

# Physician Workforce through 2030:

## Social Media for Physician Recruitment



**JACKSON**  
Physician Search

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The physician shortage continues to rank among the top three concerns for hospital CEOs, making the need to cost-effectively recruit the right candidates more acute than ever. As the physician workforce evolves, how can your organization recruit faster, more efficiently and at less cost? Embracing social/digital media as a core strategy has become central to recruitment success.

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## Social Media is at the Intersection of Two Key Physician Behaviors



**Physicians are networkers.** Through their years of training and beyond, physicians build large personal and professional networks they trust. Physicians rely on these networks for many professional reasons including building practice networks, keeping up with industry trends and news, and opening doors to future practice opportunities.



**Physicians are digital omnivores.** Their hunger for connectivity keeps them constantly connected through multiple devices, including laptop, tablets, smartphones, and even wearables. Technology keeps physicians, like the rest of us, connected 24/7, both personally and professionally.

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Peer-to-peer communication is changing with the rise of physician engagement on social networking platforms. A survey published in the last couple of years reported that ***65% of physicians use social media for professional purposes***, a number that has surely grown as dedicated physician resources and communities have developed to meet physicians where they are: online.

For example, NEJM Resident 360 connects them to experts for clinical and career insight as well as a supportive community of fellow residents. Another example is SERMO, a self-described “virtual doctor’s lounge.” It was created for verified and credentialed physicians to talk openly with other physicians about the business and practice of medicine.

Doximity is another example of how social media interaction among physicians is growing. As a HIPAA - compliant smartphone application with over 70% of US doctors as verified members, their technology enables doctors and other healthcare professionals to connect and securely collaborate on patient treatment, grow their practices and discover new career opportunities.

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## Strategic and Efficient Digital Recruiting



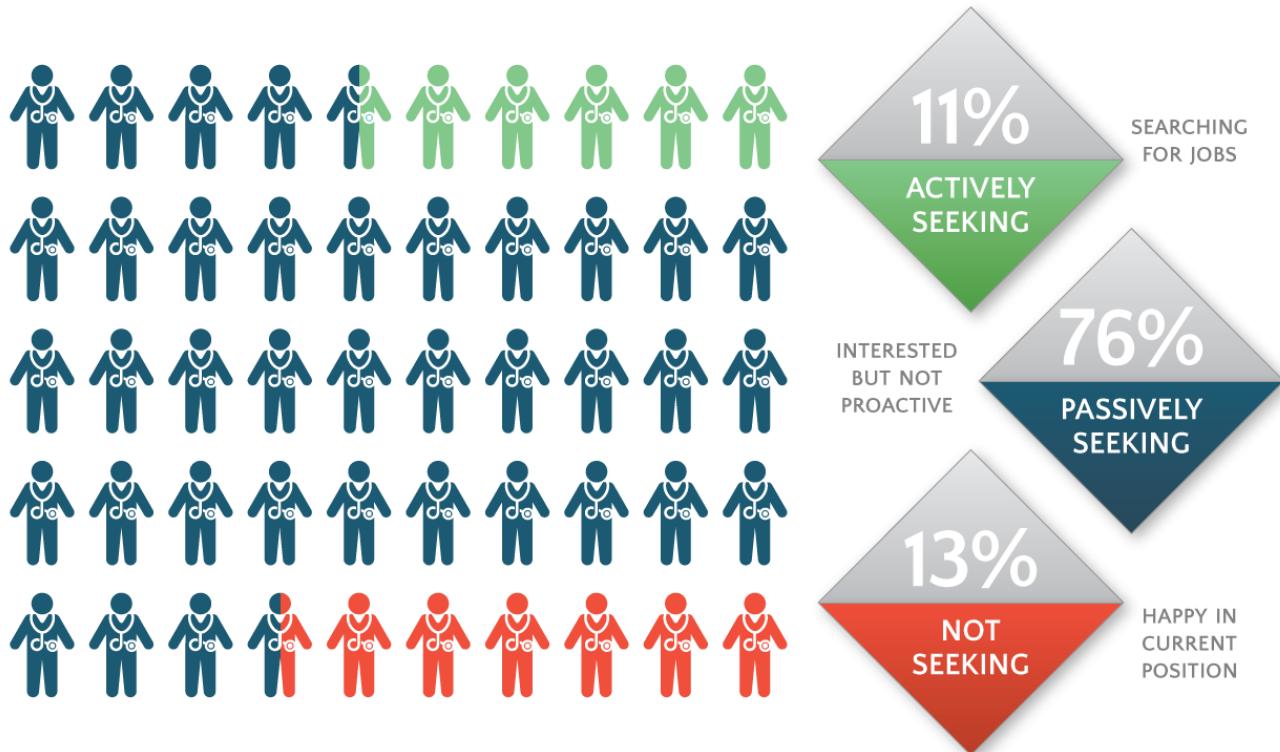
A sample digital recruitment outreach strategy, which Jackson Physician Search recruiters utilize.

