

THE AUDIENCE ADVANTAGE:


Smarter, Privacy-First Targeting for Healthcare Marketers *





The Road to Performance Marketing

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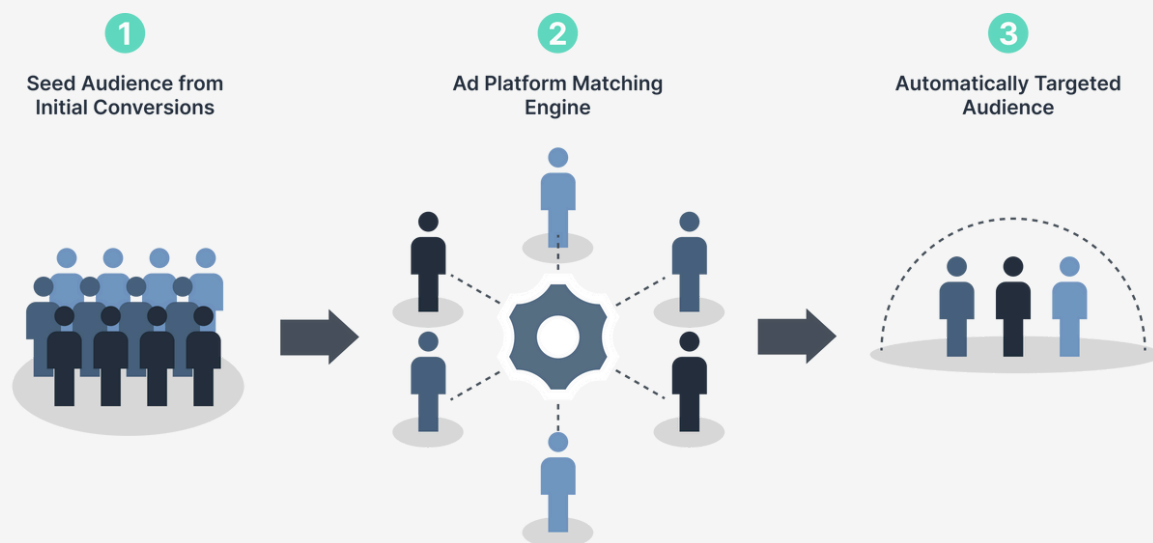
The marketers who stop waiting for permission, and start putting privacy first, are the ones who will lead the next era of growth.

Healthcare Marketing's Defining Moment

Healthcare marketing is entering a defining moment. For years, marketers have been forced to choose between protecting patient privacy and proving marketing performance. It's a false tradeoff that is stunting growth across the industry.

It usually plays out like this:

Your organization is opening a new clinic in a new region. The launch date is on the calendar, the signage is up, and leadership expects appointments to fill quickly. Your job is simple in theory: generate demand ahead of opening day. But **budgets are tight**, timelines are tighter, and expectations haven't moved an inch.



In most industries, the solution here would be straightforward. You'd build a campaign targeting people who actually fit your ideal audience. People who live nearby, haven't visited your company in the past year, and recently visited your website or logged into your web portal. The tools for that kind of precision marketing are well established: pixels, retargeting lists, lookalike audiences, and exclusion campaigns.

But those tools are off-limits in healthcare. So marketers end up running growth campaigns without data. Guessing instead of optimizing. And competing in a performance-driven world with no way to measure performance.

