

WHITE PAPER

UNDERSTANDING THE PHYSICIAN PASSIVE JOBSEEKER

A profile of physician jobseekers

November 2013



PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT HURDLES

Physician shortages abound, and increases in the number of new physicians entering the workforce remain modest. Yet, recruiters are still tasked with sourcing quality physicians from a limited pool of candidates. Recruiters are competing for the relatively small pool of new physicians and struggle to effectively reach the largest pool of physician candidates — experienced physicians who are not looking for a new position.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This white paper summarizes the results of a blind survey conducted by Digital Research, Inc. (DRI), an independent market research firm, for NEJM CareerCenter that sought to understand the job-seeking behavior of U.S. physicians. Particular attention was given to jobseekers not taking active steps to search for new employment opportunities — the so-called “passive jobseeker.” In an attempt to better understand the nuances of passive jobseekers, the survey sub-divided these jobseekers, estimated their relative proportion among all physician jobseekers, and suggested tactics to reach the passive physician jobseeker.

HOW AND WHY THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

NEJM CareerCenter conducted a study among physicians to help explain job-seeking behavior among physicians in the United States. In particular, NEJM CareerCenter sought to gain insight into:

- The engagement level of physicians in job-seeking activities and the variation of this engagement across various positions, employment tenure, and work setting.
- The impact of job satisfaction on job-seeking behaviors and the sources in which physicians are most open to seeing job opportunities.

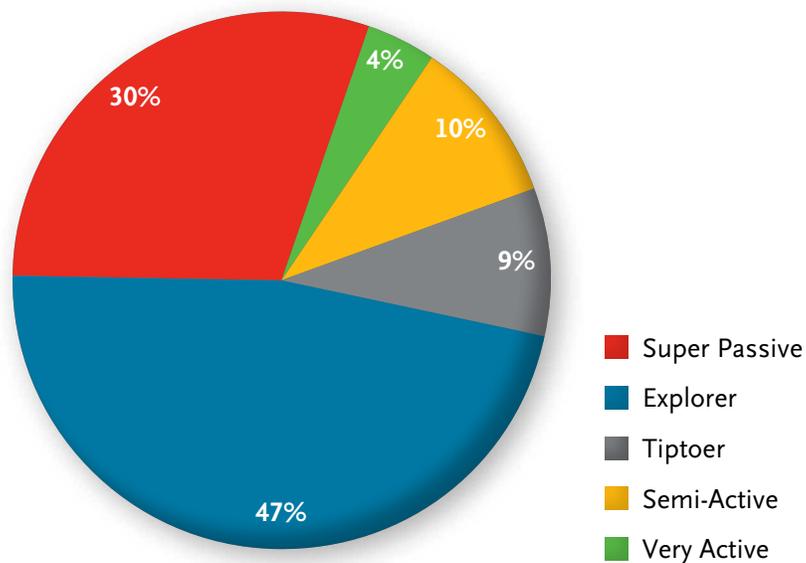
To uncover these insights, NEJM CareerCenter contracted with DRI to conduct a blind, independent study among physicians. In early 2013, DRI surveyed a total of 2,969 physicians to understand job-seeking behaviors. Of those 2,969 physicians, 1,000 were asked to complete a more detailed survey to delve into more specific behaviors.



PHYSICIAN JOB-SEEKING STATUS

As part of the survey, physician participants were asked to choose only one of the pre-defined categories (see Figure 1) to describe their job-seeking behavior: The titles for each group were appended after the survey was completed. Figure 1 illustrates the overall composition of the participants based on their job-seeking status. It's clear that a very small percentage — only 14% (made up of the Very Active and Semi-Active groups) — is spending any amount of time looking for a job.

