



# Marketing

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# Introduction

The intent of this module is to provide communities and employers with assistance in developing a marketing plan to promote themselves and attract the health-care professionals they need.

To strategically promote your community/organization, you need to develop a plan. The purpose of writing a marketing plan is to help you to clearly define what you'd like to achieve, determine which audience(s) you want to communicate with, and develop a strategy and plan of action within your budget that will ultimately result in achieving your recruitment and retention goals. The plan will also include advice on how to evaluate the success of your efforts so you can improve future marketing plans.

# Six Steps to Developing a Marketing Plan

This module will guide you through a series of steps to develop your marketing plan. The six steps are:

1. Define Your Objectives
2. Conduct a Situation Analysis
3. Identify Your Target Audience(s)
4. Shape Your Strategy
5. Develop Your Workplan
6. Evaluate Your Success

## Step 1: Define Your Objectives

The first step is to define your overall recruitment goals. Are you primarily interested in attraction or retention?

- **Attraction** involves attracting new health-care professionals to your community to respond to the rate of attrition and meet expected future demands.

- **Retention** means keeping your health-care professionals from moving to another region.

It's easy to let attraction become the entire focus of your marketing plan to the exclusion of retention, but it's important to include retention as part of your planning because retaining workforce members is more cost effective than regularly attracting new ones. Furthermore, competitive incentives have led to high workforce mobility in health care. It's become common for health-care professionals to move to another employer or community if they perceive their current situation as less than ideal.

Once you've determined your goals, then you can set marketing objectives for the year. Your objectives should be **SMART** (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound):

- **Specific:** Concrete description of what is to be achieved.
- **Measurable:** It can be evaluated against some standard.
- **Achievable:** The objective is realistic.
- **Relevant:** There is a sound reason behind selecting the objective.
- **Time-Bound:** There is a defined time-period in which the objective is to be achieved.

### Example

Objective: Recruit one Family Medicine physician by the end of 2014.

This objective supports the goal of attraction or expansion. It states exactly what is to be achieved, includes a quantity to be measured, is deemed to be realistic by the recruiter, will help the community reach a full services roster, and has a time limit.

## Step 2: Conduct a Situation Analysis

Before creating a strategy, it's a good idea to conduct a situation analysis and assess your community's/organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Look within your community/organization to determine its strengths and weaknesses, and scan the environment to understand opportunities and threats.

To assess strengths, consider the answers to the following questions:

- Why did *you* choose to live in the community?
- What are the best reasons to practise in the community/at the organization according to local physicians?
- Why have health-care professionals been attracted to the community/organization in the past? (Affordable housing? Nearby schools for children? Outdoor lifestyle? Vibrant arts and cultural scene? Welcoming sense of community? Great colleagues? Advanced medical equipment? Work-life balance?)
- How are changes in health care within the community increasing available opportunities?

To assess weaknesses, consider the answers to the following questions:

- Why have health-care professionals told you they are not interested in the practice opportunities or community after a site visit? (Community too far away from family? Practice requires a great deal of on-call?)
- What are the reasons practising physicians have left the community in the past? (Transportation to major cities too inconvenient? Lack of employment opportunities for spouse? Expensive real estate? No university in the area for older children to attend? Lack of career development opportunity? Poor physician group morale?)
- How are changes in health care within the community limiting available opportunities?

To identify potential opportunities and threats, consider the context of ongoing changes to the health-care system, such as the move towards health-care delivery through interprofessional team models. For example, in the case of interprofessional team models, physician recruiters may see an opportunity to broaden recruitment to other health-care professionals. Contact your local [Regional Advisor](#) for information on emerging health-care trends in your area.

## Step 3: Identify Your Target Audiences

After clarifying the context in which you are creating the marketing plan, segment the potential audience(s), and identify your target audience(s). A target audience can be people of a certain profession—for example, practising Family physicians versus medical residents versus nurse practitioners—or defined by age group, gender, marital status or other lifestyle particularities.

It is important to define and understand your target audience(s), as this will affect how you promote the community. Knowing what motivates your target audience(s) will enable you to create and position marketing messages more likely to have actionable results.

For example, younger physicians are now placing greater emphasis on work/life balance. If you are targeting this audience, you may want to highlight this aspect of working at clinics or hospitals in your community (if it is the case), and also speak to the range of leisure/recreational activities available in the community. Contact your local [Regional Advisor](#) to discuss current trends influencing different target audiences.

Defining your target audience(s) will also allow you to focus your marketing activities and make them more cost-effective. Once you have narrowed your focus, you can make further decisions about messaging and design.

If you have more than one target audience, prioritize the groups into primary and secondary.

### **Example**

#### *Primary Audience*

- Graduating Family Medicine residents in Ontario looking for locum and full-time opportunities.

#### *Secondary Audiences*

- Family Medicine residents in Ontario (all years).
- Practising Family Medicine physicians in Ontario.

## Step 4: Shape Your Strategy

Once you understand what attracts your target audience(s) to a community and what keeps your existing base of health-care professionals in the community, you can create attraction and retention strategies based on how your community delivers on the needs and desires of your target audience(s).

It helps if you can identify your community's unique selling proposition (USP) or what makes it different from other communities and particularly attractive to the target audience(s).

