



## **EPISODE 67 How to Increase Your Desirability as an Applicant for Nonclinical Jobs**

**With Dr. Heather Fork**

---

**SEE THE SHOW NOTES AT: [www.doctorscrossing.com/67](http://www.doctorscrossing.com/67)**

---

[0:0:00]

HF: “Don't underestimate what you already have on your platform being a physician. That in itself speaks volumes as to what you bring to the table. It's a strong platform indeed.”

Welcome to The Doctor's Crossing Carpe Diem podcast. If you're questioning your career in medicine, you've come to the right place. I'm Heather Fork, a former dermatologist and founder of The Doctor's Crossing. As a master certified coach, I've helped hundreds of physicians find greater happiness in their career, whether in medicine, a nonclinical job, or something else. I started this podcast to help you discover the career path that's best for you and give you some resources and encouragement to make it happen. You don't need to get stuck at the white coat crossroads. So, pull up a chair, my friend, and let's carpe that diem.

Hello, hello and welcome back to the Doctor's Crossing Carpe Diem podcast. You are listening to episode number 67. I'm flying solo again to skydive into a topic I feel very passionately about. And this is how you can increase your desirability as an applicant for nonclinical jobs, regardless of your experience level.

This is a follow up to last week's podcast, where I talked about whether or not experience was necessary to land a nonclinical job. If you haven't listened to number 66

[www.doctorscrossing.com/67](http://www.doctorscrossing.com/67)



yet, spoiler alert, you do not need to have prior experience for many nonclinical jobs. However, there are things you can do to increase the odds of getting hired.

Today I'm going to share 10 concrete steps you can take to increase your desirability as a candidate. I also refer to taking these steps as building your platform. Each extra thing that you do adds another plank if you will in your platform, making you a potentially stronger candidate.

Before we launch into these 10 steps, I want to share with you what I have actually seen in terms of physicians getting hired for nonclinical roles and their experience level. I'm going to use the example of applying to pharma. This is an area where prior experience such as participation in clinical trials and research can definitely be a big advantage.

But as you will see, not having this background is not necessarily a deal breaker. A year or so ago I had a number of clients from different specialties, all wanting to go into pharma. Let me tell you what happened. An oncologist who had clinical trial experience, that was a great match for the company she was interested in, was hired right away and she only applied to that one company. Another oncologist who did not have significant clinical research experience and was a relatively new attending applied for a few positions and was hired fairly quickly. As you can imagine, oncologists are in high demand in pharma and it's not difficult to get a job.

Then I had two physicians who were relatively recent graduates. They were not oncologists and did not have funny prior pharma experience. They took a number of the steps I will be talking about to enhance their platform. One applied to about seven positions before being hired and the other to about 30.

They both targeted companies seeking a physician with their specialty. Before they got their offers, both of them were really wondering if this was going to work out and feeling discouraged, but then the good news came and they both landed great jobs.

[www.doctorscrossing.com/67](http://www.doctorscrossing.com/67)



Another physician without pharma experience got very close with her interviews, but did not get the offer she was looking for. On a lark, she applied for a position in utilization management just to have something and was met with open arms. It turns out that she was pleasantly surprised and actually loves her job in UM and feels that this ultimately was a better direction than pharma.

Sometimes when your first choice is not working out, it can be a sign to change course and try another area. It can also mean to have patience and persist. It takes discernment and really listening to your own guidance to decide when it's time to hold 'em and stay the course, and when it's time to fold 'em and move on.

I'll share one more example. The is of a physician who used the “spray and pray” method to apply. As the name implies, this is where you send out or spray a lot of applications. It could be hundreds without paying much attention to the required qualifications. Then you pray that you'll get an interview. This particular physician did not have pharma experience. And by using this method was offered a contract position (i.e., a temporary job) where the company could test her out. She impressed them and was offered a full-time position at the end of her contract.

I typically don't use the “spray and pray” method with my clients. I like the more strategic approach, but I don't “knock” what works. It's really up to you. Everybody has a different approach and the best approach is the one that gets you what you want. One other point I want to make here is that if you're not having success with the application process, there could be a simple fix such as reworking your resume or focusing on interview prep. I had a physician come to me who was very distraught after applying to many utilization management companies and not getting a job offer.

Even though she would get some interviews, she was not being selected. She was definitely well qualified for the position. We fixed up her resume and did some targeted



interview prep. It still took some time, but she ended up landing a job with a progressive UM company that she's very happy with.

All right, now let's look at these 10 concrete steps you can take to enhance your platform as a candidate. The first three steps are general ones that do not require you know what career direction you're interested in.

