

doctors, patients and managers, who all need to pull together to understand what really adds value for patients.

New technology isn't always seen as humanizing; quite the contrary, in fact. But technology can be a great ally, suggests [a study into digital transformation](#) and its effects on the treatment of chronic patients in Spain, conducted by IESE professors [Jaume Ribera](#) and [Carlos Rodriguez-Lluesma](#), together with Jordi Ibañez, Senior Associate of the [Center for Research in Healthcare Innovation Management (CRHIM)](#), with the support of the global pharmaceutical company CSL Vifor. Among other benefits, digital developments can help reduce the number of in-person appointments and increase the amount of time the doctor can spend with the patient.

Like it or not, digital transformation is revolutionizing the healthcare sector. These are the seven human-centered processes that healthcare organizations should prioritize on their way toward adopting new technologies:

**1. The patient at the center.** Companies must adapt their services to patients' lifestyles and preferences, providing them with information and empowering them to become more actively involved in their health.

**2. The consumerization of healthcare.** As a result of patient empowerment and the speed at which new technologies are being developed, there is a growing consumerization of healthcare, i.e., the use of technologies designed for the consumer market that the patient already uses on a regular basis. Institutions must adapt and create new relationships, new services and even new business models. For example, users now expect to be able to schedule medical appointments or download clinical test results on their own devices.

*Patients are increasingly demanding to be seen where and when it is best for them, in an environment where not everyone responds the same way or has the same needs or expectations.*

**3. Omnichannel care.** The personalization of services involves making the system more flexible and developing a single care model with multiple channels.

**4. Cultural change.** Patient-centric care requires a change in attitude among healthcare professionals. This begins with training new professionals in both technical and transversal competencies. Similarly, cultural change in current workers must be promoted at all levels, along with techniques for managing productivity and costs.

**5. Financing linked to value.** It is the result, not just activity, that should matter. To this end, it is essential to understand what brings value to the patient, and target resources accordingly. Effective measurement and monitoring of results are necessary to properly evaluate what value is being delivered, and patients should be asked for their opinions.

**6. New professional profiles.** The use, assessment and security of data are key. New profiles in cybersecurity, confidentiality and data analysis will be needed. Within the healthcare profession itself, there will be a need for CXOs (Chief Experience Officers) and CHOs (Chief Humanization Officers).

**7. Open innovation.** The pandemic gave digital health solutions a boost. Going forward, it's essential to develop new solutions collaboratively between the health sector and external experts, in order to build a transversal system with added value for the patient. Collaboration between doctors, patients and other healthcare professionals must be encouraged.

In the wake of the pandemic, the healthcare sector has an opportunity to integrate new technologies that will help create a sustainable and patient-centric model. Identifying which technology makes for the best care, and in which environments, will be the new challenge for the future of medicine.

# About the research

This study included a literature review and the creation of a five-member advisory committee comprising leaders of healthcare enterprises in Spain. They participated in two group sessions and were interviewed individually. A further 22 health experts participated in sessions to prioritize and define key aspects and proposals.

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