### **Example: Attraction Marketing Strategy**

"We will position our community as a city with natural roots and big city culture to appeal to our target audience of graduating Ontario Family Medicine residents who are interested in practising in a small urban centre that combines big city culture and convenience with the tranquility of a natural setting. Through a year-long campaign that uses various promotional channels, we will highlight the range of practice opportunities in a community with full amenities, an active arts/cultural life, a thriving recreational environment, and a world of outdoor beauty."

### **Example: Retention Marketing Strategy**

"We will position our community as a city where practising physicians can develop their careers while continuing to enjoy a balanced lifestyle. Through a year-long campaign that uses various promotional channels, we will highlight the diversity of practice and teaching options at the health-care organizations within the community."

## Step 5: Develop Your Work Plan

Developing a work plan will help you select the best tactics (activities) to effectively implement your strategy and detail *how* you will complete all the necessary tasks.

### Tactics

Define each work plan tactic clearly and concisely. You'll likely employ a range of tactics in your plan. A recruitment attraction work plan, for example, might include: posting jobs on health-care job sites, sending e-blasts, attending health-care conferences, hosting a resident week or day, and arranging site visits. For a range of tactics, see [Marketing Plan Tactics](#).

### Target Audience

Make sure each tactic is an effective way to reach your target audience(s). In some cases, a tactic may apply to more than one target audience; in other cases, you may need to vary or customize your tactics depending on the audience you are trying to reach. Take into account how your target audience(s) prefer to receive information so you can choose the most effective communication channels. For example, residents may be receptive to communicating electronically and using social media tools.

### Tasks

A number of tasks are often required to successfully complete an activity. For instance, if you decide to attend a health-care conference, you may need to: purchase booth space, rent a booth, create signage, create a community profile and job postings to hand out, train staff on key messages, etc. All of these details need to be looked after and therefore included in your work plan. Read [Tips on Creating Communications Materials](#).

### Accountability

During the planning process, assign responsibility for each tactic to a group or individual. Accountability will increase the likelihood these tactics are completed successfully. The person who is responsible for each tactic may wish to further assign other individuals responsibility for completing individual tasks the tactic requires.

### Timeline

Outline a specific timeline or due date for each activity and task. Expectations regarding the delivery or performance of each activity are then clear.

### Budget

You may be given a budget to work with before you create your work plan. If so, select tactics that fit within your budget. Bigger doesn't necessarily mean better or cost-effective, so use creativity in promoting your community. Often, small budget items can be quite effective. See [Marketing Plan Tactics](#) for a wide range of tactics, including inexpensive ones.

Alternatively, you may be asked to propose a budget to your employer/community based on the work plan you want to implement. If so, be prepared to justify your proposed expenditures. Your employer/community will be looking for you to link costs with projected results. (Previous results may serve as a guide to future results).

## Work Plan Examples

Tactic	Audience	Tasks	Accountability	Timeline	Measurement
Post "XYZ" job opportunities on web sites, such as HFOJobs, resident portals, community web site.	PGY2 FM residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create job descriptions.</li> <li>• Contact web sites as to how to post.</li> <li>• Monitor posting.</li> <li>• Review resumes submitted and contact clinic/hospital.</li> </ul>	John Henry	Ongoing – as needed	Number of resumes submitted by PGY2 FM physicians through job postings.
Attend a recruitment event.	FM residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase booth space.</li> <li>• Acquire a booth.</li> <li>• Create signage.</li> <li>• Create hand-out materials (community profile, job descriptions).</li> </ul>	John Henry	September	Number of follow-up inquiries generated from the recruitment event.
Connect with FM residents face-to-face at medical schools.	FM residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make arrangements with universities.</li> <li>• Create a calendar for visits on academic days.</li> <li>• Post schedule on Facebook.</li> <li>• Create hand-out materials.</li> <li>• Meet with residents.</li> </ul>	Jane Smith	Ongoing – biweekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new potential recruitment candidates.</li> <li>• Number of site visits arranged as a result of meetings.</li> </ul>

## Step 6: Evaluate Your Success

For each communications activity, you'll need to determine a metric to measure success. As the recruitment process can take a long time and is the result of many factors, it may not be realistic to try to link a single marketing communications tactic directly with a successful recruitment. However, depending on the tactic, other metrics to measure the success could include:

- The increase in the number of contacts in your distribution database;
- The number of inquiries generated from participating in a conference;
- The number of resumes received through a job posting;
- The number of potential recruits interviewed;
- The number of additional physicians who have signed up to locum in your community.

Make sure you're measuring an outcome (the effect your tactic has on your audience) rather than the output (the result of your input). For instance, the number of e-blasts you send out to post-graduate residents is an output, but the inquiries you receive from post-graduate residents as a result of the e-blast is an outcome.

Track each communications tactic according to the metric you've set to evaluate whether or not it contributed to the success of a strategy and ultimately the overall objective. When all the tactics are complete, take a look at which ones produced the best results.

It's important not to skip this stage. While it is easy to get attached to traditional methods of marketing and recruitment, evaluating your tactics will help you determine if your time and marketing dollars are being used as effectively as possible.

