



Parent Portals Improve Productivity

By Larry Morgan, December 2019

Parent Portals

Improve Everyone's Productivity (and save money!)

Therapists are busy doing important work. They are trained professionals who want to spend more time helping individuals and less time doing paperwork. Clinics are keen to retain quality employees and improve job satisfaction.

The Parent Portal is a tool for families to stay informed and engaged in their child's education. It enables parents and guardians to see the child's schedule, monitor attendance, and communicate with the child's teachers.

Below we will discuss how Parent Portals, in all clinical environments can:

- ▶ improve everyone's productivity
- ▶ generate hard dollar savings
- ▶ deliver significant intangible benefits



Improving Productivity



Productivity is often defined as being efficient and getting more work done in a shorter amount of time. We are going to look at Parent Portals as a tool for increasing efficiency, and engagement...improving productivity.

Almost every day we are bombarded with new technology which makes our lives simpler and more productive. Faster printers, new computers, and a host of software programs, have replaced pencil and paper and improved our productivity, saving us countless minutes and hours every month.

Therapists want to spend their time helping their patients progress, not with paperwork, phone calls, and administrative tasks. So whatever tools we can implement to minimize the distractions from the job that *utilizes their strengths everyday* would seem to be a good investment. And when you look at the features and benefits, there are many compelling reasons to implement parent portals in the clinical workplace environment.

According to The Workplace Research Foundation, "highly engaged employees were much more likely to have above-average productivity, to the tune of 38%." So, finding ways to keep employees engaged and doing what they enjoy can pay enormous dividends. As a matter of fact, according to Gallup Research, "employees are six times more likely to be engaged in a job where they are utilizing their strengths every day."

5 Reasons a Parent Portal will improve your clinic's productivity

Let's look at just five specific features of Parent Portals to understand how they can increase productivity for the therapists and the parents:

1. On-line Session Approvals and Treatment Plans

The Parent Portal can provide easy access to session notes and clinical data for the parent to review and approve at any time, with convenient digital signature capabilities. Therapists can also upload activities and lessons for parents to do at home or in cases of extended absence so the child can continue progress. This provides flexibility and convenience for both providers and parents and is in the best interest of the client.



2. View Schedules and Cancel Appointments On-line

Parents and therapists save time and eliminate confusion because everyone can see the schedule online in real time. A Parent Portal minimizes redundant phone calls and provides advanced notice of cancellations and schedule changes, enabling therapists to reallocate their time.

3. Broadcast Announcements and Notifications

With a Parent Portal, clinics can notify the entire population of clients with a single message that is instantly distributed. It can be used for any generic broadcast message notifications such as holiday reminders or special events. It is also very useful in case of illness, emergencies, snow days, fire or weather warnings. This feature eliminates the need for multiple phone calls, saving administrative time. Clients appreciate the thorough communication and being kept up to date regarding special events or occasions.

4. On-line Forms and Reports

Parent Portals allow parents the convenience of filling out the intake and on-boarding forms in advance, online. It can also automatically update the student records, eliminating time consuming paperwork and redundant activities of the parents and therapists. These all make the initial registration, on-boarding and annual updates much easier. Forms and other hand-written documents can also be uploaded to the clients record through the Parent Portal.

5. On-line Bill Payment

This capability enables the parents to conveniently co-pay, or private pay, for services on-line. It may only affect a small percentage of clients, but for those who do use it, the savings come in many forms. The therapist or clinic save on invoicing (postage, printing and stationery) and benefit from improved cashflow and reduced administrative work.

In summary, it is easy to see how Parent Portals can improve productivity and increase customer engagement when you focus on these 5 points:

1. Increased efficiency
2. Better communication tools
3. More engaged employees
4. Job satisfaction from therapists doing what they like and do best
5. Happier, more informed families

Parent Portals will save you money - the numbers



Let's look at how the capabilities of a Parent Portal can generate tangible financial benefits and how you can calculate the ROI (Return on Investment) in your clinic. Our research has shown significant savings can be achieved and those savings will depend on the variables within your own environment. *The three key variables to which you can assign value are:*

Salaries

Revenues (per patient session)

Time (spent on various activities)

Looking at the same five features discussed earlier let's review how easy it is to quantify a dollar value that can be realized from each. Once you assign specific values to each of these components, it is simply a matter of multiplying them together to arrive at the resulting hard dollar savings. For simplicity, this is best looked at on a per therapist basis.

