PATIENT APPS

Build or buy a patient app?

Wrong opening question. Five questions that settle whether the app should exist at all.

Swipe →

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QUESTION ONE

What does the app replace?

- Booking calls to the contact centre
- Walk-ins to the report collection counter
- Payment queues and report-status calls
- Follow-up reminders currently made by hand

The team losing that work must agree. More apps die to an unchanged phone script than to anything technical.

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QUESTION TWO

Will patients open it twice?

- Chronic and long-cycle care with something to do between visits
- Maternity, where the relationship runs for months
- Diagnostics and health checks, where repeat is the model
- Transplant and oncology, where families coordinate long journeys

Without this case mix, mobile web booking and messaging serve better. Neither needs an install.

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QUESTION THREE

Your systems, or just your brand?

BRAND ONLY	Content, appointment requests, payment link. Anything will do
YOUR SYSTEMS	Live slots, verified reports, correct bills. An integration project
THE TEST	Vendor demo on your registration system, at a non-flagship unit

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QUESTION FOUR

If you cannot name the person who will own the app in year three, and they are not currently in the building, do not start.

A bought app decays exactly like a built one, just with an invoice attached.

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QUESTION FIVE

What does it cost when it goes wrong?

- Consent, retention, deletion and breach obligations you now own
- A support queue in your catchment's languages, at patients' hours
- The vendor supports you, not your patients
- A broken app is worse than no app. Patients formed a view.

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THE THIRD OPTION

Buy the pieces, build the thin layer

1. Packaged components for payments, teleconsultation, notifications, identity
2. A small integration layer your own team owns
3. Mobile web and messaging delivery, no download

It does not produce an app icon for the board. Ask whether the group wants an icon or shorter queues.

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HOW TO CHOOSE

When to buy, build or wait

BUY	Standard needs, fast, on a registration system the product already supports
BUILD	The app is the product: chronic care, home care, long-cycle specialties
WAIT	Most groups. Mobile web and messaging first
NEVER	Build because buying felt like an admission of weakness

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THIS MONTH

Three things for the next agenda

1. Three plain counts: web bookings, messaging enquiries, patients returning within a year
2. Take the top contact-centre call reason. Ship the mobile web fix. Watch volume.
3. Write the ownership line before the technology line

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READ THE FULL GUIDE

Build or buy a patient app, in full

- The five questions in the order to ask them
- How to run a vendor evaluation on your terms
- The CEO test: which queue disappears
- gauravphogat.com/build-or-buy-a-patient-app

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