



**DATA STUDY**

# THE TOP 5 PHONE TRENDS OF 2020

**AND HOW HEALTHCARE PRACTICES ARE TAKING ACTION**

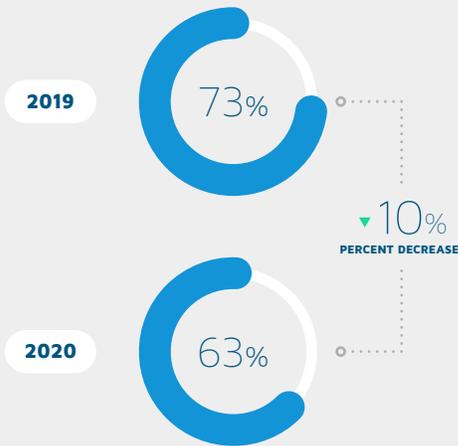
During 2020, the healthcare industry experienced a dramatic shift in how everyday operations are conducted. One tool in particular is now being relied on more than ever to keep patients informed, capture more opportunities and revenue, and ensure a seamless patient experience — the phone.

By examining phone trends from more than 1,700 healthcare practices across the United

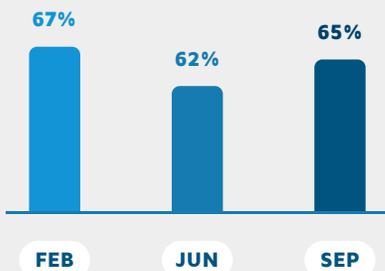
States, Call Box is able to conclude how the phone has been uniquely utilized in 2020. The following study presents the top five phone trends of 2020 and shares specific data points to better understand how your practice's phone metrics compare to industry averages. Furthermore, the study offers insight into where phone trends are headed in 2021 to more effectively leverage the phone to capture additional revenue and opportunities.

## DECLINING CONNECTION PERFORMANCE

### 2019 VS. 2020



### FEB - SEP 2020



# THE TOP 5

## PHONE TRENDS OF 2020

### 01 DECLINE OF CALL CONNECTION PERFORMANCE

Between 2019 and 2020, the rate of patient callers connected to a qualified individual who can help them dropped from 73% to 63%. This represents a significant number of callers never reaching someone who can help or even having the opportunity to speak with a staff member. Given the stagnation of new patient acquisition, it's more necessary than ever to take advantage of every patient opportunity calling in and capture as much revenue as possible.

Diving further into 2020, call connection dropped from an average rate of 67% in February to 62% in June, and then increased to 65% in September. While we're seeing a slight increase in performance, connection is still well below 2019 metrics. That said, many practices are still operating with fewer resources and higher call volume — all of which contributes to a decline in connected calls.



## 02 INCREASE OF INBOUND AND OUTBOUND CALL VOLUME

Both incoming call volume and outgoing call volume experienced a sharp increase between 2019 and 2020. Inbound call volume increased by an average of 61% in 2020, and outbound call volume increased by 69.7%. With most healthcare practices operating with fewer resources in 2020, many offices have turned to remote staff and/or contact centers to assist with this spike in call volume.

There is some evidence to indicate that inbound call volume is beginning to level off — in February of 2020, practices received an average of 299 calls per office location. In June, that volume spiked to 505 calls per office. However, in September, inbound volume leveled off at 400 calls per office. That said, it's unlikely we'll see inbound call volume revert back to pre-COVID levels, given the additional phone calls now needed to coordinate socially distanced visits.

### INCREASING CALL VOLUME

#### INBOUND CALL VOLUME



#### OUTBOUND CALL VOLUME



*\*Volume projected for remaining months of 2020.*

By contrast, outbound call volume is steadily increasing; between February and September of 2020, outbound call volume increased by 48.2%. As practices continue to rely more on outbound calls to recapture patients, leverage waitlists, and set expectations for visits, we will likely continue to see that number increase.