FIGURE 1. Physician Job-Seeking Status (2,969 Physician Respondents)

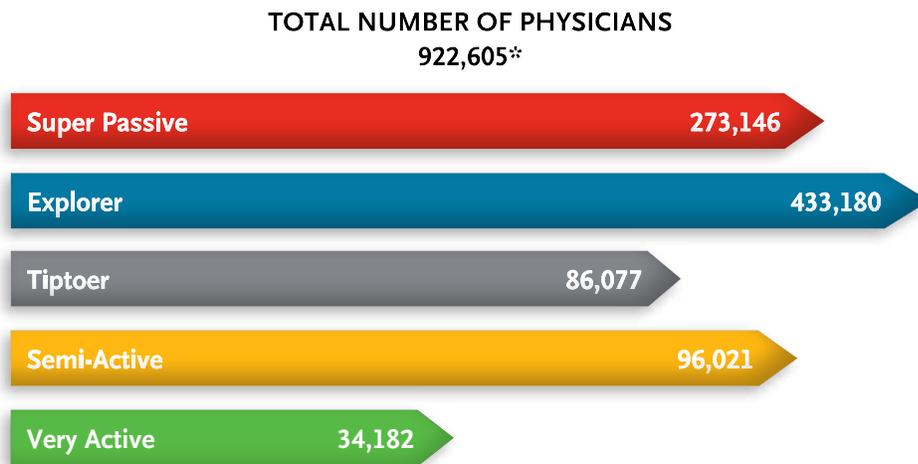


1. **Super Passive** — I am completely satisfied in my current job and not interested in new job opportunities.
2. **Explorer** — I am not looking for a new job, but would be open to discussing selective opportunities.
3. **Tiptoeer** — I am thinking about changing jobs, but have only started to network with close associates.
4. **Semi-Active** — I am casually looking for a new job, spending some time on job-searching activities 1–2 days/week or less.
5. **Very Active** — I am aggressively looking for a new job, spending some time on job-searching activities 3 days/week or more.



The vast majority of physicians surveyed are considered passive jobseekers and not actively spending ANY amount of time looking for a job. While the Super Passives, Explorers, and Tiptoers make up the majority of the group at 86%, the Explorers and Tiptoers (although not actively looking) have identified themselves up front that they are open to discussing job opportunities.

FIGURE 2. Overall Physician Population by Segment



*Source: AMA physician count as of June 9, 2013

Job-seeking segment percentages applied to total number of U.S. physicians.

KEY FINDINGS

Relatively few physicians are actively seeking employment opportunities

Only 14% of physicians are searching job listings, attending job fairs, or actively looking for employment. According to survey results the two active groups — Very Active and Semi-Active — apply for more jobs, are less satisfied with their current job, and tend to have had short tenures at their prior job. In general, these two groups are not difficult to reach for recruiters, since they use as many channels to find employment as possible and tend to be over-represented in job board profile databases.

A small portion of physicians are curious, but not aggressively seeking employment opportunities

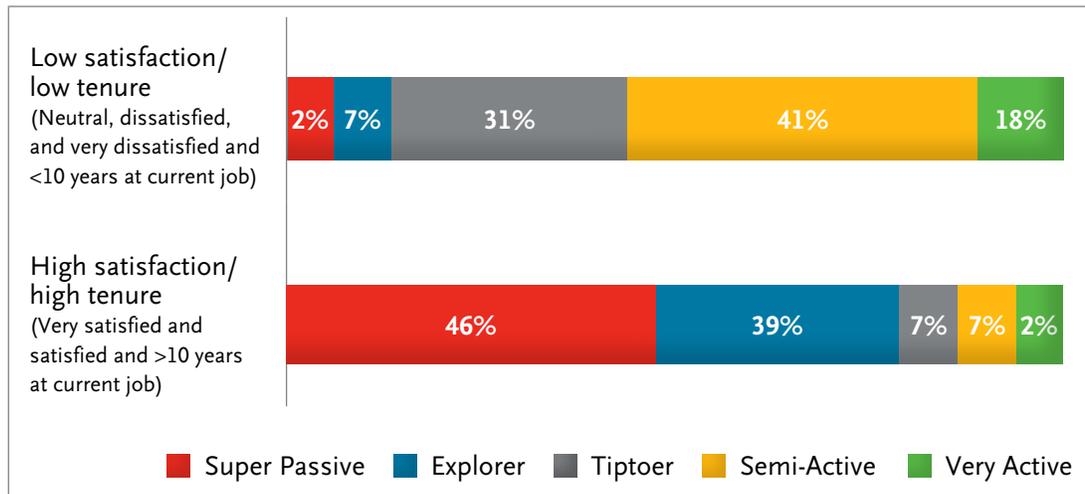
Only 9% of physicians are in the Tiptoer category, meaning they have only started to network with friends and close associates about employment. This group is not visiting job boards and soliciting help from recruiting firms so they are difficult for recruiters to identify and reach.