At the end of the year, you can also measure if you've achieved your overall objective. E.g. "recruit one Family Medicine physician to the community" or "reduce the physician attrition in the community by 5%." If you have achieved your objective, review your marketing plan and identify which strategies were most effective. If you didn't achieve your objective, re-examine your strategies and assess how you can modify or change them to yield better results. Recruitment and retention is not something that happens in immediate response to marketing activities, so all aspects of the plan must be reviewed together to judge their cumulative effect towards achieving the overall objective.

# Partnerships

*Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.*

~Henry Ford

There is a shortage of physicians in certain regions of the province. The common purpose of communities and regions is to address the physician shortage. Partnering to recruit physicians not only helps to divide the workload but to improve the outcomes.

Experience shows there is tremendous value in partnering with other community members to help bolster physician recruitment and community marketing efforts. How you choose to partner should reflect your marketing objectives, your community's unique assets and your particular health human resources needs.

Partnering can occur through shared marketing efforts, recruitment strategies, or health human resources planning. This can happen at the local or regional level, with provincial support through your [Regional Advisors](#).

## Partnering Locally

Approaching recruitment and retention as a community issue has proven highly effective. The key, however, is to get the right mix of individuals and organizations involved in the partnership. When deciding which community and organizational leaders to invite to the table, consider your own unique marketing objectives and strategy.

Recruitment and retention committees can achieve a variety of marketing objectives for your community, as well as plan and carry out recruitment and retention strategies. They may be able to provide access to more aspects of the community and resources, such as passes to tourism or cultural attractions. These committees can also act as a community ambassador by taking on the role of tour guide.

Here are some recommendations, whether you're looking to develop a local recruitment and retention committee or enhance the work of an existing one:

- Try to involve various stakeholders from across the community, such as business, Government, physicians and community members;
- Consider creating a core group of health-care stakeholders supported by the broader community for on-the-ground work;
- Establish strong lines of communication early on between all parties;
- Try a multi-faceted approach in your recruitment and retention efforts. This may include looking at different incentive packages or a long-term retention strategy that involves the community.

Carefully consider your potential partners. Who would be most willing and able to add value and expertise to your marketing efforts? Some of the partners often involved on physician recruitment and retention committees include:

- Physician Champions;
- Chambers of Commerce Senior Staff and/or Board Members;
- Municipal Senior Staff and/or Elected Officials;
- Key Hospital Staff, such as Medical Affairs Officers and Chiefs of Staff;
- Family Health Team and Network Leaders;
- Business Leaders;
- Community Development Leaders;
- Economic Development Officers;
- Educational Partners (Colleges, Universities, Training Board, etc.);

- Tourism Partners;
- Service Clubs;
- Volunteers with community spirit;
- HFO MRA Regional Advisors.

Make some calls to find out who wants to participate. At your first meeting, get commitment from your members and begin to establish what you can do collectively. Work together to find the “fit” between what physicians need and what the community has to offer. Ask different individuals what they might be able to offer to attract potential physicians to the community.

### Ways to Help a Potential Recruit

When a physician is in the process of choosing where to live and practise, he or she wants to know: What are the working conditions like? What is the community like? Does the area offer what I need? Does the community offer what’s most important to my family? A site visit will help answer these questions. When arranging a site visit:

- Book accommodation for arrival;
- Provide a full orientation and tour of the community – involve as many community leaders as possible;
- Try to arrange for the donation of special perks, such as a boatslip at the local marina. Be sure to tell the potential recruit the community donated the product/service for him/her;
- Develop a community profile that you can share with the potential recruit, which highlights your community’s best features;
- Ask if you can provide assistance with credit or loans and/or signing bonuses.
- For more tips on arranging a site visit, see the Recruitment and Retention module.

### Partnering Regionally

Physician recruitment has traditionally been viewed as highly competitive between communities. Whether that is the case in your region or not, there can be advantages working together.

Benefits of regional partnership:

- Sharing costs of marketing material development;
- Sharing staff and/or volunteers who attend events;
- Demonstrating a region that works together makes the area more attractive;
- Sharing best practices and lessons learned, strengthening each other’s efforts;
- Securing the help of larger tourism partners, which will support recruitment and retention efforts.

Regional collaborations might include:

- A regional physician recruitment network that meets anywhere from once a year to every month;
- A network of all of the HFOJobs administrators (the people who keep HFOJobs up-to-date);
- A collaboration of medical affairs or medical staff coordinators;
- All of the above.

First step:

- Call your local Regional Advisor. He or she can facilitate the process, and bring together people to work effectively.

### **Exploring Potential Partnerships**

The following outline provides a number of questions to ask potential partners:

- What potential activity suggests a possible partnership (e.g. marketing and promotion of community, health-care professional recruitment)?
- Who could the possible partners include (e.g. health-care professionals, businesses, chamber of commerce, other communities, educational institutions, provincial agencies representing funded programs and services)?
- Are there common goals (e.g. the partnership will be beneficial to all parties involved and the region)?