Healthcare Marketers Are Running the Same Race With Different Rules

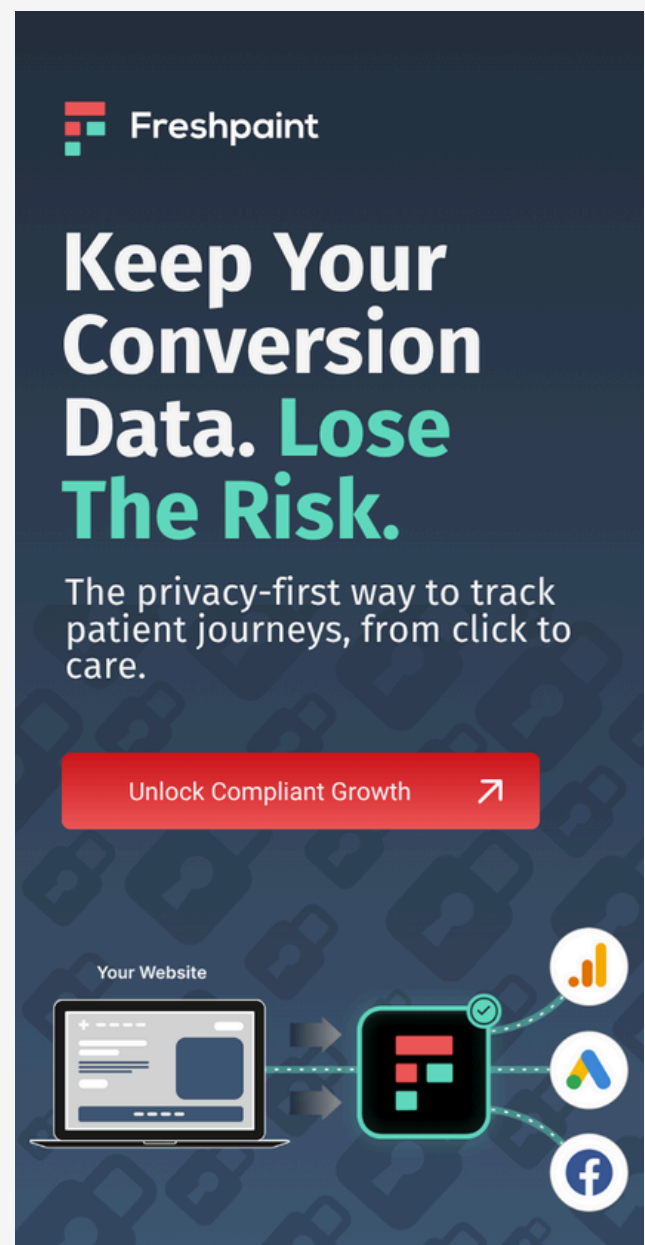
HIPAA, along with a continually expanding [patchwork of state privacy laws](#), makes it incredibly difficult for healthcare marketers to collect, use, and share data for marketing purposes, especially on platforms like Google and Meta that won't sign [Business Associate Agreements](#) (BAAs).

That leaves marketers with a nearly impossible tradeoff: protect patient privacy or meet business goals.

Many organizations rightfully prioritize protecting patient privacy because the consequences of getting it wrong have intensified. Regulators, plaintiffs, and even ad platforms are all tightening the screws.

The FTC has fined companies like [BetterHelp](#) and [GoodRx](#) for sharing health-related data with marketing platforms, and the OCR continues to crack down on noncompliant tracking technologies. At the same time, class action lawsuits have surged. [Stewart v. Advocate Aurora Health](#) is one example which ended in a \$12.2 million settlement.

State lawmakers are adding another layer of complexity. Washington's My Health My Data Act, for example, broadened the definition of "health data" and opened the door to new enforcement actions. And beyond government oversight, ad platforms have become de facto regulators themselves. Meta's 2025 policy update now places full liability on healthcare advertisers for any data misuse.

A promotional graphic for Freshpaint. At the top left is the Freshpaint logo. The main headline reads "Keep Your Conversion Data. Lose The Risk." in large, bold, white and teal text. Below this, a sub-headline states: "The privacy-first way to track patient journeys, from click to care." A red button with white text says "Unlock Compliant Growth" followed by a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom, a diagram shows a laptop labeled "Your Website" with an arrow pointing to a teal square icon containing a red and green bar chart. This icon is connected by dashed lines to three circular icons on the right: a bar chart, the Google Analytics logo, and the Facebook logo. The background is dark blue with faint, repeating icons of people and padlocks.

Freshpaint

Keep Your Conversion Data. Lose The Risk.

The privacy-first way to track patient journeys, from click to care.

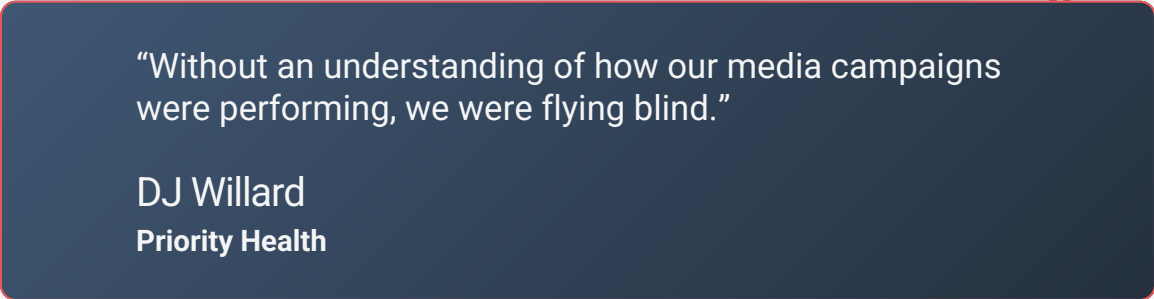
Unlock Compliant Growth ↗

Your Website

While compliance teams are right to be cautious, total risk avoidance has a measurable cost. When healthcare organizations stop using audience targeting, campaign efficiency drops sharply.

