

Training Support with a New Technology Solution



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A RECENT WALL STREET JOURNAL ARTICLE by Heather Haddon described how “Grocers Imagine the Store of the Future.” It was an excellent article outlining how technology will improve the customer experience by customizing ads, deploying staff to cash registers based upon store traffic monitored via infrared sensors, and apps that take recipes and populate grocery shopping lists. Undoubtedly there is applicability to retail pharmacy management.

The article referenced a major retailer using virtual reality headsets to train employees on how to deal with situations ranging from holiday shopping crowds to spills in the beverage aisle. It was this reference to virtual reality to facilitate training that caught our interest. What if virtual reality headsets could be used to simulate everyday situations that are relevant to your pharmacy staff? This could be very beneficial for operational, regulatory compliance, and staff training needs. We created our list of key pharmacy areas that would be opportunities for virtual reality training. Here are our top 20 ideas:

- 1. Rx Dispensing incident** — Strategies to handle and document a prescription missfill incident.
- 2. Prescription Transfer Process** — Reviewing and testing for proper documentation when transferring a prescription to/from another pharmacy to ensure compliance with state laws and avoid PBM recoupment audits.
- 3. Suspicious CII Narcotic Rx** — Ensure proper internal procedures are being followed. Has the state PDMP program been checked and documented? If dispensed, was the Rx double-counted?
- 4. Unruly Customers** — Various situations, including long wait times, issues with insurance coverage, out-of-stocks, prior authorizations, or suspicious CII narcotic Rx (see above).
- 5. Drug Interactions and DUR Messages** — Monitoring the triage and adjudication of drug interactions and DUR messages of various levels, including documentation of actions taken to resolve.
- 6. Vaccination Procedures** — Patient recruitment to vaccinate, paperwork completion, administration technique, proper billing, patient monitoring, and request for referrals.
- 7. Store Security** — Following protocols in a robbery/burglary situation such as proper documentation follow-up with internal loss prevention, and contact with law enforcement.
- 8. Protected Health Information (PHI) Data Breach** — The pharmacist becomes aware of PHI that has been exposed to the public. What are your internal processes and procedures to manage? Who needs to communicate what to external authorities?
- 9. Media Inquiry** — A local reporter comes to your pharmacy to interview you for a news story. Or a reporter wants to film inside your pharmacy for a story on a particular OTC product issue. Review how your staff should handle such a request.
- 10. Medicare D Compliance** — Assess the staff’s ability to communicate deductibles, the donut hole, catastrophic coverage, and preferred networks to patients. Ensure that the staff is assisting patients with questions, but not marketing a particular plan.
- 11. Inventory Management** — Assess staff ordering practices, inventory returns, use of appropriate min/max levels, improving inventory turns, and handling out-of-stock situations.
- 12. Shrink** — How to identify/manage a situation where on-hand inventory does not match system quantity and you suspect internal theft.
- 13. Corrective Feedback for Pharmacy Personnel** — Train management staff for handling chronically late employees, poor customer service, dress code violations, etc.
- 14. Performance Reviews** — Ensure that management staff is providing feedback to employees in a timely, proper, specific, and effective manner.
- 15. Workflow Training** — Validate that pharmacy staff is optimally using workflow modules in pharmacy management software to efficiently operate the pharmacy.
- 16. Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) Training** — Compliance for training, patient education, assessment, and documentation to ensure compliance with FDA-mandated REMS programs.

17. Electronic Prescribing — Review procedures for dispensing a prescription received electronically, including the proper drug selection, quantity, SIG, and notes fields. Assess when the prescriber needs to be contacted for clarification.

18. Prior Authorizations (PAs) — Recent enhancements in your pharmacy systems help automate the communications with prescribers to attain a prior authorization for a patient. Are new procedures being followed properly? Is there appropriate monitoring to verify if the PA has been approved or denied?

19. Negative Margin Prescriptions — When the pharmacy system flags an adjudicated claim as a negative margin prescription, validate that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the quantity dispensed matches the package size selected, that the claim was adjudicated properly, and that internal procedures are followed on how to proceed.

20. Discount Card Programs — Validate how to handle a patient without insurance who presents several discount cards obtained at the doctor's office. How does the staff help the patient and follow policy on a preferred discount card program?

So there you have it, our top-20 list of potential uses of virtual reality training. The *Journal* article helped to break paradigms as to the application of virtual reality training for pharmacy. What additional areas could you explore for pharmacy training using virtual reality? Imagine the time you and your employees could save by automating training needs to specific situations that impact the patient experience and operations of your pharmacy.

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To read the original *Wall Street Journal* article, visit <https://www.wsj.com/articles/grocers-imagine-the-store-of-the-future-1508119682>. **CT**

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