Passive jobseekers may be more desirable

Physicians who are satisfied with their current position and have been in the position for 10 or more years mostly fall in the Super Passive or Explorer segments, whereas those with lower satisfaction and tenure fall mostly into the Tiptoer or Semi-Active segments (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. Job Satisfaction and Tenure



Most physicians are not actively looking

The vast majority of physicians — 86% — are not taking an active role in seeking new employment opportunities. The three groups of inactive jobseekers in this study — Tiptoers, Explorers, and Super Passives — are difficult to engage by recruiters since the physicians are either content in the current job and not interested in changing employment, or they will entertain new opportunities but only on their own terms.

Passive jobseekers are not quite so passive

Although this group of Super Passive physicians (making up 44% of the total surveyed) initially said they were not interested in new job opportunities, they also said they would likely click on a job posting that appeared next to clinical content that they were reading while on a journal or association website. For recruiters, there are tactics available to reach even the most passive candidates.

Suburbia and longevity are keys to low turnover

The survey showed that when a physician is employed in a suburban work environment AND has worked at their current employer for 10 years or longer, they are likely to be a Super Passive and not overtly interested in changing employment.



Hospitalists appear to be more restless in their employment status

There is a larger proportion of hospitalists in the Very Active segment. Hospitalists have *spent less time in their current job*, are *less satisfied*, and are more likely to engage in a *variety of job-seeking activities*.

TAKEAWAYS FOR RECRUITERS

Target active and passive jobseekers

With the majority of physicians *not actively looking for employment opportunities*, recruiters need to ensure they employ tactics to reach both active and passive jobseekers.

Most physicians are open to new job opportunities

Passive jobseekers are not a single block of physicians, but can be segmented into subgroups based upon their level of activity and interest in employment opportunities. *The Explorer segment of physicians represents nearly half of all physicians* and appears to be more amenable to direct solicitation than the Super Passives.

Reaching passive jobseekers near clinical content can be effective

Exposing passive jobseekers to job postings when *they are researching clinical content on websites* can prove to be an effective and efficient technique to source candidates since. Nearly half (44%) of Super Passives and the majority of Explorers (61%) and Tiptoers (72%) indicated that they are likely to click on a relevant job posting that appears alongside clinical content of a journal or medical website.

Opt-in emails are another effective way to reach passive jobseekers

Along the same lines as reaching physicians while they read clinical content, emails in which physicians opt-in to receive is also efficient. The passive group is slightly more likely (46% of Super Passives; 72% of Explorers, and 77% of Tiptoers) to click on a relevant job posting while *they are reading emails that they have signed up to receive, which cover medical articles in their specialty, than simply reading clinical content on a site*.

Reach directors, chiefs, and department heads through clinical content

When we take a look at the results by position title, directors, chiefs, and department heads are particularly inclined to click on a job posting next to clinical content either on a medical website (75%) or in an email from a medical website (83%).



CONCLUSION

It may not be a surprise to most recruiters that the majority of physicians are not actively seeking new employment. However, the survey suggests that most physicians are at least curious about select *relevant* job opportunities and are open to discussing them. Unfortunately, passive physician jobseekers are finicky about how they are approached with opportunities and unsolicited contact is often not welcomed.

One very effective approach to reach passive jobseekers identified in the survey is placing job postings adjacent to clinical content. It is a strategy that puts the physician in control of the outcome and reaches them in an efficient, time-saving environment.

ABOUT NEJM CAREERCENTER

NEJM CareerCenter provides unique physician recruitment solutions. Our advanced technology targets passive physician jobseekers by specialty while they are reading trusted and valued content from the *New England Journal of Medicine* and NEJM Journal Watch online. We also reach physicians through a number of our opt-in clinical content emails and on our NEJMCareerCenter.org site.



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