## 03

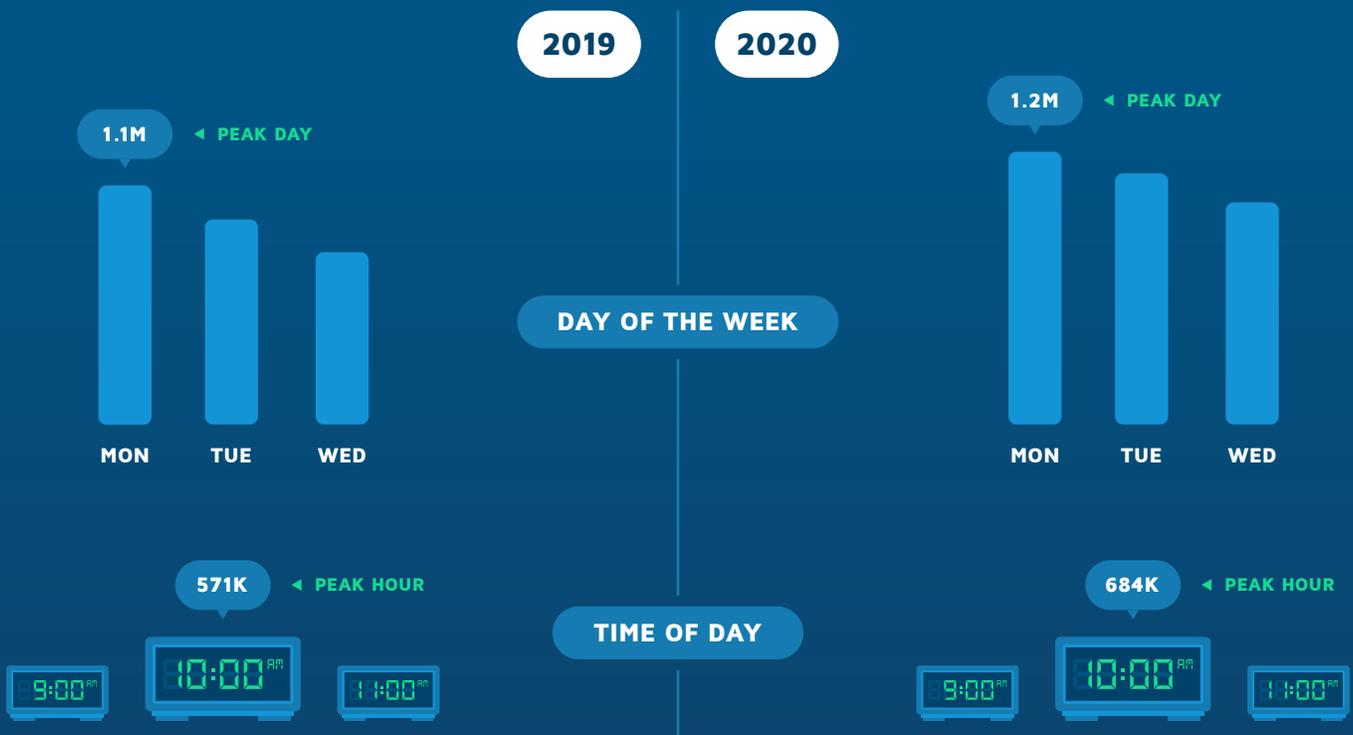
## CONSISTENT VOLUME PEAKS THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND WEEK

Looking at 2019 and 2020, we see consistent peaks in the days of the week and times of day that received the highest number of patient calls. In particular, Mondays received the highest volume of calls, followed closely by Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Furthermore, the 10:00 AM hour received the most calls for healthcare practices, followed by 11:00 AM and 9:00 AM, respectively.

However, in September of 2020, the 1:00 PM hour received more patient calls than 9:00 AM, thereby taking over the third highest call volume slot. Even more significantly, Monday was no longer a peak day of the week for receiving calls in September; instead, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday



### CALL VOLUME PEAKS



received the highest number of calls, respectively. As practices remain limited in their hours and days of operation and patients continue to work remotely, we'll likely continue to see this shift toward mid-week and midday peaks in call volume.