- Heartland Dental saw an 8x increase in acquisition costs after removing pixels.
- Allergy Partners' cost per lead climbed to \$300.

Without audience targeting, teams waste budget reaching irrelevant audiences, lose visibility into campaign performance, and struggle to prove marketing's strategic value. As DJ Willard, Senior Director of Strategic Marketing at [Priority Health](#), put it:



"Without an understanding of how our media campaigns were performing, we were flying blind."

DJ Willard
Priority Health

When marketing loses its ability to prove impact, it stops being seen as a growth engine and starts getting treated like overhead. That perception is already taking a toll: healthcare marketing budgets dropped from 9.6% of total revenue in 2023 to 7.2% in 2024. The only way to reverse that trend is to prove marketing drives revenue again.

To do that, healthcare marketers need a performance infrastructure that puts privacy at the foundation of performance marketing.

Understanding Privacy-First Audience Targeting

The basis of high-performing marketing in any industry is audience targeting. At its core, audience targeting uses data to deliver the right message to the right person at the right time. It helps marketers avoid the waste of broadcasting a single message to everyone and instead focus spend where it matters most.

There are a few common ways to do this:

Tactic	What It Does	Example in Healthcare
Segmentation	Divides users into groups based on shared traits or behaviors.	People in Cincinnati for a campaign promoting a new clinic opening.
Lookalikes	Finds new prospects who resemble your best existing patients or members.	Targeting people similar to those who booked online appointments in the past 90 days.
Exclusions	Removes people who've already converted, reducing waste.	Suppressing patients who already received a flu shot or completed an intake form.
Retargeting	Re-engages users who showed intent but didn't complete an action.	Following up with people who visited an appointment page but didn't book.

In other industries, these tactics routinely deliver 20 - 50% higher conversion rates and up to 2x higher click-through rate. Those aren't small gains. They're the difference between a campaign that pays for itself and one that drains the budget. But, these tactics are typically enabled through unsafe tools like pixels, cookies, and other tracking technologies.

In healthcare, these tactics can finally be enabled by privacy-first audience-targeting platforms like [Freshpaint](#). These tools introduce controls that make compliant, data-driven marketing possible. Instead of hiding or discarding valuable behavioral signals, they give teams the tools to handle them properly:

* BAA-Protected Infrastructure:

Ensures any data collected is processed within a covered environment.

* Server-Side Data Collection:

Moves data capture away from the browser, eliminating client-side leaks.

* Precision Allowlists:

Specify exactly which data fields can be shared with each external system, so PHI never leaves your environment.

* Event Verification:

Validates that every outgoing event is scrubbed of PHI before activation.

Together, these controls let compliance teams stay confident while giving marketers the flexibility to act on data safely.



Healthcare ad targeting, finally unblocked.

No PHI exposure. No pixels. Just compliant, effective campaigns.

Get Access



What Happens When Privacy and Performance **Work Together**

Four healthcare organizations have proven that using privacy-first audience targeting can lead to measurable results with real impact.

Here's how they did it.

A Large Regional Payer: Enterprise Scale, Zero Compromise



The Win: 10% CPC improvement in just one week

This regional payer is proving that privacy-first audiences can meet compliance requirements and drive real performance. In just a week of running [Freshpaint Audiences](#), they cut Cost Per Click (CPC) by 10% while also improving Cost Per Mille (CPM).

And they're doing it at enterprise scale. With 100,000 prospects imported and dozens of custom segments live across Meta and Google, they're running sophisticated A/B tests during their critical open enrollment period.

This isn't a workaround or a compromise. It's healthcare marketing operating with the same sophistication as any other industry, but with the privacy guardrails that HIPAA demands.



A Global Fertility Clinic Network: Speed That Changes Everything

The Win: 30 minutes
from import to live
campaigns in Meta



A Global Fertility Clinic Network demonstrates what happens when compliance barriers disappear. Within 30 minutes of connecting Freshpaint Audiences, they imported their entire customer list and deployed it as an exclusion audience in Meta. That's right. Just 30 minutes to redirect ad spend from existing patients to future ones.

Google's policy limitations were holding this network back, but after deploying Audiences, the network launched Meta as a new channel. Meta delivered immediate value via exclusion lists. Every dollar saved from targeting existing patients is a dollar that can acquire new ones. When you're under pressure to do more with less, that kind of efficiency is transformative.