## Solving the Social and Digital Media Puzzle

Social and digital media can be **efficient** and **cost-effective** for recruitment.

It's important to understand who is using social and digital media on a daily basis. The short answer is almost everyone. But the more important question is why? Are they using it to seek a new job? The answer ranges from "absolutely" to "not right now." That's because **only 10% to 14% of physicians are actively searching** for a new opportunity at any given time. The smallest segment of your audience is already being targeted by the most recruiters. The result is a noisy, highly inefficient landscape that makes it difficult for physicians and organizations to connect in a meaningful way.

Leveraging these platforms successfully requires both a keen understanding of the candidate pool and proficiency in social media and digital marketing to engage physicians.



More often, you are seeking the type of physician who is not looking – **passive candidates who comprise about three-quarters of the pool**. They may be interested, but not proactively exploring the market. Even the remaining few who are happy and have no plans to change jobs experience life events that make them receptive when the time is right.

The vast majority of potential candidates are passively running below the recruitment radar, but the good news is that most of these **passive candidates are actively engaged with social and digital media**, making these channels a great place to connect with these physicians.

Nearly 9 out of 10 (87%) physicians age 26 to 55 engage with social media daily, as do 65% of physicians over 55. Think about it: some of your best recruits may be those who want to practice for another 10 years, but maybe not where they currently are. That spells opportunity.

Social media platforms are the first place that candidates will check you out, even before making human contact. Nearly every hospital has a website, LinkedIn account, and Facebook page focused on

outreach to patients and the community. But, how well are they designed to help physicians and advanced practitioners appreciate your culture and learn about practice opportunities?

A great place to start is to focus on your number one asset: your current medical staff. It's likely that you already have identified the physicians who best represent your organization's culture. Don't wait until site visits to get them involved with candidates. Enlist their help in building your network. Help them share content — in a professional way — with friends, former classmates, colleagues, and candidates on social media and provider-focused online communities.

Once you have a plan and standards in place, your medical staff can be your best advocates in building your brand far beyond the immediate community. If your team is small, struggling with high volume, or searching in difficult-to-fill specialties, *ask your recruitment firm or internal recruitment team to explain exactly how they will use social and digital media to source candidates.*

## How Does Email Fit into the Digital Mix?

A national survey by Adobe confirmed that email is still the “Alpha Channel” — even for reaching millennials despite growth in mobile apps, social media, and text. We also know *that physicians prefer to receive opportunities by email*. The problem is that they are inundated: 16% get one contact per week, and 39% are contacted by recruiters multiple times each week. The problem is that the job opportunities they are hearing about are NOT relevant to their interests. These physicians reported that they get a relevant contact less than 10% of the time.

Many recruiters do not understand enough about email to create a strategy that optimizes results and the physician candidate's experience. We highly recommend designing a robust email strategy in which you are offering your physician audience value-add content, news, research *in addition to* the jobs that you need to promote. With that, it is critical that emailers target the candidate audience as strategically as possible. If we don't target and put relevant information in front of these physician candidates, research show they will tune out the noise... and the recruiters will waste a lot of time.