### **Formalizing Partnerships**

Defining the partnership helps to clarify it and gain buy-in from participants around the key objectives of the group. Consider the following when looking at a governance structure for your partnership:

- Will the partnership be formalized in terms of reference or a letter of agreement?
- Which individuals will represent each party in the partnership?
- How will decisions be made?
- Is each party fully committed to making the partnership a success?
- What would constitute an end to the partnership?

### **Partnership Resources**

Resources facilitate any kind of work. It's important to define up-front:

- What human resources will be committed by each party?
- What financial resources will be committed by each party?

### **Partnership Work Plan**

Consider the following when developing a work plan:

- What are the defined goals and objectives of the partnership?
- Are resource requirements clearly outlined?
- Is there a defined project leader for the work plan?
- Are all responsibilities outlined clearly?
- What are the processes under which the partnership will operate?
- How will progress be monitored and measured?
- How will success be measured?
- Are there contingency plans in place if the goal is not achieved?

# Resources

## Marketing Tactics

A wide range of marketing tactics is available to you. Here are some examples:

### Preliminary Work

**Contact Database:** You will likely come across health-care professionals who have expressed interest in your community but may not be interested in relocating at this time. It is helpful to maintain their contact information within a database so you can use it as a distribution list. A database can be something as simple as an Excel or Outlook file. (See [Customer Relationship Management](#) for further information on using a database).

### Tactics

- **E-blasts:** Send e-blasts to your contacts a few times a year to remind them of opportunities in your community.
  - Craft the content to grab people's attention and include a "call to action." For example: Call now about this great job opportunity.
  - Avoid bombarding your contacts with e-mails; sending e-blasts a few times a year will remind your contacts of the opportunities in your community.
- **Community Showcase:** Develop a community showcase bulletin to be e-mailed to your database contacts that highlights new jobs and the work/life balance health-care professionals enjoy in your community. This can also double as a handout for events you attend. Include poignant testimonials from previously recruited professionals; their voice lends credibility to your message. Also include links to your web site and social media outlets.
- **Social Media:** Social media is quickly becoming one of the most powerful distribution tools in a marketing plan. Social media platforms allow organizations to post a variety of media (pictures, video, infographics, etc.), and editorial content, enabling target audiences to connect with your community/organization in a more meaningful way. As social media changes quickly, your community/organization needs to update content regularly to keep users engaged and following you. Some of the most commonly used social media outlets include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn.
  - Facebook – Consider developing a Facebook profile for your community or organization. Use Facebook for: marketing upcoming events, posting event photos, promoting new web site content, posting/linking to promotional videos you've created, or re-posting content from partner organizations (e.g. interesting articles from a local hospital, chamber of commerce, etc). To stay relevant, consider posting one to two times per week.
  - Twitter – Twitter updates are limited to 140-character posts and generally do not include media. Post quick updates or alerts/links (e.g. if you've posted a new testimonial on your web site you want people to read). Twitter also allows you to follow other organizations and re-post their content to your followers who may not otherwise know about it. To stay relevant on this site, aim to post at least once daily.
  - YouTube – Post videos. YouTube enables you to more broadly and easily distribute videos to a wider audience. One YouTube video features hospital staff providing a lip sync and dance tour of the hospital.
  - LinkedIn – Use as a professional, online network site; post positions your organization is currently advertising.

Identify the role social media is going to play in achieving your overall marketing goals. Are you using it to drive followers to your web site? Are you trying to create better overall awareness about the amenities in your community? Are you using it to connect and answer questions from potential recruits?

Social media will also increase the visibility of your web site so make sure the two are connected – post your web site address on your social media platforms, and link to your social media platforms from your web site (e.g. "Follow Us" buttons with icons).

For more information on how to use social media, please refer to the [Social Media Recruitment Essentials](#) module.

- **A Blog:** A blog (a web site on which an individual, group of users or organization can record opinions, information, etc.), allows you to write editorial content, such as articles or first-hand testimonials from past recruits. Pictures and links can also be included in posts.
- **Presentations to Residents:**
  - Contact Program Directors and ask if you can present the opportunities in your community to soon-to-be-graduating residents.
  - Prepare a flyer or handout so residents have your contact information.
  - Consider making your presentations available online after your presentation to give attendees a reason to visit your web site.
- **Conferences and Events:** Conferences and events are a great way to make tangible connections to potential recruits. Find out who will be at the conference and the type of information in which they will be interested. You might want to create separate promotional materials for different events, e.g. if you are attending a Family Medicine physician conference, create a sell sheet that lists only Family Medicine opportunities in your community and testimonials from other Family Medicine physicians. If you are inviting physicians to an event, always leave at least two weeks for RSVPs. (If you have a couple of months lead time, send a "Save the Date" card ahead of the invitation). Some events to consider attending include:
  - Academic and orientation days: Universities and colleges invite communities to exhibit; these are great opportunities to network with future health-care professionals.
  - FMRQ resident day: Based in Montreal, this is another opportunity to market your community.

Contact your local [Regional Advisor](#) for a calendar of conferences and events.

