

3 Exciting Features of the Doctor's Office of the Future

Imagine if your doctor's office more resembled an upscale neighborhood bookstore or coffee shop than the dull, sterile environment you were conditioned to dread growing up. Imagine if its waiting room helped keep you calm and informed about the latest in healthcare news, instead of only contributing to an already stressful situation. Wouldn't it make sense if your doctor's office boosted your sense of well-being, instead of draining your energy and preventing you from connecting comfortably to your technology? These improvements may seem to be a long way off, but it may not be too long until what was once only an imagination becomes a reality.

A recent post in [Fast Company's Futurist Forum](#), titled [The Doctor's Office Of The Future: Coffeeshop, Apple Store, And Fitness Center](#), details what the future of healthcare might look like, as medical environments and facilities respond to healthcare reform as well as an increased focus on wellness and well-being.

With the Affordable Care Act placing a larger emphasis on primary care, waiting rooms and reception areas will be facing an influx of traffic, and will need to respond by creating a more customer-friendly experience. Competition over these new patients will increase as well, and as a result amenities like a healthy food bar and technology-friendly [waiting room furniture](#) will become more and more important.

The implementation of the ACA harbingers a shift from volume-based to value-based healthcare, and doctors and hospitals that keep their patients well and motivated to stay healthy stand to benefit the most. The Fast Company article, with the help of [the healthcare team at Gensler](#), asks several "what if?" questions about this nascent healthcare future.

What if:

DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOMS LOOKED AND FUNCTIONED MORE LIKE A COFFEEHOUSE

People who may not have anything in common could come together for the experience of partaking health care information. Gone are the rows of chairs and old magazines - in their place, patients can hunker down at a table with easy access (either electronically or via printed materials) to the latest research on medications or home safeguarding techniques.

DOCTORS' OFFICE WERE FITNESS OR WELL-BEING CENTERS

30-minute "unplug" sessions are held during the lunch hour (or after work or after moms drop the kids off at school) and devoted to stress management techniques, deep breathing exercises, posture improvement, gut redux, etc.-and all of them led by a health care professional other than the doctor.

DOCTORS HAD SMALL BRANCH OFFICES

These could be located throughout a metropolitan area or in rural areas so patients didn't have to travel so far. And perhaps, they "see" the doctor via high technology: a video screen and monitors that feed the patient's current health metrics directly to the doctor.

The key question now is not if the status quo of the doctor's office will transition away from the sterile environment of the past into the dynamic, attractive, profitable space of the present and future, but when.

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