Step number one, serve on a committee in your current place of employment. You may already be doing this. And if so, it's great because recruiters like to see that you are going above and beyond what your clinical duties are. The shows that you are interested and engaged. You want to be of help. You also use different skills when you're on a committee, especially if you are in a specific role, such as the chair of the committee, the secretary, the treasurer, or whatever it is. So that's a great thing to add.

Step number two, take on a nonclinical role or project in your current place of employment. This might be being the medical director for your section. It could be supervising some other employees. It might be volunteering for a quality project. It might even be suggesting your own project that you want to do. It might be with optimizing the EMR or improving patient flow.

Recruiters and hiring managers really like to see these things, because again, it shows initiative and it's something you can talk about making potential changes or using different skills. So, no matter what role you're going for, this can be something that just makes you stand out.

Step number three, consider volunteering. Many of you already volunteer. You might have done volunteering like in medical school or residency. And this says a lot about you. Just the fact that you're a giver and you care about causes. Doing volunteer work can be a way to add on a skillset that could be desired in a job that you're aiming for. You might be involved in speaking or doing some training. It could be that you



participate in fundraising for a nonprofit and start understanding the financial aspects of a company or organization.

A lot of you have gone on medical missions, gone to other countries. These also speak volumes about the kind of person that you are. So, that's just something to consider if you don't have much volunteering already on your CV or resume.

The next seven steps are ones that are good to explore when you already have an idea of a career sector in mind. Step number four is to take a relevant course that's industry specific. For example, my clients interested in pharma who don't have any experience, take a free course called the Good Clinical Practices course, which helps teach them about keeping patients safe in clinical trials. My clients interested in utilization take a course that's about four hours where they can get CME credit and they learn about utilization management.

No matter where you're going, it could be medical writing or something else. There's usually a course that you can take. And this helps give you some background. It also shows commitment and interest in an area. You can find these courses by Googling. You can ask other physicians who are already in this area, if there are courses that they recommend. There are platforms such as Coursera or Udemy, where they offer courses. But check around and you typically don't have to spend much money to take one of these. I wouldn't make a big investment, but just something to get started with.

Step number five, write a few topical articles and post these on your LinkedIn profile. For example, one of my clients who was interested in pharma, who didn't have any background, wrote some articles about the COVID vaccine in pregnant women, and she posted them on her LinkedIn profile, which you can do. As long as you have a profile, you can publish on your own site. It's like having a blog and you can add images to these articles.



And it's helpful because if a recruiter comes by and looks at your LinkedIn profile, they already see that you have a dedicated interest in this area. You took the time to write an article. It's not as if you just had a bad burrito the night before, and you're wanting to find the nearest exit door. These don't have to be lengthy. They could be 500 words. Some people also submit articles to Kevin MD or put them on a site called Medium.

There are lots of ways to do something that doesn't take a lot of time to start showing that you're invested in a certain direction and also helps you see whether you're really interested in these topics by writing about them.

Step number six, see if you can do something as a side gig or a test drive in your area of interest. We talked about doing a test drive in episode 59. So, you can check that out. But this might be, for example, if you are interested in medical writing. Before you jump out of medicine and get hired as a medical writer for a full-time job, and then find that you don't like it, you could work as a freelancer, get some articles published, get paid for them and see how much you really like it. They also can add to your portfolio.

If you're interested in pharma, there are many things you could do. You could be a sub investigator for a clinical trial. You could volunteer for a clinical trial in your area, you could be on an IRB.

If you're interested in the area of utilization management, a lot of physicians do chart review as an independent reviewer. And the chart review could be in the medical area. It could be disability. It could be workers comp. This is helpful for a lot of different sectors, such as health insurance, disability, utilization management, benefit management, life insurance. So, that's doing chart review.

If you're interested in teaching, and perhaps getting a job in an academic center, you could offer to teach a lecture, a course at the local medical school or one of the allied



health professional schools in your area. And some of this teaching could also be done online so you don't have to actually physically be near one of these schools.

Number seven is to join in conversations and discussions online in your area of interest. This could be on LinkedIn. You can follow thought leaders in your area. For example, let's say you want to get into health disparities and improve access to care. You can follow physicians and other thought leaders who are writing and talking about these topics. And on LinkedIn, you'll see when they post and you can comment, you can follow up on what they say and people will start to recognize you. You can also start discussions and conversations.

On LinkedIn you can join special interest groups. For example, there are interest groups and pretty much all of the nonclinical sectors. If you're interested in digital health, health technology, you can find a corresponding group on LinkedIn. You can join them and participate in the discussions that are going on. You can also follow companies that you're interested in. See when they share news, give people kudos in the company. And it's just a way to be involved.