- **Promotional Items:** Branded promotional items (a.k.a. SWAG) can be especially effective at a tradeshow or career fair, either to attract people to a booth or as a takeaway to remind potential candidates of your community and/or opportunities. Promotional items can be either consumables (such as notepads, candy, seedlings, pens) or non-consumables (such as water bottles, key chains, lanyards, USB drives, bags, magnets). They can be branded with the organization or community's name and web site address to help potential recruits remember you.
  - The purpose of the promotional item will help guide which kind of item to use. For example, a piece of pie may attract candidates to a booth, but not act as a reminder about the community or opportunities. A pen, which provides space for a web address, may be a more effective takeaway, but likely won't draw candidates to a booth.
  - Consider how takeaway items will be used. While all consumable items will get used up, some (such a pad of paper with branding on each page) may expose candidates to your message more frequently.
  - Many promotional marketing companies across the province have a wide range of products available for branding.
  - Some organizations try to differentiate their organization or community by creating a brand association (for example, with a particular expertise or level of service) and developing a slogan to capture that brand. If your organization is developing a slogan, think about if it will translate well to promotional materials. A long sentence may not fit on a pen, for example.
- **Newsletter:** Write short, to-the-point articles (100 to 500 words). Possible items include:
  - Front-page column from the CEO/President/Mayor;
  - Feature articles (community attractions, points of interest, festivals);
  - Sidebar articles (small facts or related items to feature in a box);
  - Visuals (charts, photos, illustrations) to break up text and add interest.

## Advertising

Advertising is typically considered to be paid promotional materials, although you may use the same materials or information in free outlets. Your budget will often define the parameters of where you can advertise. Advertising may be the largest expense in your marketing plan. It is possible to spend a lot of money with limited success, so researching free and low-cost options as well as consulting with other recruiters, HFO MRA Regional Advisors and health-care organizations can help to improve your success rate. If you are advertising, ask each candidate how he/she learned about the opportunity. Determining where your candidates learn about opportunities will help you to refine future advertising campaigns.

### Where to Advertise:

- **HFOJobs:** [HFOJobs](#) is a free, online employment portal for physician and nurse opportunities across Ontario.
  - It's easy to use, and you can post an unlimited number of physician and nurse vacancies.
  - Showcase the wonderful aspects of your community.
  - Contact your local [Regional Advisor](#) for assistance.
- **Job Boards:** A number of job boards have specific health care and physician categories for posting opportunities. There is a fee for posting on these sites.
  - [Monster](#);
  - [Workopolis](#);
  - [Charity Village](#);
  - [CMA's drcareers](#).
- **Journals and Associations:** Medical journals can be a good choice as they reach defined audiences, however they can be quite expensive. Many offer both print and online options. Some of the most popular include:
  - [The Medical Post](#);
  - [Canadian Medical Association Journal](#).

Also, many associations offer their own journals and online advertising. For example: The Ontario Association of General Surgeons: [www.oags.org](http://www.oags.org) has a great site that is affordable.
- **Medical Schools:** Looking to recruit new graduates? Contact the Program Directors/Assistants at the medical schools that offer the specialty you are looking to recruit. Many have a web site and will post your opportunity; sometimes there is a small fee for this service.
- **Web Site:** Advertise on your own web site and if possible, partner with a local hospital or community to advertise on its web site. This option drives traffic to your site while also showcasing your opportunities and expanding on information you have highlighted in other communications.
- **Outdoor:** Some examples include: a mural on a transport trailer, or billboards on the side of the road or at the entrance to a community.

## Tradeshows

Most conferences include a tradeshow component. Some will be large international conferences and others will be small local Continuing Medical Education (CME) conferences or job fairs targeting a specific profession. The primary reason for attending a tradeshow or job fair is to generate recruitment leads. Talking to people one-to-one is the best way to get your message across and establish relationships that can eventually lead to successful recruitments.

### Identifying Opportunities

How do you choose which tradeshow and job fairs to attend? As with all other aspects of marketing, defining your objectives, audience(s), and budget will help to determine which shows to attend. Asking the following questions will help you gather information to make a decision:

- Where is the show?
- How far will you need to travel to set up at the show?
- How much does registration cost?
- Will you need accommodation and food?
- How many days will you be away at the show?
- How long has the show been running?
- Who typically attends and how many people attend?
- What are the demographics of the attendees?
- Will this show garner the type of contacts you wish to generate?
- What materials are you going to hand out at the show?
- How many people will you need to staff the booth?
- What type of dress code will you establish for people working at the booth?

If you haven't attended the show before, ask the organizer/promoter for the names of organizations/communities that have had a booth there in the past. Contact some past participants and ask if they thought the show was worth attending. Ask your local Regional Advisor for information about shows and find out if the Agency has participated in the past.

Seek out opportunities for partnership. Perhaps there are neighbouring communities or hospitals that would also benefit from attending. Maybe you can combine resources to have one booth that represents your full region? As the booth would be shared between multiple communities/organizations, it would limit the cost and number of staff needed to attend from each community/organization.

**Sponsorship vs. Exhibiting:** Most conferences and tradeshow will provide opportunities for sponsorship as well as exhibiting at the tradeshow. In some cases a sponsorship will allow you to speak about your community/organization at the start of the session you sponsor, in others, your name will appear on the tent card thanking sponsors on each table. Knowing your objectives, audience, and budget will help you to determine whether a sponsorship is a good investment.