## 04

### CALENDAR AVAILABILITY PLAGUES AS TOP REASON APPOINTMENTS ARE NOT BOOKED

Consistently across 2019 and 2020, calendar availability plagued as the top reason why appointments did not get booked. Furthermore, the second highest reason appointments did not get booked across both years is due to insurance.

Between 2019 and 2020, there was a slight increase in calendar availability being the top reason why appointments were not booked. In 2019, we saw 35.2% of appointment opportunities not booked due to specifically calendar availability, and 16.6% due solely to insurance. In 2020, we saw 37.8% of opportunities not booked due to calendar availability and 16.2% due to insurance. With reduced schedules and availability due to social distancing measures and fewer overall resources, this slight increase could be anticipated.

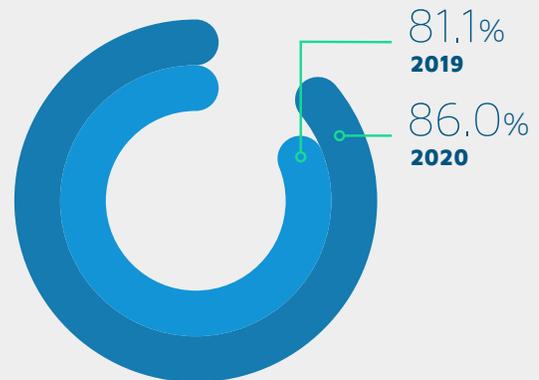
## 05

### STEADY RATE OF APPOINTMENT CONVERSIONS WITH INCREASED REQUEST RATE

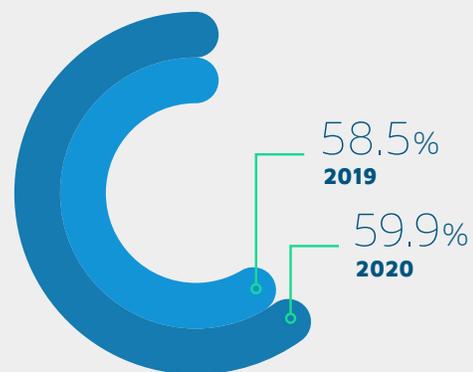
In 2019, practices converted patients into booked appointments at an average rate of 58.5% over the phone. Despite it being a much more challenging year, conversion rates on all appointment opportunities remained steady in 2020 at 59.9% — in fact, 2020 saw a slight increase in scheduled appointments.

## APPOINTMENT CONVERSIONS

### REQUEST RATE



### SCHEDULE RATE



That said, we know taking a proactive approach to requesting the appointment and inviting patients in for visits tends to result in a sharp increase in appointments. When appointments are requested and invitations are extended to patients, staff members are around 25% more likely to book an appointment. In 2020, practices made a concerted effort to offer more appointments to patients — 5% more than in 2019. This effort likely directly contributed to the ability to keep appointment conversions high during an unprecedented year.

# PHONE TRENDS

## TO EXPECT IN 2021

As we look ahead to 2021, there are a few phone trends we can expect to observe as phone handling processes continue to adapt and develop.



### EMPHASIS ON RECALL EFFORTS

First, we expect there to be an increased emphasis on patient recall efforts. Most offices are currently unable to invest heavily in marketing and other new patient acquisition tactics, but have hundreds of patients overdue for appointments or pending outstanding treatments. This will result in more outbound calls and a proactive approach to patient growth.



