

The Future of the ASC: What Sales Reps Need to Know

A practical article for sales teams covering the shift toward ambulatory surgery centers

Key message: The ASC opportunity is not just about selling into more facilities. It is about helping outpatient centers improve workflow, manage cost, support surgeons, and deliver safe, efficient patient care.

Ambulatory Surgery Centers are no longer viewed as a niche alternative to the hospital. They are becoming one of the most important growth channels in healthcare. For sales reps, this shift creates a major opportunity, but it also requires a different way of selling.

The ASC customer is not simply a smaller version of a hospital customer. ASCs operate with leaner teams, tighter schedules, faster room turnover, and a sharper focus on cost, efficiency, and surgeon satisfaction. Every product, service, and conversation must fit that reality. The future of the ASC belongs to companies and reps who can help these centers deliver high-quality care while protecting their margins and keeping cases moving.

Why the ASC market is moving forward

Several forces are driving the ASC market forward. CMS continues to expand the number of procedures that can be performed in the ASC setting. In the 2026 OPPI/ASC final rule, CMS added 289 procedures to the ASC Covered Procedures List and added another 271 codes tied to procedures removed from the inpatient-only list. CMS also began phasing out the inpatient-only list over three years, starting with 285 mostly musculoskeletal procedures in 2026. These changes reflect a broader belief that more procedures can be performed safely in outpatient settings when the patient, surgeon, facility, and clinical pathway are appropriate.

Volume is expected to follow. Sg2's 2025 forecast projects total adult ASC volume to grow 21 percent over the decade, with surgical utilization in ASCs expected to grow 23 percent. That growth is especially important for reps covering specialties such as orthopedics, spine, pain management, ophthalmology, GI, and other procedure categories that are increasingly suited for outpatient care.

Cost pressure will also continue to push procedures toward ASCs. MedPAC has reported that, for services covered in both ASCs and hospital outpatient departments, Medicare payment rates are lower in ASCs, which can also lower beneficiary cost sharing. For patients, payers, and employers, that value proposition matters. For sales reps, it means the selling conversation cannot only be about clinical features. It must also address economics, efficiency, predictability, and the total cost of care.

What this means for procedures and adoption

This does not mean every case will move to an ASC. The future will be defined by appropriate patient selection, careful case planning, strong anesthesia protocols, and clear recovery pathways. More complex procedures may continue to migrate outpatient, but ASCs will demand solutions that reduce variability.

Products that add complexity, increase setup time, expand inventory burden, or slow down turnover will face resistance. Products that simplify workflow, support repeatability, and help the facility manage cost will be better positioned.

How the sales conversation must change

The sales rep of the future must become more than a product expert. Reps must understand how ASCs make decisions. In many centers, the surgeon may be an owner or a major influencer, but administrators, materials managers, nurses, and business office leaders all affect adoption. A product that the surgeon likes may still fail if the center cannot justify the cost, manage the inventory, train the staff, or get paid appropriately.

For the surgeon, the conversation should focus on clinical confidence, reproducibility, patient selection, and procedural efficiency. For the administrator, it should focus on cost per case, reimbursement awareness, scheduling impact, and operational fit. For the clinical team, it should focus on training, ease of use, tray management, turnover, and support. For the business office, it should focus on documentation, coding awareness, and avoiding surprises.

Quality, transparency, and value will matter more

Quality and transparency will also shape the ASC landscape. CMS requires Medicare-enrolled ASCs to report certain quality measures through the ASC Quality Reporting Program, and ASCs that fail to submit required data can receive a two-percentage-point reduction to their annual payment update. CMS also makes ASC quality data available publicly through Care Compare.

As patients, payers, and health systems become more focused on measurable outcomes, sales reps should be prepared to support conversations around safety, consistency, and value.

The opportunity for sales reps

The ASC opportunity is not just about selling into more facilities. It is about helping customers build a better outpatient model. That means showing up prepared, knowing the procedure environment, understanding the economics, and offering support that makes adoption easier. Reps who only present features may struggle. Reps who help the ASC solve business and workflow problems will become trusted partners.

In the coming years, the most successful sales reps will ask better questions: How many rooms does the center run? What procedures are growing? What cases are they trying to move from the hospital? What are their biggest turnover challenges? What does reimbursement look like? Who owns inventory decisions? What training does the staff need? What would make this product easier to adopt?

The future of the ASC is growth, but it is also discipline. ASCs will continue to expand because they offer convenience, efficiency, and a lower-cost site of care for appropriate patients. But they will not adopt every new product or technology simply because it is innovative. They will adopt what helps them run better, treat patients safely, satisfy surgeons, and protect financial performance.

Questions every ASC sales rep should ask

- What procedures are growing in this center, and which cases are moving from the hospital?
- Who influences adoption: surgeon owners, administrators, materials managers, nursing leaders, or the business office?
- How does the product affect setup time, turnover, inventory, training, and cost per case?
- What support does the staff need to make adoption easy and repeatable?
- How can the solution support clinical confidence, operational efficiency, and financial performance at the same time?

Bottom line

Winning in the ASC requires a sharper, more consultative approach. Know the clinical value. Know the economic value. Know the workflow. Know the customer's pressure points. The ASC is one of the most important frontiers in healthcare, and the reps who understand how to sell into that environment will be the ones who lead the next phase of growth.

Sources

- [CMS: Calendar Year 2026 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System and Ambulatory Surgical Center final rule fact sheet](#)
- [ASC Focus: Sg2 2025 ASC volume forecast summary](#)
- [MedPAC: March 2025 Report to Congress, Chapter 10](#)