Flex case study

Pádraig MacGinty
Owner, North West Hearing Clinic
Donegal, Ireland

Pádraig MacGinty has been in business for 15 years, owning two clinics in North West Ireland. His experience with Flex:trial™ is that it encourages patients to feel enthusiastic about getting new hearing aids and makes them feel very much a part of the process. He has over 15 Flex:trial devices working for him in his practice.
How Pádraig incorporates Flex into his practice

Pádraig has made Flex:trial an integral part of his counseling for patients who are new to hearing instruments. “First appointment, straight off, I usually carry out the hearing test and if they didn’t have hearing aids before, if they’re new users, straight away after the hearing test I’ve got a big screen on the wall and I explain the audiogram and my findings,” says Pádraig. “Then I say, ‘Now listen Mr. X, I just want to try something in your ears that will take about 5 minutes to get ready and let you respond if you find that you’re hearing my voice any better.’ I don’t even mention the word hearing aid in case they balk at the idea. And I program the Flex:trial devices up and fit them in their ears and we usually get a smile and you nearly know straight away. What happens is, they tend to sit back in their seat because they can hear my voice automatically. And whenever I see them fall back in their seat I know I’m in business. I know they are hearing. And I’ll say, ‘Can you hear me any better?’ and they do, they really do. So that gives them an initial positive response where they think, ‘Maybe this is a good idea. And the fact that I can take these home with me for a week without having to pay this guy some money, this is fantastic.’ They’re not expecting it and it’s a great opportunity. It’s like buying a car and getting to take it away for a week for a test drive.”
Hearing healthcare professional benefits

• Build patient trust
• Delight patients with risk-free trials

Patient benefits

• Reduced fear and uncertainty
• Patient feels part of the process
• Risk-free trial at home

Business impact

• Start building a strong customer relationship right from the first appointment
How Pádraig explains what Flex:trial is to patients

Pádraig likes to make sure his patients know that the Flex:trial devices are just for trying out the hearing instruments before making a purchase. “I keep it quite simple, to be honest,” says Pádraig. “I’ll say, ‘These aren’t the hearing aids you’re going to have. These are just a trial pair of hearing aids.’ ”

Pádraig always starts a trial at the Pro level so that his patients can get a taste of what the best technology sounds like. “I would never dream of starting with a pair of 6s or Es because you’re getting one chance to show off your wares here,” he says. “So I start with the Pros and I explain that they are fantastic hearing aids. I tell them the price and explain that if they feel they are a bit too expensive, we can trial a different pair. I tell them that this is more important than changing their car or putting a conservatory onto their house. This is so they can communicate with everybody so they shouldn’t worry too much about the money. I have to say this usually works.”

Pádraig has traditionally sold mid- to low-end products. With Flex:trial, he is now selling more Pro and 20 technology level products. “This isn’t a very wealthy part of the world,” he says. “Industry isn’t here. The cities aren’t big. There isn’t a lot of population and there’s not a lot of money, to be honest. So the purchase of a pair of hearing aids is a big deal. With Flex:trial, it’s a lot easier to sell better hearing aids because patients have more confidence in the product since they have trialed it.”
With Flex:trial Pádraig sees more patients buying high-end hearing instruments, which, in turn, leads to higher satisfaction rates. “I’m seeing higher satisfaction rates, which is, in my opinion, better than selling more hearing aids because they will tell their neighbors and relatives about what’s happening with their hearing aids and about how well they’re feeling socially and emotionally and professionally and every other way of connecting with people.”

**Hearing healthcare professional benefits**
- Fit higher technology levels

**Patient benefits**
- Increased confidence in decision

**Business impact**
- Increased average selling price
- Increased customer referrals
How Flex positively impacts patient acceptance of amplification

With Flex:trial Pádraig’s patients get to experience the benefits immediately and realize that the hearing instruments will help them. “It’s changed the whole way that I work in the office, because there’s more trust straight away between me and my clients. Prior to Flex:trial they had to take my word for it, but now they experience the benefits right away and realize that the hearing aids will help them. So it means there is less suspicion, I suppose, for lack of a better word. Most people are skeptical when they come in because they’ve heard so many sad stories about their neighbors not getting on well with hearing aids. Whenever they get to hear the natural sound of a Moxi™ hearing aid through Flex:trial I think they’re very impressed and willing to proceed to the next step.”