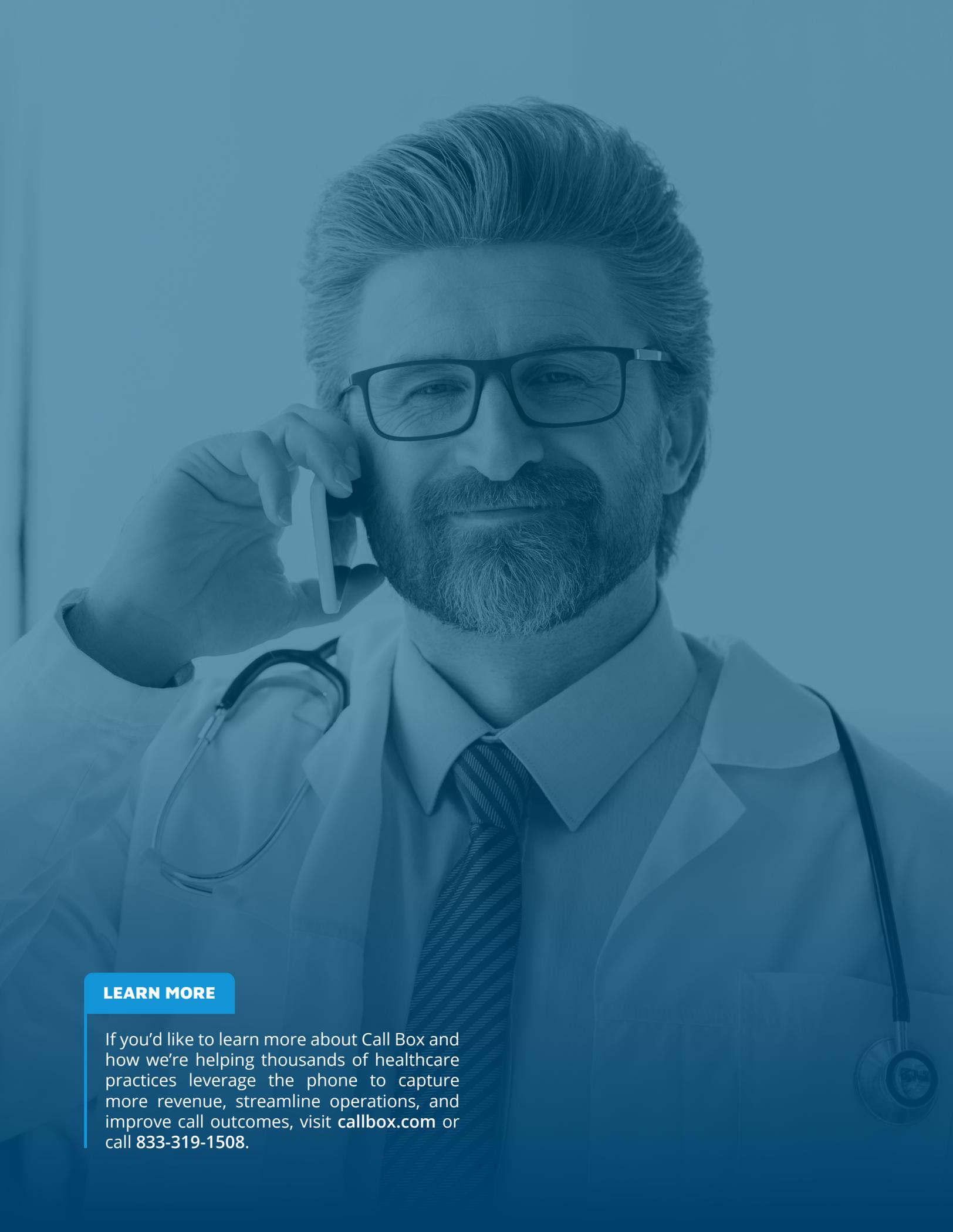
### INCREASED USE OF REMOTE TEAMS, CALL CENTERS, AND TEXTING

Second, we expect there to be increased reliance on remote teams, third-party contact centers, and texting to help combat high call volume and streamline workflows. With a continued emphasis on social distancing measures and reduced staffing models, adequately handling the high number of patient calls is crucial.



### CONTINUED ADOPTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF PHONE HANDLING TECHNOLOGY

Finally, we expect to see continued adoption and improvement of phone handling technology. As the phone continues to be a critical tool to keep patients informed and ensure a seamless workflow, practices will adopt methods to become more effective on the phone.



## LEARN MORE

If you'd like to learn more about Call Box and how we're helping thousands of healthcare practices leverage the phone to capture more revenue, streamline operations, and improve call outcomes, visit [callbox.com](https://callbox.com) or call 833-319-1508.