Your email strategy should utilize a variety of content -- jobs, articles, news, research – to convert passive candidates into engaged members of your network.

## A Practical Approach to Social Media for Recruitment

The goal is to effectively engage passive candidates with content that is highly relevant to their interests. Integrating your outreach channels will put your physician recruitment program on the right digital track. When the time is right for a physician or advanced practitioner to change jobs, your organization will be at the top of their mind and they will be receptive to recruitment messages.

**SEGMENT  
ENGAGE  
AUTHENTIC  
RELEVANT  
CREDIBLE  
HABIT**

### *Segmentation*

Take the time to segment your targets according to subspecialty and skills, graduation year, medical school and training program, ties to your community, and connections to current members of your staff.

### *Engagement*

**Build your audience by following your physician champions and other influencers.** Make it easy for them to share relevant content, articles, news, and jobs with their networks. Find and join groups on social media sites. Enter the discussion threads when you can add value.

### *Authenticity*

Avoid a commercial or salesy tone. Use a friendly, conversational, approachable voice that fits your hospital's and community's culture. Candidates will get a sense of what it truly means to work and live there. Remember to adhere to privacy rules and keep it professional. (It is not the place to share your favorite Politico meme.)

### *Relevance*

Prepare content with these questions in mind:

**Why would a physician candidate audience care about this?** For example, sharing a comment from a recently hired physician about how warmly they were welcomed the community will help candidates envision your support when they open their practice and relocate their family.

**What insider information or tips can you offer?** Residents are hungry for information about compensation, practice models, negotiating tips, and industry trends. This is their first rodeo, but you've hired many physicians and advanced practitioners. You will catch their eye by sharing what you know.

### *Credibility*

**Be credible as a recruiter and trusted resource who adds value and responds quickly.** Be sure your digital profile is professional yet approachable. Become the go-to person for physicians who are exploring options and want to learn more about your organization and community (without risk of getting the hard sell).

### *Habit*

Consistency is vital for social media to become an embedded recruitment strategy. Make it a core responsibility for designated members of your recruitment team. Create a calendar and consistently feed your marketing team and recruitment champions with great content candidates care about.

## Dedicating Resources to Social and Digital Media

The challenge is that your recruitment office responsibilities are most likely focused on managing interviews, negotiations, and contracting. You may also be competing internally with hospital service lines and other departments for the marketing resources to implement a social/digital sourcing strategy.

Based on the resources you have and the volume of searches you manage, it is important to prioritize what you can build, borrow, buy, or learn to do on your own. ***Like any set of tools, you need to know how to use them to get the desired result,*** use them often enough to be cost effective — or know when to call in the expert with the well-oiled machine.

If you are looking for more how-to guides and examples, please download our [How to Use Social Media for Physician Recruitment Guide.](#)

### About the Author

With over 30 years in healthcare strategy, Tony Stajduhar is a recognized leader and innovator in the recruitment of physicians and advanced practice providers. As president of Jackson Physician Search, he leads one of the most respected firms in the nation known for exceptional customer service, powered by proven recruitment strategy and search technology.

He is a sought-after speaker for healthcare industry groups, national medical associations and residency programs. Based in Atlanta, Tony can be reached at [tstajduhar@JacksonPhysicianSearch.com](mailto:tstajduhar@JacksonPhysicianSearch.com) or 866.284.3328.

### About Jackson Physician Search

Jackson Physician Search specializes in permanent recruitment of physicians and advanced practice providers to hospitals and health systems across the United States. The company is recognized for its track record of results built on their clients' trust in the skills of their team and the transparency of their process.

Jackson Physician Search attracts and retains the most talented and motivated recruitment professionals in the industry. The has been recognized as one of the Best Places to Work by Modern Healthcare and certified as a great workplace by the independent analysts at Great Place to Work®.

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