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Understanding the Physician Passive Jobseeker

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 article 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 on page 3) 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.

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.

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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 Tiptoeer 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 Tiptoeer or Semi-Active segments.

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 — Tiptoeers, 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*.

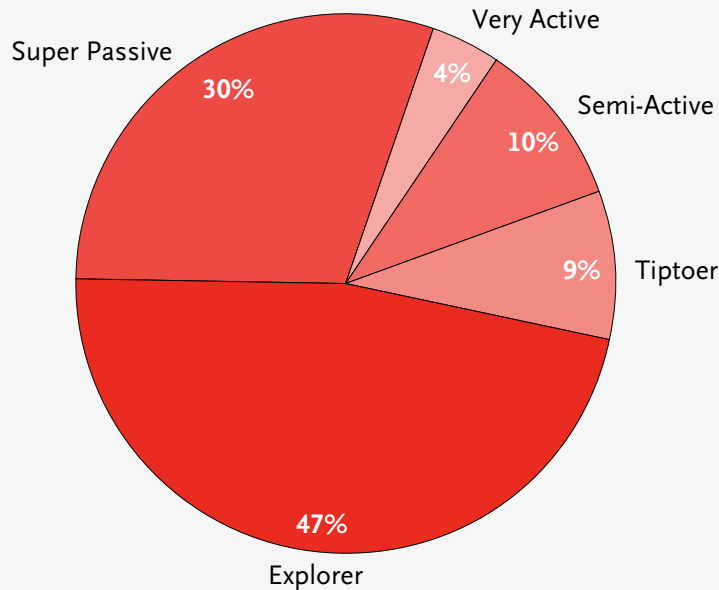
Takeaways for Recruiters

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.

(continued on page 3)

Figure 1: Physician Job-Seeking Status
2,969 Physician Respondents



Super Passive — I am completely satisfied in my current job and not interested in new job opportunities.

Explorer — I am not looking for a new job, but would be open to discussing selective opportunities.

Tiptoer — I am thinking about changing jobs, but have only started to network with close associates.

Semi-Active — I am casually looking for a new job, spending some time on job searching activities 1–2 days/week or less.

Very Active — I am aggressively looking for a new job, spending some time on job searching activities 3 days/week or more.

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For more *Takeaways for Recruiters* and to find out how to reach passive jobseekers download the full white paper at: nejmcareercenter.org/passive.

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.

Download the full white paper at: nejmcareercenter.org/passive.

What’s New at NEJM?

PHYSICIANS CAN NOW APPLY FROM THE CLOUD

The “File Chooser” enhancement on NEJMCareerCenter.org is a new way for physicians to upload their CV onto our site when applying for jobs or creating a profile.

In addition to enabling physicians to select files from their computer, “File Chooser” also enables them to connect to Dropbox, Skydrive, or Google Drive. This new feature will make it easier than ever for physicians to apply using their tablet or mobile device.

**UPCOMING
RECRUITER
MEETINGS
AND MEDICAL
CONVENTIONS**

**Association of Program
Directors in Internal
Medicine**
April 6–10, 2014
Nashville, TN

**American College
of Physicians/Internal
Medicine**
April 10–12, 2014
Orlando, FL

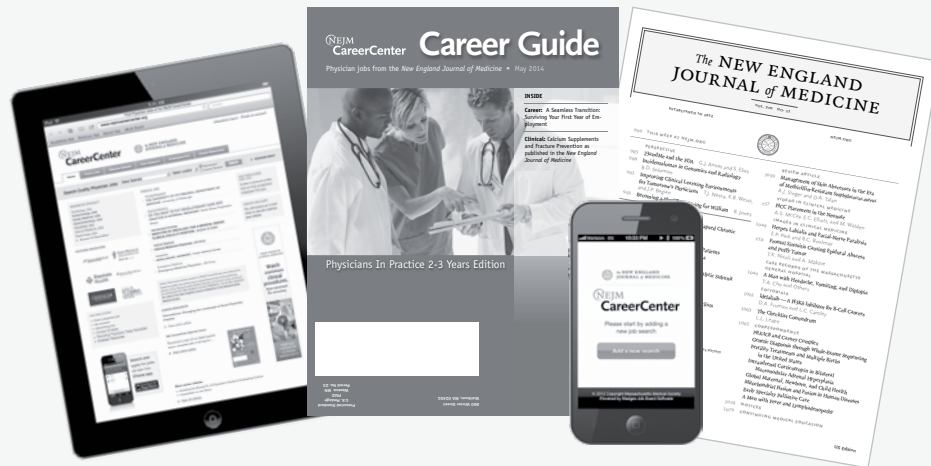
**American Society of
Clinical Oncology**
May 30–June 3, 2014
Chicago, IL

**American Diabetes
Association**
June 14–16, 2014
San Francisco, CA

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PROMOTIONAL NOTES/NEWS

**Did you know that among young physicians,
those in practice 2–3 years* are most likely to switch jobs?**



Zero in on this group of physicians

Among young physicians those in practice 2–3 years* are most likely to change jobs — if you are recruiting for physicians it is an ideal time to reach out to them.

At the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) we have a special Career Guide that reaches this group of young physicians. By participating in the Guide you will also have your job listing in the May 1, 2014 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* as well as online at the heavily trafficked NEJM CareerCenter.

Our recruitment offerings to physicians are built for an optimal experience whether on a desktop computer, tablet, or mobile device or in print. From physicians who are actively searching for a new opportunity, to those who may be passively interested, we reach them all.

Once a year you can participate in this offer.
Contact us for a quick quote — offer expires April 11th!
Call (800) 635-6991 or email ads@nejmcareercenter.org

*Source: Cejka Search and AMGA 2012 *Physician Retention Survey*.