### Preparation

**Trade Show Registration and Costs:** If you decide to exhibit at a tradeshow, register at the early rate for maximum savings. Consider the size of the table and if you need electrical. Be careful of extras – sometimes table skirting is included, sometimes it is not. Many conferences have a contact person who is able to answer questions. Other exhibition costs include:

- Meals;
- Accommodations;
- Transportation (rental car, taxi, mileage);
- Flights;
- Registration fee;

- Additional booth utility fees;
- Shipping – of display and any other materials;
- Items for draws;
- Promotional give-aways;
- Insurance for shipping displays.

**Creating a Schedule:** Once you've registered for a tradeshow, create a schedule to make sure all the preparation details are taken care of in a timely and organized manner. It might be helpful to use the work-back schedule, meaning you schedule tasks by starting with the end date and working backwards.

Follow these steps:

1. Make a list of the elements that need to be in place to complete a successful project.
2. Take each item on the list and break it down to tasks necessary to complete the item.
3. Decide the order in which the tasks need to be completed and start placing the tasks in your work-back schedule (calendar).

**Banners and Booths:** As a physician recruiter, you will likely be displaying your booth at a job fair or a physician tradeshow. Your booth will be located among different types of medical equipment suppliers, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and clinics and other communities. All of the exhibitors are vying for the attention of the event attendees. Market research suggests you have approximately five seconds to grab the attendee's attention and draw him or her to your booth. Designing a clear and effective display is important because it is your first point of contact and it will draw attendees to the booth.

Displays are your most important investment and vary greatly in style and cost. Some of the most common displays are:

- The pop up display: The metal framework is pieced together for assembly and panels with graphics adhere to the framework with Velcro to complete the display. This type of display is easily transported in a canvas carry bag or a PVC hard-sided case with wheels, depending on the size of the display.
- The folding panel display: A metal framework with two, three or four panels join together to form the display. It can come with its own briefcase for carrying.
- The banner glide: The banner, housed in a metal base, works much like a blind and is easy to set up. The banners can be double sided – for example, one side English, the other French – and more than one banner glide can be grouped together to create your booth or highlight important messaging. The banner is transported in a canvas carry case.

Given the variation in designs and cost options, it is important to research and compare the different types of banners and displays available. Avoid spending a lot of money on a large display with permanent signage until you learn what works and what other communities/clinics are doing. Select a display that is easy to set up, take down and transport. Practise setting up and taking down the display before travelling to the show. Consider the size and weight of the display, as well. If you are required to fly to events, there may be additional baggage fees if your display is oversized or overweight.

**Messaging:** The display could include the following:

- Name of your community/organization;
- A map to help the attendees locate your community/organization;
- A list of practice opportunities/providers your community/organization is recruiting;
- Pictures of the community/organization (special events, lifestyle photos, sporting/cultural opportunities or tourism activities);
- Community/organization branding or slogans that draw attendees to your booth;
- A TV monitor or laptop to show a video about your community or organization. (Check if the trade show organizers can provide electricity; there will be an additional fee for this service at some shows).

Additionally, plan your 30-second elevator introduction. Be able to summarize who you are and what you do professionally in half a minute. And remember to carry extra business cards.

### **During the Show**

**Staffing the Booth:** Send appropriate representatives to staff the booth at the trade show/job fair. They must be knowledgeable about your community, including its educational facilities, real estate prices, medical office space, cultural and sporting activities, multiculturalism, religious institutions, and spousal employment support, to name a few areas of interest. They also need to be enthusiastic and friendly because they will be interacting with many people.

It's often very effective to get a local physician to participate. Potential candidates can then speak to him or her about what it is like to practise medicine in the community and live there. Physicians can also answer clinical questions. They can speak to the availability of medical equipment, on-call schedules and physician comradery.

As image makes an impression, be sure to wear professional clothing. If you have shirts or name tags consistent with the branding of your booth and promotional materials, you can wear them. It's advisable to wear comfortable shoes, as well, because you will be standing for long periods of time.

On the show day(s), arrive at the booth at least 15 minutes before the doors open for attendees. Avoid clustering with other staff at the booth. It's better to be open and available to anyone approaching the booth. Make eye contact, introduce yourself and ask for the attendee's name. Smile. Have an introduction prepared for everyone who approaches the booth.

Stand in front of or to the side of your booth, depending on set up. Rather than sitting and waiting for attendees to come by, engage with them as they pass the booth. Say "hello" or offer them a pen and ask if they have heard of your organization/community to draw them into a conversation. During your conversation, obtain names and contact details, and verify contact information before they leave your booth.

**Collecting Prospect Information:** The primary purpose for attending a trade show or job fair is to collect the names of health/medical students and professionals who may be interested in practising in your community or organization. To do this, establish a process at the booth for collecting names and contact information. You may also want to track other information you learn about each attendee. Some shows provide the attendees with stickers to distribute that include their name and contact information. Other shows do not, in which case you will need to collect the information yourself.

Whichever method of collection is used, it's important to collect accurate contact information. If you can't read the e-mail address or phone number, it will not be possible to follow up with a specific candidate. Ask attendees to type their name and contact information into an electronic sign-up sheet or database program on your laptop. If you are collecting contact information manually, ask attendees to complete a sign-up sheet or enter the information yourself (so you can recognize the handwriting).

