

## Strength In Numbers: Improve Your Recruiting Metrics To Hire Better People, Faster

By Beth Dery, President, RosmanSearch

There is nothing better than interviewing a wonderful doctor, having them like you as much as you like them, and getting a contract signed quickly. In physician recruiting, however, that scenario is far from the norm. Since we can't wait for the ideal doctor to knock on the door, we have to do everything we can do to make sure that essential positions get filled with the best possible candidates.

Focusing on—and improving—a handful of key metrics can turn your recruitment strategy into a powerful engine for delivering value, both in terms of your bottom line, and more importantly, the quality of the physicians you add to your team.

### Time-to-Fill

Your “time-to-fill” ratio is exactly what it sounds like: the average time it takes to fill a vacant position. Reducing time-to-fill, even marginally, can translate to significant savings, both by making up lost revenue resulting from the vacancy, and by increasing productivity through shorter ramp-up timeframes.

There are a number of effective ways to meaningfully reduce time-to-fill.

- First, **focus on candidates who have a reason to be interested in your position**, and convey your unique appeal. Can you offer the opportunity to subspecialize? Most practices need a generalist, yet many physicians, especially those in fellowships, prefer to specialize. Is there any available subspecialized volume? Even 20-30% can appeal to certain doctors. Market any subspecialty that might work. Moreover, can you offer a visa? Look for candidates with specific needs or interests and show how you can address them. Anything you can do to broaden your pool of possible candidates will help reduce your time-to-fill.
- **Move quickly when a candidate expresses interest**, ideally within the first 24 hours, where the advantage you can gain over competitors is most significant. By being first, you're more likely to remain top-of-mind. By being fast, you're more likely to leave a positive impression. Conversely, an interested candidate who is allowed to languish may not develop a favorable impression of you—or any impression at all.
- To ensure a quick turnaround, **create a proactive plan with clear “next steps”** that you can activate in response to an interested candidate (instead of wasting valuable time waiting for the next monthly committee meeting). Process delays open the door for the candidate to find something else—and the last thing you want to hear from someone you liked is “I just accepted another offer.”

### Interview-to-Hire

In recruiting, time isn't the only important number. Volume matters, too, especially when it comes to the number of interviews it takes to make a hire.

A low interview-to-hire ratio means that you're interviewing high-quality, high-value candidates—high-quality in the sense that you want to hire them, and high-value in the sense that they will want to work for you.

Taking steps to ensure a good interview-to-hire ratio will reduce costs associated with travel and entertainment for a candidate. It will also maximize the productivity of your interviews (and interviewers), saving you time and resources.

How can you effectively optimize your interview-to-hire ratio?

- Understand the parameters of your position—both the clinical and the “soft” skills that are important but often overlooked. Then **pre-screen for these parameters**.
- Video interviews also serve as an interim step to “see” the candidate in action before wasting time and money on a full site visit. Even a short video interview can help you decide if it makes sense to bring the candidate in for a visit.
- Increase the odds your candidate will want to work for you by **impressing them on their site visit**. Good ideas: a hotel gift basket, a welcome note, a well-planned itinerary. Bad ideas: sticking them in a conference room with no water or bathroom breaks.

## Physician Satisfaction & Onboarding

Congratulations—you quickly zeroed in on the right candidate and they accepted the job! Your work is done, right? Not quite. Ironically, some of the most important recruitment metrics come after the recruitment.

Physicians who are onboarded smoothly and engaged early and effectively are more likely to report higher satisfaction and job productivity. That's obviously good for a whole host of reasons, but it specifically translates to better physician retention, and fewer, less frequent vacancies that you need to fill in the first place.

Here are some ideas for improving your onboarding process, and generating higher physician satisfaction:

- **Talk to your existing doctors**—what was difficult for them when they started? What would have helped them integrate better into the medical staff, or build their practice? Use the answers to make your onboarding process smoother and more supportive for the new hire.
- **Have everything ready to go** for the new physician—computer, logon, office, etc. Even if they can't put their finger on the reason why, they'll feel welcome. And they'll definitely remember it if their first day is full of obstacles and delays.
- **Plan the first day, week, month, or even the first 90 days**. Be clear about who they can rely on for guidance and help (even who will meet them on their first day and show them around), and about what your culture expects of them. Don't leave things to chance, or assume everything will work itself out.

In addition to these key metrics, there's one more really important set of numbers to keep in mind: the tangible, measurable costs associated with an unfilled position.

According to Becker's Spine, **the average annual revenue of a Neurosurgeon is \$3,437,500**. And the Medical Group Management Association estimates that **the average annual revenue of a Neurologist is \$303,949**. And these numbers don't include the high number of tests these positions typically bring in for hospitals.

You'd much rather those numbers represent a portion of your revenue than the size of the hole in your budget.

In the end, recruitment is about people—the physicians who enable you to deliver healthcare services, and the patients and communities you serve. By focusing on the numbers first, your journey to finding and hiring those people gets a lot shorter.

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