



remarks

Who's Who and Who's Helping Me in the Search Process?

All recruiters can help you in the search process, but an in-house recruiter can work as your ally in a specific community or organization to create the best opportunity for you...and help you settle in once the deal is sealed.

BY KRISS BARLOW



"I was interested in seeing what practice opportunities were available back in my hometown, so I responded to a couple of ads. While I've learned a lot, I also have too many people willing to help me. Who are all these people?"

Sound familiar? As you begin the process of looking for the right practice, there can be an endless procession of suitors from a wide array of organizations—which begs the question, who's who and what are their agendas?

If you're a physician currently evaluating practice opportunities,

KNOW YOURSELF

1. Create a checklist to establish your minimum requirements:
 - Geography
 - Money and benefits
 - Practice style, type, size
 - Personal and family needs
2. Talk through your list with the recruiter.
3. Eliminate those who cannot meet your needs, or ask for written verification from those who can.
4. Determine how the recruiter is able to support you. Assuming trust, use him to support the process. But remember, it's your job to continue to evaluate and ask questions.

you have a lot at stake personally and professionally, and there's no one method for finding the right fit. With limited time to gather all the background and sift through the details, it makes sense to get support. You need a trusted intermediary who has the knowledge and can do some legwork for you.

That's why many physicians turn to physician recruitment services. These firms have been around in many forms for many years. Some recruiters work for large companies; others work for small, independent firms or for themselves. A special group, the in-house recruiters, works directly for the clinic or hospital that is interested in having you join them.

IN-HOUSE RECRUITERS

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In-house recruiters play an important role. Beyond their recruitment expertise, they can be a sounding board for you, the person who paints a realistic picture of the practice and the organization, and an ally in working through the hiring process and helping you get set up in the practice.

The in-house physician recruiter is employed by a specific practice, clinic, or hospital system. It's his primary job to find candidates interested in practicing in the group he represents. These recruiters are salaried employees who work to find the best candidates, in terms of expertise and fit, for the practice.

As you peruse the ads (particularly those here in *UO*), you will see the names of the individuals or teams right on the advertisement. These people will become your personal contacts for the practice opportunity from start to finish. This is an ideal approach when you have a sense of the communities you desire and want a local expert with a great deal of in-depth knowledge—as well as a liaison who will work to make sure both parties are satisfied with the relationship.

Optimize your connection

It is likely that the in-house recruiter will have connected with you because you have something in common with her current need or because you asked for more information on her opportunities. Use the first phone call to determine if the practice can meet your baseline requirements. While seasoned recruiters will anticipate some of the information you need, you must be prepared to ask questions based on your individual priorities. Prepare for these questions by following the checklist in “Know

Yourself,” on previous page.

Determine if the opportunity adequately meets your core requirements for practice size and scope, clinical opportunity, income, and personal and community needs, then ask for materials as a follow-up. The recruiter should be able to spell out the specifics and make clear how her organization is prepared to meet these needs.

If you want more depth in some of the details, ask the in-house recruiter. It's her job to provide background and insights to satisfy your curiosity or concerns. Be prepared with the tough questions: Ask about group dynamics, the impact of the economy on the city, the changes in hospital ownership from an insider's perspective, your key issues, or any gray areas that need clarifying.

It's in the best interest of the recruiter to be helpful and straightforward in order to get a long-term fit. When the recruiter knows she will see the new physician on a regular basis—in the cafeteria, the grocery store, or the practice—there's a strong desire to work extra hard to make sure the practice fits the description that was sold.

Today's job hunt is further complicated by the variety of contractual options for getting started. Again, you'll need to be prepared with questions to determine who can give you the best package for your needs. Spend time with the recruiter and do your research about what types of packages are being offered so you have a starting point for negotiation.

If you're the ideal candidate, the practice may be able to offer additional value-added services. Ask the recruiter to help work through the

internal process for you. These services may include: offering support with outreach clinics, negotiating management services at a market-based fee, marketing support, and making introductions. The recruiter will know the nuances and what's available within her organization.

Support beyond the signing

Your life inside and outside the practice is about much more than the contract. Many physicians looking for a new practice admit they may have loved a clinical opportunity or felt they had great partners, but they also know the importance of finding the right community and fitting in—for themselves and their families.

Rely on the in-house recruiter to facilitate your transition as a prospective physician to a new member of the medical staff. Use him as a resource to assist directly in getting things set up. Beyond the practice, this recruiter will have community connections he can make available to you.

In addition to introducing you to real estate agents and civic groups, the recruiter will be an excellent resource for supporting your spouse's job hunt, acquainting you with area schools, and facilitating social connections. Since you have a local resource who's committed to your successful integration, why not optimize his role?

Trust your instincts

At Barlow McCarthy, we're often asked to assist with hiring, training, and skill development for recruiters. The best in-house experts I meet consistently impress me not because of their recruitment savvy, but because of their passion and commit-

ment. Physicians I work with find this is an especially important attribute. When you're looking at a major professional career change, it is important to trust the person brokering the deal.

Recognize the recruiter's strengths and determine how you can use her to assess what's right for you. Trust your intuition, and if you need confirmation of your gut feeling, ask for feedback from someone whose judgment you respect. Add their input to the details you gather, and then take the next step.

It's your right to ask the recruiter to explain her role, her involvement in the recruitment and transition processes, and whom she works for. Most doctors tell me that the best response comes from those closest to the issue, so use the in-house contact to help you get to the best information available. When you encounter a great in-house recruiter, you've also found an important connection in taking your professional career a step forward. ■

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