Step number eight is to attend a relevant conference. This is one of my favorites because when I was first coaching in the nonclinical realm, I needed to educate myself about all these options. I went to so many industry conferences. I went to one on medical writing, life insurance. I attended a big pharma conference with a DIA in Philadelphia. I attended several physician advisor boot camps.

And what else did I do? Oh, yes. I went to the integrative and functional medicine conference. And then of course I attended the SEAK Nonclinical Career Conference for 10 years as a mentor and speaker.

This is a wonderful way to network. It also will really help you decide whether this is an area that you want to transition into, because if you go to the conference and you're on



fire, that's a great sign. If you look at the lineup of speakers and topics ahead of time and don't want to spend that money, well, that's probably not the place for you to go. So, this is a great one. Attend a relevant industry conference.

Number nine is to join a relevant society. Again, all of these nonclinical areas typically have societies that you can join and become a member. Sometimes when you're a member, they even partner you with a mentor. For example, there's the American College of Physician Advisors. And when you join their society, they hook you up with a mentor who can help advise you.

These societies often have regional chapters. For example, the AMWA American Medical Writers Association has regional chapters, and you can go to these meetings. This is a great way to talk to people who've already transitioned and get a lot of advice and help with your transition. And also, it gives you a sense of your interest level.

Number 10 is to network with physicians and recruiters in your area of interest. This is something that is fairly easy to do on LinkedIn. You can search for physicians who are in the jobs that you're looking for, have the job titles you're curious about, and reach out to them and ask if they're willing to chat with you, or you can ask them some questions. Sometimes they'll respond to you and sometimes they won't, but this is a wonderful way to be able to find a needle in a haystack relatively easily.

You can also build relationships with recruiters. Even if you're not ready to transition or even apply, it could be a couple years from now that you want to change, but you can start building these relationships and let the recruiters know about you. And you can even ask them "What, if any, experience do I need to start acquiring before I make this transition?"

Connecting with these physicians and recruiters can also be helpful because if an opening comes up, you could be top of mind. And when a physician who's already in a





company knows about you and wants to recommend you, it's a much easier way to get hired going through this back door than applying blindly online to a job opening.

These are the 10 steps. There are obviously more things that you can do, but these are just some to get started with. I'd like to just review them quickly for you.

Step number one is to serve on a committee. Step number two, take on a nonclinical role or project in your current place of employment. Step three, consider volunteering if you're not doing this already. Step number four, take a relevant course. Step number five, write a few topical articles and post some on your LinkedIn profile or somewhere else. Six, see if you can do something as a side gig or a test drive. Seven, join in conversations and discussions online. LinkedIn's a great place to do this. Eight, attend a relevant conference. Step number nine, join a relevant society. Ten, network with physicians and recruiters.

As you take some of these steps, a good number of them can be added to your resume. These will help you stand out from other applicants and show your interest and commitment to a new direction. You could also capture these experiences on your LinkedIn profile.

If you would like help in crafting a customized resume or creating an attention-grabbing LinkedIn profile, you could learn more about the resources I offer by going to [doctorscrossing.com](http://doctorscrossing.com) and selecting the products tab at the top of the page.

I have a downloadable resume kit that will walk you through converting your CV to a resume. I also have a video course for physicians on LinkedIn that shows you how to create your profile, how to network, and also how to apply for positions. I'll include these links in the show notes, but you can simply go to my website, [doctorscrossing.com](http://doctorscrossing.com) and hit the products tab at the top of the page.



I would like to also emphasize that I have seen transitions work for physicians who have a straight clinical platform with nothing additional. They didn't do any of these steps above and they landed jobs. Don't underestimate what you already have on your platform being a physician. That in itself speaks volumes as to what you bring to the table. It's a strong platform indeed.

I am wishing you all the best in your career journey. If you're enjoying the Doctor's Crossing Carpe Diem podcast, please, please share it with anyone you know who might find it helpful.

Thank you to all of you who are already sharing episodes. It really helps get the word out. Thank you so much for listening. Be well and don't forget to carpe that diem. I'll see you in the next episode. Bye for now.

You've been listening to the Doctor's Crossing Carpe Diem podcast. If you've enjoyed what you've heard, I'd love it if you'd take a moment to rate and review this podcast and hit the subscribe button below so you don't miss an episode. If you'd like some additional resources, head on over to my website at [doctorscrossing.com](http://doctorscrossing.com) and check out the free resources tab. You can also go to [doctorscrossing.com/free-resources](http://doctorscrossing.com/free-resources). And if you want to find more podcast episodes, you can also find them on the website under the podcast tab. And I hope to see you back in the next episode. Bye for now.

[00:22:30]

*Podcast details*

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**