Alternatively, hold a draw for a prize at your booth. This prize will encourage attendees to provide readable contact information. However, a draw doesn't allow for the opportunity to make notes about each individual, as attendees may be entering the draw without necessarily connecting with you.

**Working the Room:** In addition to identifying potential recruits, job fairs and trade shows also offer the opportunity for you to connect with other recruiters and exhibitors. Take advantage of downtime to visit the other booths and talk to the other exhibitors. Look at their booth designs, marketing materials and give-aways. Find out how they think the show is going and if they have attended before. Ask what other shows they will be attending in the future and which they would attend again. Ask about their process for following up with potential recruits and about their expectations for show outcomes. This time is a great opportunity to make connections and learn from others; in some cases this can be as valuable as the names of the prospects you collect.

### After the Show

**Post-Show:** Enter the contact details of show attendees into whatever system you use to track potential candidates. E-mail or call them within a week of the show; same day or within 24 hours is even better. Thank them for visiting your booth, include a link to your web site, a reminder of what you spoke about, and provide additional information they may have requested or that is relevant to your conversation at the booth. Ask if they have any questions.

**Show Evaluation:** Recruitment has a long cycle and results of the event will not be immediate. Some measures you can use to determine whether or not the event was worthwhile include:

- Whether the audience matched your target market;
- Whether the types of booth visitors were the professionals you want to recruit;
- Number of contacts collected;
- Quality of the contacts. The number of contacts that replied to your follow-up within a month of the event;
- The number of contacts that indicated potential interest in your opportunities or community;
- The quality of interaction with other exhibitors.

## Creating Marketing Materials

In addition to advertising in journals and on web sites, there will be opportunities to distribute other marketing materials to prospective candidates. It could be at a job fair, during a community visit or at local tourism venues. You can provide different types of marketing materials to promote your community and opportunities: paper-based collateral (such as brochures or one-page flyers), electronic collateral on a USB memory stick, or a web address that links to a web site with more information about your community and opportunities.

Here are some questions to consider when designing your materials:

- Who is your audience?
- What is the purpose of the material?
- What kind of information do you want to share?
- What do you want the reader to do next?
- How will you be connecting with the potential candidates?
- What is your budget?
- What other marketing materials do you have?

### **Paper Collateral (Brochures, Information Sheets)**

Paper collateral includes brochures and information sheets. It allows you to provide potential candidates with a take-away at a career fair and could be part of a candidate package supplied during a community visit. At a tradeshow/job fair booth, these pieces can prompt conversation and provide attendees with the opportunity to make notes based on the conversation at the table. Collateral can also be passed on to other potential candidates.

Attendees will likely collect paper-based information from other recruiters, so keep the collateral simple with the important highlights about the community or organization and opportunities. Include a call to action in the information. This could be an invitation to contact the recruiter for more details or to arrange a site visit or to visit a web site or join a Facebook group.

Most word processing software includes templates that can be used to design written promotional materials. The format should facilitate the kind of information you want to convey and meet your budget. Use a clean and attractive design so the information is easy to read at a glance. Once designed, you can print your collateral for a relatively low cost on an office printer or at a professional print shop.

### **Electronic Collateral**

Creating electronic promotional materials to be delivered on a CD or USB memory stick allows you to incorporate interactive elements and more information than a paper brochure.

The electronic information could include copies of the same materials provided on paper, but with links to community and employer web sites embedded in the documents to make it easier for the potential candidates to access additional information. Additionally, you could include videos about the community or organization and testimonials from other physicians who have chosen to practice in the community or from families who live there.

While electronic collateral offers more flexibility in terms of information you can provide and reduces the amount of paper an attendee needs to carry around, it has some drawbacks. Electronic collateral requires the potential recruit to load the material on a computer to read or view. And just as paper materials can be dropped in a recycling bin, electronic copies can be deleted. Also, the cost of providing electronic copies is higher than paper materials.

### **Web-Based Promotional Material**

It is essential to have a web site where potential candidates can get information about practice opportunities, communities and employers. The good news is most of the information potential recruits seek already exists in various forms on the Internet and doesn't need to be replicated. Often it's most effective to simply provide a single address within other marketing materials or on branded promotional items.

The web address can take potential recruits to a simple or complex site, depending on your resources and capacity to produce a web site. It could be a freestanding site or a page on a municipal site with links to other resources such as school boards, real estate, medical practices, etc.

The information can be as simple as what is included in paper-based handouts, but the medium enables you to include more complex and interactive content (video, social media, etc.) to provide more comprehensive details about the practice opportunities, employers and community.

### **Messaging**

When deciding what messaging to use, consider what is important to your target audience. The more you know your audience, the more informed your communication decisions will be. For example, physicians with young families may value parks with playgrounds, family friendly restaurants and community centres. Your messaging could highlight these amenities in your community. You also want to be clear about the action you want the audience to take.

### **Practice Opportunities**

When highlighting a practice opportunity, be sure to address the following information:

- Family Medicine or specialist?
- Hospital or community practice?
- Type of Family Medicine practice opportunity? (solo practice, FHT, CHC, etc.)
- Group practice or turn-key opportunity?