Using Flex to encourage skeptical patients to experience amplification
Pádraig uses Flex:trial when someone comes in for a hearing test and they aren’t sure about getting a hearing instrument. He lets them go home with a pair of Flex:trial devices, usually for about a week, following up with a phone call the day after they are fitted. “If I feel that they need to come in, or if I need to do a house call, I’ll do that,” he says. “But certainly after a week, I feel that it’s time enough for them to make a decision. And it gives them great confidence, especially for first-time users. Whenever they’re a bit afraid of wearing a hearing aid, or they’re not too sure it’s for them, it’s a big barrier. I think Flex:trial really helps them to overcome the barrier.”

Hearing healthcare professional benefits
- Build patient trust

Patient benefits
- Increased confidence in decision

Business impact
- Start building a strong customer relationship right from the first appointment
How Flex changes the way Pádraig sells

Flex:trial has eliminated the need for Pádraig to apply sales pressure to his patients. “Definitely, you don’t have to apply pressure,” he says. “In fact, I don’t apply pressure. Honestly, in my practice it’s very much a case of, listen, if you want help I’m here to offer it. If you want cheap hearing aids that don’t work go to the competition. But you’ll end up coming back to me. I’ll get you in the long grass anyway because the cheap stuff doesn’t work. But if you want quality hearing through quality hearing aids, sample Flex:trial and you’ll get Moxi or Moxi Kiss or whatever. So there’s no need for all these cheesy lines and applying a bit of pressure to them because Flex:trial does the selling for you. Flex:trial and Moxi. Unitron products do the selling for you. My job is just to marry the patient with the devices, let them start the relationship and watch it blossom.”

Hearing healthcare professional benefits

- Reduce sales pressure

Business impact

- Spend less time “selling”
How Pádraig uses Flex to engage patients and family members

Pádraig believes that Flex:trial encourages patients and their family members to get excited about hearing instruments immediately. “With Flex:trial you can show them that they scored a 4 out of 10 without the hearing aids and now they’re scoring 9 or 10 with them. And the spouses are thinking, ‘Hang on a second, this is impressive.’ I think Flex:trial encourages people to get enthusiastic about what’s going on and about how well they’re hearing with their new devices. They are very much a part of the process.”

Patient benefits

• Patient feels part of the process
How Pádraig integrates Flex into his marketing

Pádraig really feels strongly about staying in touch with customers and telling them about new initiatives like Flex:trial. “I think it’s really important to keep them on the line. So I do write to them quite frequently. I’m trying to impress upon them that technology is moving on and software is improving and the new hearing aids are improving so don’t even dream about going anywhere else because you’re going to miss out on what I have to offer.”

Pádraig promotes Flex:trial quite heavily in his marketing activities. “It’s on my website and on most of my literature. There’s a caption on all my newsletters that I send out as well. Flex:trial is a strong member of my advertising team.”

Hearing healthcare professional benefits

• Differentiated marketing
• Database mining

Business impact

• Tool to maintain current customers and attract new ones

Using Flex to stay in touch with your patients

Using Flex to build traffic
How Pádraig integrates Flex into the repair process

Pádraig also uses Flex:trial as a tool to bridge existing patients through repairs of their hearing instruments. “I use it if someone brings a hearing aid in for repair, not just a Unitron hearing aid but any hearing aid, even if they bought it from one of my competitors,” he explains. “If they’re bringing in an old hearing aid for repair, and if I can get them into the booth, I’ll do a quick hearing test and get out a Flex:trial and let them borrow it while their old hearing aid is being repaired. To be honest, 8 or 9 times out of 10 they buy it. It will take at least a week for their hearing aid to get repaired. Usually by the time that week is over they fall in love with the Flex:trial. It’s a great way of getting an unexpected sale. Actually, it’s not an unexpected sale anymore. I nearly expect a sale whenever I have someone bringing in a hearing aid that’s broken. I think it’s a great opportunity.”

Hearing healthcare professional benefit
• Offer premium and convenient repair bridge

Business impact
• Increase sales to current customers

Using Flex to increase sales
Overall, the Flex experience has been very positive for Pádraig. “It’s helping every angle of the business, to be honest. It’s a very strong commodity and one that I certainly commend Unitron for dreaming up. It seems obvious now, but it’s great that it can happen because it’s a very strong tool.”

“I’m always telling my counterparts to, first, get their hearing aids from Unitron and, second, use Flex because it saves a lot of work and gets the results. It’s been very positive and very good to me. I just hope that I get more ears coming in so I can share the experience of Flex with them. It’s terrific.”

**Key business impacts**

- Attracts new customers
- Increases average selling price
- Increases customer referrals
- Simplifies selling process
- Provides a powerful customer relationship tool
- Improves in-clinic success
- Improves the patient experience
At Unitron, we care deeply about people with hearing loss. We work closely with hearing healthcare professionals to provide hearing solutions that improve lives in meaningful ways. Because hearing matters.