1. On-line session approvals

The key components are:

- Number of sessions per month
- Amount of time spent to get the approval
- Salary dollars per hour (or minute)

The savings calculation **will typically be in a range between \$15 and \$30 per therapist per month.**

2. View schedules and cancel appointments on-line

The key components are:

- Time spent taking calls and rescheduling
- Number of rescheduling events per month
- Salary dollars per hour (or minute)

The savings calculation **will typically be in a range between \$1 and \$2 per therapist per month.**

An additional financial benefit to this feature is the ability to reschedule the therapist to another revenue generating activity.

The key components are:

- Number of productive reassessments
- Revenue generated per session

The savings calculation **will typically be in a range between \$30 and \$50 per therapist per month.**

3. Broadcast announcements and notifications

The key components are:

- Number of announcements and/or notifications
- Time spent notifying each client
- Salary dollars per hour (or minute)

The savings calculation **will typically be in a range between \$3 and \$5 per notification per therapist per month.**

4. On-line forms and reports

The key components are:

- The number of forms per month
- Amount of time transcribing and updating student records
- Salary dollars per hour (or minute)

The savings calculation **typically will be in a range between \$5 and \$10 per student per month.**

5. On-line bill payment

The key components are:

- The number of invoices you no longer have to send
- The time spent processing each invoice
- The cost of preparing and mailing each invoice
- Salary dollars per hour (or minute)

The savings calculation **will typically be in a range between \$9 and \$20 per client per month.**

In summary, there are easy-to-calculate savings to be had with each of these features. These savings are associated with each therapist on a monthly basis. The amounts will vary based on your specific environment as far as amount of time events may take and how much salary the individuals responsible for the tasks are paid. Regardless, all of these will add up to a significant dollar value which will more than off-set any expenditure for the parent portal software.

Delivering intangible benefits

Soft dollar benefits are not as easy to quantify, but they can be the most valuable and consequential. These savings are real but more subjective. Review the questions below and apply to your business to assign a value to each.

- How do you assign a value to your reputation, or customer satisfaction?
- What is the value of one client telling another client about your great service?
- What is the cost of losing one session for any reason which could have been avoided?
- How much is the monthly value of protecting each of your clients?
- How do you measure the value of happy employees who are more engaged?
- What is the value of positive employee morale within the team?
- What is the value of positive employee morale on your clients?
- What is the cost of employee turnover?
- What is the cost of recruiting new employees?
- What is the cost of training new employees?

In summary, sometimes avoiding expenses is just as valuable as generating revenue.

A recent study by Deloitte showed that an increase in employee engagement can increase employee retention rates by up to 87%. Studies have also shown that clients who are more engaged with your system are more likely to stay with that therapist. Tools like a Parent Portal make your clients "more sticky." All of these factors have a financial value, regardless of how difficult it may be to calculate!

In Conclusion

Parent Portals improve productivity, have easy to quantify and tangible hard dollar savings, and they provide significant soft dollar benefits. From the perspective of a clinic...



- ▶ Engaged employees are happier
- ▶ Happy employees perform better
- ▶ Morale is contagious
- ▶ Positive attitudes translate into better interpersonal relationships
- ▶ Employee and client continuity are invaluable
- ▶ Reputation is everything

Parent Portals are becoming pervasive. Schools at every level have them, doctors and insurance companies have them. Today they may seem like a "value add," but very soon they will be a necessity. Clients are used to parent portals and the cost of replacing a client is significantly more expensive than maintaining your existing client, so not having a parent portal will soon put you at a competitive disadvantage.

From a parent perspective, this is not digital parenting, it is engagement!

Having tools that provide flexibility and ease of communication will generate loyalty.

Other factors that facilitate client retention are:

- Ability to be engaged in the patient's progress
- Secure constant communication
- Easy to use tools

Clients who are happy with your services are more likely to tell others, which is the best recommendation any business could want.



The most important benefits of Parent Portals are to the patient. These benefits are simply...

- ✓ More access to therapy
- ✓ More parental engagement
- ✓ More progress

Priceless!

Parent Portal Essentials checklist

- HIPAA Compliant
- Secure
- Easy to use
- Feature Rich
- Cost effective

Parent Portal Features checklist

- On-line bill-pay
- Broadcast notifications and announcements
- Parent notes and acknowledgments
- Ability to view and cancel appointments
- Session approval sign-off capabilities
- Forms for registration and updating demographics
- On-line form updates to the student record
- Visibility of progress graphs and reports

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For more information and to receive a free Parent Portal value savings kit visit TotalABA.com



About Larry Morgan

Larry Morgan is the President and CEO of TotalABA a leader in providing software services to therapists and clinics working with individuals across the Autism Spectrum. He and TotalABA improve the productivity and quality of lives for thousands of individuals and therapists every day. A global executive, entrepreneur and mentor, Larry is passionate about building winning teams and companies in intensely competitive markets around the world.