An Innovative Healthtech Startup: Turning Dead Leads Into Revenue

The Win: 75% ROI
improvement from a
single audience segment



This company had a problem every marketer knows: 60,000 email addresses from users who started but never completed signup. Traditional thinking says those leads are dead. Audiences proved otherwise.

By importing those 60,000 emails into Freshpaint Audiences and retargeting them on Meta, they generated a 75% ROI lift compared to other awareness channels. That's not just an incremental improvement. It's a step change in performance. And with phone number support coming, their reach will double to 120,000 potential patients.

This is what happens when you stop letting privacy restrictions dictate your marketing strategy and start using tools built specifically for healthcare's unique requirements.



A Virtual Care Clinic: Building Compliance Into Growth From Day One



The Win: Consent-first architecture enabling confident scaling

One virtual care clinic's journey showcases a different kind of win: the confidence that comes from getting compliance right from the start. Their legal team decided they needed a consent management solution before launching campaigns, and the marketing team treated it as foundation-building rather than a barrier.

With that foundation in place, they're now tracking consented events, have 14,000 users in their first segment, and are preparing to launch retargeting campaigns. They didn't have to retrofit compliance after the fact or pause campaigns for a privacy audit. They built it in from day one, and now they can scale without looking over their shoulder.

This proves that Freshpaint works across the full spectrum of compliance needs and can meet teams wherever they are.



Don't Let Privacy Rules Wreck Advertising ROI Goals

Reclaim your budget from soaring CPLs and privacy violations.

[Learn More](#) ↗









Proof That the Privacy-First Marketing Works

These aren't edge cases or lucky breaks. These organizations represent various segments of healthcare, ranging from large insurers to specialized fertility clinics and digital health startups. Yet they all faced the same challenge: how to run sophisticated marketing campaigns without violating an ever-growing patchwork of privacy laws.

The answer isn't to accept limitations. It's to find tools built for healthcare's unique requirements. Tools that understand the difference between a website visitor and a patient. Tools that can handle PHI safely while still enabling the targeting capabilities modern marketing demands.

Each of these organizations made a choice. They decided compliance wasn't a roadblock but a solvable problem. They chose tools that let marketing and compliance work together instead of against each other.

The results speak for themselves:

-  Campaigns live in 30 minutes instead of weeks
-  ROI improvements of 75% on previously dead channels
-  Enterprise-scale audience management with full compliance
-  Consent-first architecture that enables, not restricts

Across payers, providers, and digital health companies, the results are consistent: faster launches, stronger ROI, zero PHI exposure.

Every day without these capabilities is a day of wasted budget. Marketers are targeting existing patients with acquisition campaigns, missing retargeting opportunities, and losing competitive ground to teams that have already moved forward.



How Healthcare Marketers Are Using Privacy-First Audience Targeting

Once your foundation is in place, the question becomes: what can you actually do with it? Privacy-first audience targeting opens the door to dozens of strategies that used to be off-limits in healthcare.

Below are some of the most practical, high-impact use cases healthcare marketers are already deploying with Freshpaint Audiences.

1. Prospecting and Lookalikes

Use compliant behavioral data to find new, high-propensity patients or members.

1. Build lookalikes from high-intent site actions — people who started but didn't complete an appointment or quote request.
2. Create seed audiences from completed lead forms or offline-converted patients synced back into Freshpaint.
3. Refresh lookalikes every 30 days to reflect recent conversions and maintain relevance.

These tactics turn your owned data into the fuel for sustainable, privacy-aligned acquisition.

2. Retargeting and Nurture

Safely re-engage high-intent visitors who didn't finish the journey.

1. Retarget appointment or cart abandoners with reminders or convenience messages.
2. Retarget viewers of key service pages (e.g., orthopedics, dermatology).
3. Re-engage video viewers who watched 50-95% of testimonial or educational clips.
4. Run multi-touch nurture campaigns that provide brand exposure that keeps you top-of-mind between conversion pushes.

Because events are scrubbed of PHI before activation, these retargeting plays stay fully compliant.

3. Suppression and Exclusions

Protect budget and patient experience by ensuring ads never reach the wrong people.

1. Suppress current patients from acquisition campaigns to eliminate wasted spend.
2. Suppress recent converters for a cooling-off period to prevent redundancy.
3. Exclude users in active care journeys or ineligible geographies.
4. Automatically exclude unsubscribed or “do-not-market” users for compliance alignment.

The result: lower media waste, cleaner reporting, and a better experience for patients who’ve already taken action.