### **Writing Tips**

- Craft a contemporary, catchy headline and subheads, e.g. A Night to Remember—Billed an Evening of Celebration, it was all that and more;
- Develop a compelling first sentence to encourage further reading;
- Decide to use a conversational or business-like tone;
- Create benefit-oriented copy;
- Break copy into sections and subheadings;
- Keep paragraphs and sentences short, but remember to vary your sentence structure;
- Write in the active tense;
- Involve the reader, e.g. You'll love it here!;
- Highlight a success story or testimonial, wherever possible;
- Include value-added information, e.g. a link to an external source such as a chamber of commerce or local real estate agent;
- End your copy with a "call to action", e.g. RSVP to the event or call for information or visit our web site.

### **Proofread Everything**

Regardless of which medium is used, proofread your collateral to avoid spelling errors and typos, which create an unfavourable impression.

### **Pictures, Pictures, Pictures**

In today's visually rich universe, graphic design is just as important as content. Good photographs and visuals will add a contemporary, fresh and compelling dimension to your presentation and create a good first impression.

If you can afford it, hire a professional graphic designer and/or photographer. Alternatively, ask for stock photos from tourism partners or run a photography contest specific to images you want to showcase.

### **Working within a Budget**

Assess your existing resources. Do you have access to good quality in house writers, designers and printers? Will you need to use freelancers for any of these components? Maximize the resources you have.

### **Delivery**

Keep the following in mind for delivery of communications: postage, envelopes and e-mail capacity. Remember the size and weight of your finished print product may impact postage costs. Take into account the size of any e-mail being distributed and related technical issues such as: file types, coding and broadband width.

### **Building a Community Profile: List of Community Attributes**

Research all aspects of your community to help you build a community profile. (See the following list for suggestions). When building the profile, highlight the strongest aspects that are of greatest interest to your target market. Also, think about how to position your community so it stands out from others.

- **Arts and Culture:** Research the art galleries, museums and theatres in your area. Find out if there are any clubs, such as art or book clubs, that welcome newcomers.
- **Community Statistics:** Know the demographics of your community, including future projections, and key economic drivers.
- **Cross-Cultural Services:** List cross-cultural services, such as English as a second language services.
- **Cultural-Based Organizations:** Research cultural-based organizations in your area.
- **Employment opportunities:** Consider the physician and the spouse.
  - **Practice Opportunities:** Compile a list of Family Health Teams, Community Health Centres, medical clinics — particularly those with turnkey options and retiring physicians. Know all aspects, including remuneration, hours worked (in general, on-call), and the workplace culture within the hospital and other organizations.
  - **Career Opportunities:** Be aware of other prominent industries in the area (e.g. high-tech, biochemical). You can then pursue a more individualized approach when working with a specific recruit and spouse, by tapping into or creating a database of potential work opportunities and contacts for the spouse.
- **Government/Community-Based Services:** Consider all Government services located in your area as well as other community-based services, such as homecare and daycare.
- **Location:** Provide information about where your community is located in reference to the closest major centre, the U.S., provincial border, provincial parks, etc. Geographic landmarks help to orient potential candidates. It may also be worthwhile to include directions on how to get there. For example, if flights or train travel options are available from Toronto or Ottawa, etc.
- **Maps:** Use maps to show potential recruits where the community is situated in the area and province.
- **Natural Attractions:** Identify the hidden natural gems— such as lakes, beaches and hiking trails—in your area. Ask your local tourism partner to share photos to help market the community.
- **Places of Worship:** Create a list of places of worship in the area, including details on location.
- **Real estate market:** Find out the average house price, and the available accommodations — both rental and for purchase — in town and in neighbouring communities.
- **Schools:** List the elementary and secondary schools — public, separate, private, and bilingual, French immersion and or other language availability — as well as post-secondary education options. Include links to local school boards.
- **Shopping:** Know the malls and unique stores in your area (particularly in the downtown area) that can really showcase a community.
- **Social Aspects:** Investigate if there is a strong medical social network that welcomes newcomers. Get others involved.
- **Special Events or Annual Festivals:** Compile a list of annual events and festivals that take place in the area.
- **Sports, Parks and Recreation:** Research the location of gyms, find out about parks and recreation programming and provide links to relevant web sites. Highlight the variety of recreational activities available.

- **Transportation:** Learn about the local transit system within the community, bus and train access, and local highways for travel to larger centres. Know the distance to the nearest airports. Define the distance from your community to larger urban centres.
- **Volunteer Opportunities, Clubs and Organizations:** Compile a list and find out how new residents can get involved.

In addition to this list, include any other services, features or community assets that might appeal to new recruits.

Local agencies, including your municipality or city hall, as well as partners in tourism and economic development, such as your local chamber of commerce, can likely assist you with your research and/or creating the community profile. See [Partnerships](#) for information on regional partners.

Once your community profile is complete, you can easily highlight the three or four most important aspects about your community on other promotional materials as attention-grabbing bullets or as headers for paragraphs providing more details about those particular areas of interest.

For more information or questions,  
please contact your local Regional Advisor:

[www.healthforceontario.ca/ra](http://www.healthforceontario.ca/ra)