The Use of Social Media and Online Resources for Professional Networking and Job Searching

Source: AMN Healthcare is a provider of health care workforce solutions, including managed services programs, recruitment process outsourcing solutions, recruitment and placement of health care professionals into temporary and permanent positions, and consulting services. AMN Healthcare is also the parent company of physician recruiting firm Merritt Hawkins. For more information or to view the full study, visit www.amnhealthcare.com.

This past year, “social recruiting” became mainstream as more job seekers and companies discovered the opportunity to connect across social platforms. For today’s 1.2 billion users worldwide, one in five minutes of online time is spent on social networks1. AMN Healthcare’s 2011 Social Media Survey was designed to discover how health care professionals are taking advantage of social media to further their career.

Responses to the 2011 survey indicate that job searching on social media sites is on an upward trajectory. Nearly one-third (31%) of respondents cited that they are using social media for job searching — a significant change from 2010 — with nearly half of those surveyed also using it for professional networking. In 2010, only 21% of survey respondents said they were using social media for job searching.

A total of 70,347 health care professionals were surveyed, of which 2,790 surveys were completed for a total response rate of 3.96%. The respondent types break down as follows in the chart below:

This article will look at highlights from the study and focus on how physician usage compares among the other respondents.

General Job-Search Trends

Results from AMN Healthcare’s 2011 Social Media Survey show health care professionals are using social media more often for both professional networking and job searching — nearly half of all respondents now use social media for professional networking. Similar to the 2010 survey,

(continued on page 2)
referrals, direct contact, and recruiter assistance are still the top job-search methods of choice (and most successful methods for obtaining a job), followed by search engines and online job boards, which showed a slight increase. The most significant change year over year was that 76% of physicians reported being contacted by recruiters in 2011, compared to 49% in 2010.

Q: Are You Currently Seeking Employment?
In 2011, the number of health care professionals seeking employment declined from the previous year in all groups except pharmacists. In this latest survey, 35% of respondents noted they were looking for employment (contract, full-time, and part-time), compared to 38% in 2010. Physicians rank on the lower percentage at 28%, while pharmacists led those seeking employment at 43%, followed by allied professionals (39%) and RNs (31%).

Q: Which Job-Search Methods Have You Used in the Past Two Years?
Among those who said they are seeking jobs, the most common job-search method used over the past two years was referrals (70%), even though this source declined from 2010 (77%); followed by direct contact (64%), search engines (60%), and online job boards (57%), showing a slight increase from 2010.

Significant changes in job-search methods for physicians from 2010 to 2011 include a 10% decline in the use of search engines and a 27% change in recruiter found me (76% in 2011, compared with 49% in 2010). Although their use of referrals declined year over year (80% in 2010), physicians were the highest users of referrals among clinicians (77%).

Q. Have You Used Any Social Media in Your Job Search?
Nearly one in three clinicians surveyed in 2011 (31%) said they use social media sites for job searching, which is a significant increase from the one in five (21%) who said they used social media as a job tool in 2010.

In 2011, physicians ranked on the low end at 23% while allied professionals continued to be the most frequent users of social media sites for job searching (36%), followed by RNs (33%) and pharmacists (29%).

Q. Have You Used Online Social Media for Professional Networking?
Health care professionals have continued to use social networking platforms to further their professional networking activities. In fact, usage changed by 11% year over year (where 48% used social media for professional networking in 2011, compared with 37% in 2010).

Not surprisingly, Facebook retained top honors among physicians, RNs, allied professionals, and pharmacists for professional networking purposes. RNs use it 44% of the time, allied professionals 43% of the time, and physicians and pharmacists each cite using it 34% of the time for this purpose.

Q. If You Could Choose Only One General Social Media Site, Which Would You Choose?
Facebook was the top choice for health care professionals when asked which site they would choose if they could use only one general social media site. On average, it was the top choice 74% of the time, compared to 64% in 2010.

Nurses favored Facebook more than other clinicians (83%), followed by allied professionals (73%), physicians (64%), and pharmacists (62%).

Q. If You Could Choose Only One Health Care-focused Social Media Site, Which Would You Choose?
For physicians, the top choice was MedScape (75%), followed by Sermo (18%), and Doximity (3%) (see MarketWatch).
**MARKET WATCH**

Top 3 Health Care-focused Social Media Sites for Physicians

- Medscape (75%)
- sermo (18%)
- doximity (3%)

Source: Physicians were asked to choose only ONE health care-focused social media site in the AMN Healthcare’s 2011 Social Media Survey.

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**Q: Are You Using Mobile Devices or Tablets to Access Health Care-related Content, Jobs, or Applications?**

In 2010, physicians were among the heaviest users of mobile devices for professional reasons and that trend has continued in 2011. 41% of physicians cited use of mobile devices or tablets for health care-related content or jobs in 2011, compared to 37% in 2010; and 50% of physicians use mobile devices for health care-related mobile/tablet applications in 2011, compared with 37% in 2010 — a large jump year-over-year for physicians.

**Q: Do You Use Mobile Job Alerts and Did You Receive an Interview, Offer, or Job?**

One in 10 clinicians of the 17% who are using mobile job alerts in 2011 (up from 10% in 2010) said they received a job interview following use of mobile job alerts. 14% of those received a job offer and 8% of those found a new job through the use of mobile job alerts. This is a significant increase over results in 2010, with only 3% reaching interview, 2% obtaining a job offer, and 1% securing a job after using mobile job alerts.

Nurses show the highest usage at 21%, followed by pharmacists (18%), allied professionals (16%), and physicians (15%). However, allied professionals have shown the greatest success in obtaining a job through mobile job alerts (10%), followed by physicians (9%), RNs (7%), and pharmacists (6%).

**Conclusion**

The survey suggests that the top methods used by health care professionals to find jobs remain referral, direct contact, or with the assistance of a recruiter (which saw a significant increase year-over-year), and all of these methods involve a personal connection. Social media fosters that personal connection and leverages an individual’s social graph to make personal links easier than ever before for networking, content sharing, as well as job searching. This is particularly important for companies interested in social recruiting and for their recruiters, who can access an even larger pool of candidates through social media sites. Health care professionals have also shown an increase in their use of mobile devices for accessing health care-related content, applications, and jobs.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROMOTION</th>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>CLOSING DATE</th>
<th>SPECIALTIES</th>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialty Delivery</td>
<td>9/13/12</td>
<td>8/24/12</td>
<td>CD, D, END, FM, GE, HEM/ONC, HOSP, ID, IM, NEP, N, ORS, ENT, PUD, DR, RHU, and U</td>
<td>Final-year residents and fellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October Resident Reach</td>
<td>10/11/12</td>
<td>9/21/12</td>
<td>All specialties — about 100</td>
<td>Final-year residents and fellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November Resident Reach</td>
<td>11/15/12</td>
<td>10/26/12</td>
<td>All specialties — about 100</td>
<td>Final-year residents and fellows</td>
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