

THE RACE TO RECRUIT: TIPS ON IMPROVING YOUR ODDS IN THE TALENT SEARCH GAME

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MAKE IT AN ONGOING ACTIVITY

Most practices run an ad only when they have an open position. They get a slew of resumes, most of which are a marginal fit at best. So rather than employing the *reactive* strategy of "filling a vacancy", think in terms of a *proactive* strategy in which you constantly look for talented people and keep them on your radar screen for future needs.

STOP THE "CATCH AND RELEASE" PROCESS

One of the least effective strategies to employ is the old "catch and release" ploy: Throw your line into the talent pool, catch as many as you can, and then simply throw away the non-keepers.

Rather than send out that dreadful "we received many excellent resumes" rejection letter or email, why not offer them some feedback about their resume, such as what you look for, what catches your eye, what makes a difference. *People always remember people who help them*, and this is especially true in a job search situation.

THINK LIKE MARKETERS, NOT RECRUITERS

Don't tell me you don't have time to reach out to these applicants! Recruiting talent and developing a pool of potential candidates for future needs is one of the most critical factors in your practice's success. Despite the current economic downturn, jobless rates in most markets remain at all-time lows, so you've got to do whatever you can to stand out from your competitors. Offering helpful advice to candidates is a great way to do just that.

USE INTERNET JOB SEARCH SITES

This should be obvious, but it never ceases to amaze me how many practices don't do use internet recruiting. Post positions on healthcare job search sites, and always encourage candidates to visit your website, so they can learn more about your practice! And don't be sleepy in your response: Create a sense of urgency and importance by replying to qualified email resumes *the same day that you receive them!*

Another tip: In your ad (electronic or printed), why not use employee testimonials about how they like working at your practice? There's nothing more powerful than hearing it from the troops...in their own words.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EMAIL

Any time you receive a resume, be sure to offer the applicant the opportunity to receive updates about your practice and available positions. It doesn't have to be anything fancy: What's important here is consistent communication with your potential talent pool, so in the event you have an opening, they'll be more familiar with you. And the reverse is true

as well: If for some reason they turned you down the first time, guess who they'll contact first when they're ready for a change?

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK

The absolute best way to recruit top talent? Get to know the people in your market. Make sure that your staff participate in local practice management associations and that they make an effort to meet their peers in your office building. Sponsor a building-wide "get to know your neighbors" event and invite staff from other offices to drop by for a "TGIF" gathering. *There is absolutely, positively no substitute for networking*, and you need to do everything you can to encourage your staff to get out there!

IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT MONEY

Time and again, research shows that people want to work in a friendly, caring environment, and that is more important than salary. While you need to be price competitive, you also need to show candidates how important they are. There is nothing worse than introducing candidates to a physician, who says "hi" and wisks away after 10 seconds because he's "so busy".

TURN THE EXIT INTERVIEW UPSIDE DOWN

Here's a great idea: Instead of always asking staff why they're leaving, ask them *at the interview* what it would take to keep them around! This shows that you really care about their needs.

OFFER BOUNTY PAY FOR HIRED REFERRALS

It worked in the wild west, and it works here too! If one of your staff refers someone who is ultimately hired, reward them with a bonus (\$100-\$500 is standard, depending on the position). But be sure that they're paid only after the new hire successfully completes their three-month probation.