

# How we helped Star-shl to implement an impactful patient portal to improve their patient experience



## About Star-shl

Star-shl is a leading player in Dutch medical diagnostics, contributing to well-organised primary healthcare with its advanced laboratory and diagnostic centres with extensive research facilities. Star-shl's mission is to actively shape a sustainable, high-quality regional infrastructure for medical and laboratory diagnostics in the Netherlands, focusing on quality and customer satisfaction.

Hans van der Put is the Business Manager of Star-shl's Diagnostic Imaging Division and Prenatal Center. Hans underscores Star-shl's mission of advancing healthcare digitisation, providing patients with the utmost freedom throughout their healthcare journey. Therefore, Hans is establishing a patient portal to schedule appointments with Star-shl after receiving a doctor's referral.

Antoinette Tekstra is the Head of the Customer Contact Center at Star-shl. Her department is responsible for scheduling examinations and informing patients about the procedure and preparation for the examination.

*As Star-shl, we aim to contribute to the digitisation of healthcare by providing patients with the utmost freedom throughout their healthcare journey.*

Hans van der Put

# Scheduling Appointments Before the Implementation of the Patient Portal

Before implementing the patient portal, patients could schedule appointments with Star-shl by phone by contacting the Customer Contact Center. This meant that appointments could only be made during business hours from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM. The ambition to digitise was already there, and COVID-19 accelerated this process. The situation necessitated adjusted service, including appointments for all examinations. As a result, the Customer Contact Center couldn't handle the high call volume despite the additional efforts of staff, leading to longer waiting times for appointment scheduling.

Also, prior the portal's implementation, specific instructions for certain examinations that a patient needed to know were discussed over the phone. These instructions included details such as fasting before the examination, temporarily discontinuing certain medications, or bringing a companion to the appointment. Following these instructions was important as they could affect the quality and reliability of an examination. Although patients were also referred to patient information on the website, it often happened that an examination could not be carried out (fully) because a patient was insufficiently prepared.

To ensure that patients could schedule appointments more quickly and easily, come well-prepared for examinations, and relieve pressure on the Customer Contact Center, Hans and Antoinette, along with other Star-shl colleagues, worked on establishing the patient portal "Mijn Star-shl" by Brightfish, a part of LOGEX. how they are feeling and doing.

## From Wait Time to Convenience: Scheduling Appointments Online Through the Patient Portal

### How does it work?

After receiving a referral for an examination at Star-shl, patients automatically receive an invitation to schedule an appointment online via email or SMS. Patients then visit [www.mijn.star-shl.nl](http://www.mijn.star-shl.nl) or use the Mijn Star-shl app. They can log in with DigiD (Dutch Online Identification System) to schedule an appointment for the examination. At present, the majority of examinations offered by Star-shl can be scheduled through the patient portal. The goal in the coming period is to gradually allow scheduling of all Imaging Division and Prenatal Center examinations via the Patient Portal.

*The patient portal is particularly user-friendly and accessible, but most importantly, patients can now choose when to schedule an appointment, no longer being dependent on our Customer Contact Center's opening hours. They can also read the instructions at their own pace, 24/7.*

Antoinette Tekstra

# The impact

## Reduced Pressure on the Customer Contact Center

After the first few months, 30% of patients already use the portal to schedule appointments online. This positive result was achieved without any active promotional campaign targeting patients and referrers. It is expected that usage will increase further as more features are added, and the portal is actively promoted.

Antoinette has noticed that since the launch of the patient portal, the service level has improved within the Customer Contact Center and can be maintained steadily with fewer staff. This allows the Customer Contact Center to focus on other tasks.

## An Accessible System for Patients

“We see that the portal is easy to use when we look at who starts using it immediately,” says Hans. “You want everyone, young and old, non-native speakers, to easily use this service. One of the first patients to log in was an elderly patient, which gave us confidence that we offer an accessible system.”

Antoinette: “We haven’t received any calls from patients regarding the portal, which I believe is a positive sign. It means that it’s clear for the patients.”

## Advancing Toward Streamlined Healthcare: Expanding the Mijn Star-shl Patient Platform

Star-shl wants to develop and expand the portal gradually. Initially, they started with a ‘minimum viable product’ (MVP) with the essential functionalities. By doing so, they could improve patient experience immediately, then quickly identify which current functionalities might need optimisation, and determine which new features could be added.

Antoinette and Hans have a clear vision for the future of the patient portal:

*“Our ambition is to offer more possibilities to patients in the next phase. We want to implement new features such as managing personal information and changing or cancelling appointments. Additionally, more examinations will be added to enable an even larger group of patients to use the portal. All of this aims to make it as easy as possible for patients. We are eager to see how patients respond to these additions, as we expect it will lead to increased platform use.”*



**Antoinette Tekstra**

Head of the Customer Contact Center, Star-shl



**Hans van der Put**

Business Manager of Star-shl’s Diagnostic Imaging Division and Prenatal Center