4. Lifecycle and Win-Back Campaigns

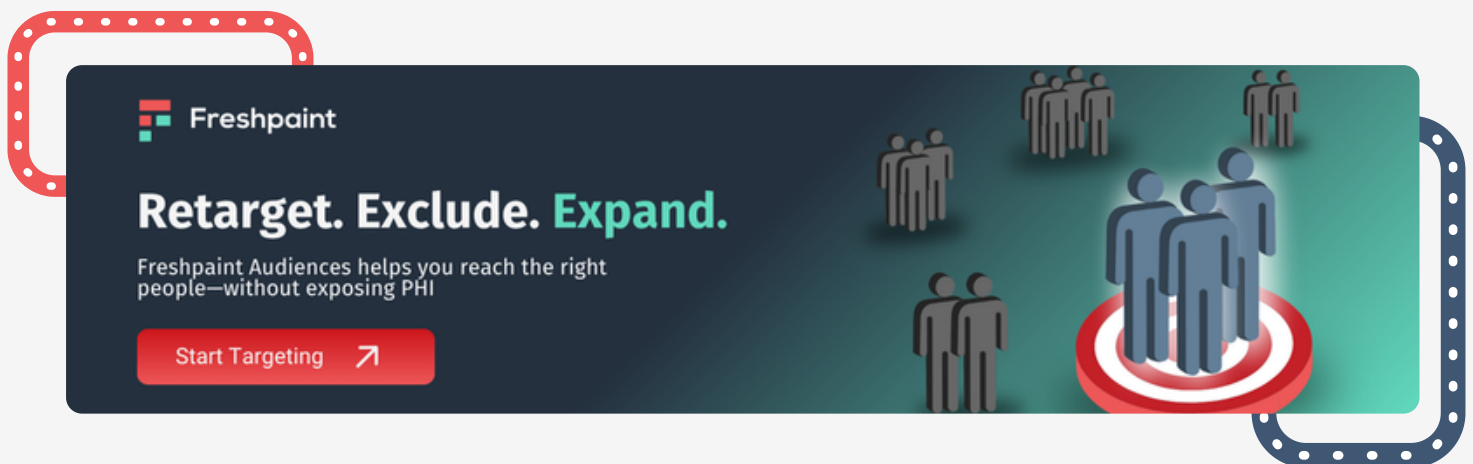
Extend marketing value beyond the first conversion.

1. Win back lapsed patients with service-line-specific reminders or follow-up offers.
2. Re-engage pre-qualified leads who stalled before booking.
3. Upsell or cross-sell care based on past services — for instance, promoting dental whitening to hygiene-only patients.
4. Encourage follow-up visits at clinically appropriate intervals based on appointment recency.

Because these campaigns use first-party, consented data, they’re both effective and defensible.

The Takeaway

Audience targeting isn’t just about performance anymore. It’s about precision, trust, and control. With the right privacy-first foundation, healthcare marketers can finally do what they’ve always known works: reach the right people, at the right time, for the right reason.

A promotional banner for Freshpaint's audience targeting capabilities. The banner has a dark blue background with a teal gradient on the right side. On the left, the Freshpaint logo is displayed above the text "Retarget. Exclude. Expand." in white and teal. Below this, a smaller line of text reads "Freshpaint Audiences helps you reach the right people—without exposing PHI". A red button with the text "Start Targeting" and a right-pointing arrow is positioned at the bottom left. On the right side, there are several stylized human figures in white and teal. One group of figures is highlighted with a red circular target graphic, indicating the focus of the targeting. The entire banner is framed by a decorative border consisting of a red dotted line on the top left and a blue dotted line on the bottom right.

Freshpaint

Retarget. Exclude. Expand.

Freshpaint Audiences helps you reach the right people—without exposing PHI

[Start Targeting](#)



The Future Belongs to Privacy-First Marketers

Healthcare marketing has reached its turning point. Not because regulations softened, but because the industry finally started putting privacy-first and innovating on top of that foundation.

The future belongs to teams that treat privacy as a design principle, not a roadblock. They'll build systems where PHI never leaks, where campaigns optimize toward attended appointments instead of vanity clicks, and where compliance isn't a last-minute hurdle but a built-in advantage.

These are the organizations that will set the new standard:



Campaigns that launch in hours, not weeks.



ROI that leadership actually trusts.



Audiences that reflect real intent, not guesswork.

Privacy-first audience targeting isn't the end of healthcare's marketing evolution. It's the moment it finally begins to scale with confidence.



Keep Learning

About Freshpaint

Freshpaint's Healthcare Privacy Platform empowers healthcare companies to use the industry's best marketing tools while remaining compliant with a growing list of privacy regulations like HIPAA. Freshpaint replaces untrusted tracking technologies from tools like Google Analytics, Facebook, and Google Ads, then provides a governance layer that controls what data gets shared with those platforms.



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