Guide to Healthcare Recruiting

Keys to Hiring Top Talent In Today's Critical Talent Shortage

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Introduction

What matters most when you're choosing a doctor? From the patient's perspective, that's a relatively simple answer. You want someone who knows what they're doing (skill) and who treats you well (culture). Both considerations are important, and either one can make or break your experience.

From a recruiting perspective, those same two considerations still carry the most weight. But finding talent with the right qualifications isn't easy. A shrinking supply of qualified talent coupled with increasing demand for key roles has created significant hiring challenges for the healthcare industry, including:

- **High turnover due to an increase in opportunities**

- **Increased needs for talent at all levels**

- **Lack of qualified candidates available to fill open positions**

To overcome these hurdles, hiring managers and recruiters need a targeted strategy designed to address the unique concerns of healthcare professionals.

What You'll Learn…

A Birds-Eye View of Healthcare Recruiting

The Bureau of Labor Statistics pinpoints the healthcare industry as one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. By 2026, BLS projects that we will see 2.4 million new jobs in healthcare and an industry growth rate of 18%.

What's behind that surge in demand? There are several contributing factors including an aging population, increased access to health insurance, advances in our ability to treat certain health conditions resulting in more people living longer, and technology advances that require new skill sets.
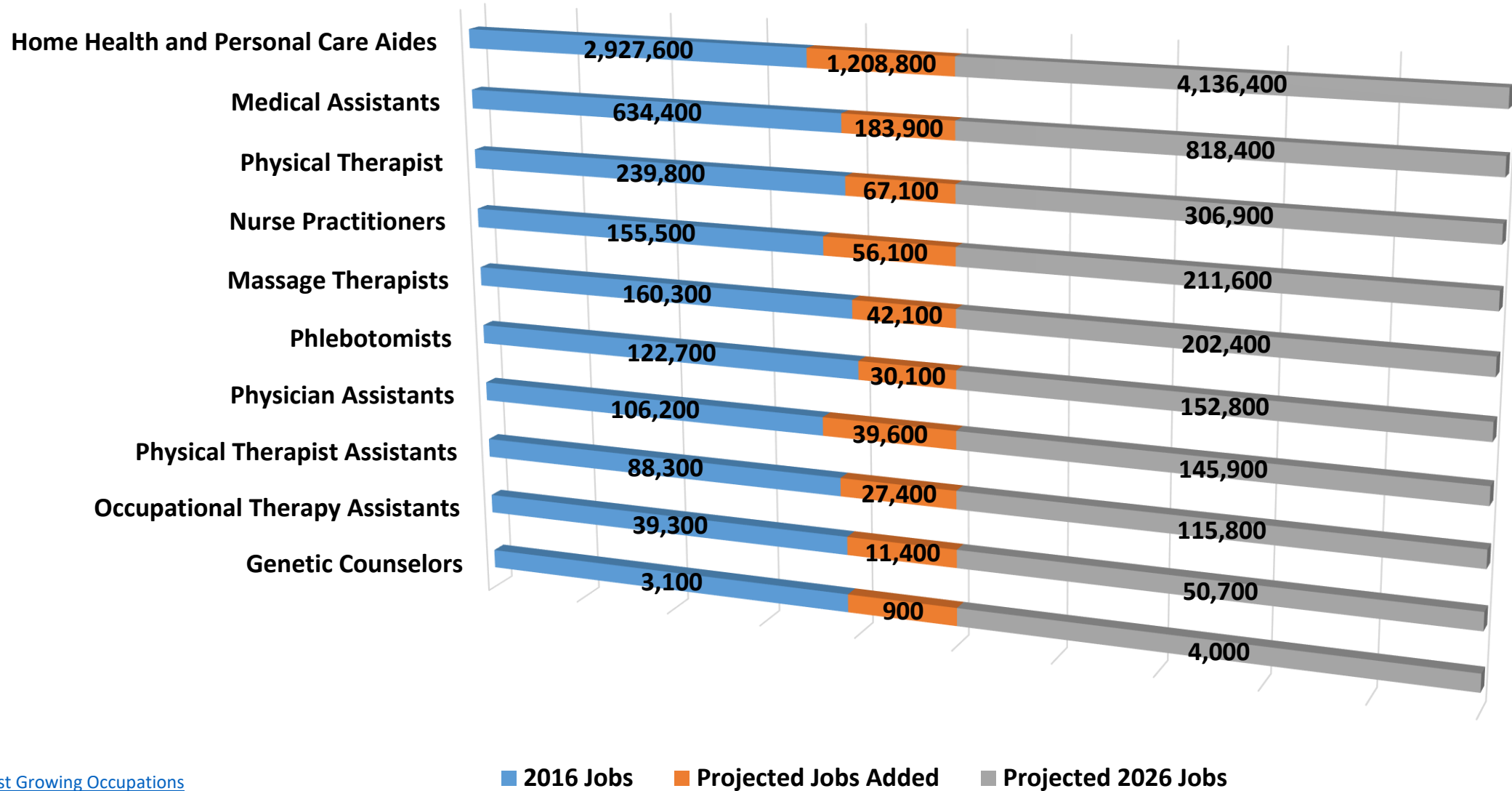
The Top Ten Fastest-Growing Healthcare Jobs

Healthcare jobs account for 11 of the 20 fastest-growing jobs according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The industry as a whole is projected to see an 18% growth rate, and individual jobs can expect to see even faster growth.

Job Title	Median Salary	Projected Growth
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	$23,130	41%
Physician Assistants	$104,860	37%
Nurse Practitioners	$110,930	36%
Physical Therapist Assistants	$57,430	31%
Genetic Counselors	$77,480	29%
Medical Assistants	$32,480	29%
Occupational Therapy Assistants	$59,310	29%
Physical Therapist	$86,850	28%
Massage Therapists	$39,990	26%
Phlebotomists	$33,670	25%

Source: Fastest Growing Occupations

Fastest Growing Healthcare Jobs

Occupation	2016 Jobs	Projected Jobs Added	Projected 2026 Jobs
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,927,600	1,208,800	4,136,400
Medical Assistants	634,400	183,900	818,400
Physical Therapist	239,800	67,100	306,900
Nurse Practitioners	155,500	56,100	211,600
Massage Therapists	160,300	42,100	202,400
Phlebotomists	122,700	30,100	152,800
Physician Assistants	106,200	39,600	145,900
Physical Therapist Assistants	88,300	27,400	115,800
Occupational Therapy Assistants	39,300	11,400	50,700
Genetic Counselors	3,100	900	4,000

■ 2016 Jobs   ■ Projected Jobs Added   ■ Projected 2026 Jobs

Source: Fastest Growing Occupations

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Which Jobs are Hardest to Fill?

Healthcare jobs range from low-wage support jobs that pay less than $30,000 per year to high-wage physician and technical positions that pay well into six figures. But salary is only one factor to consider.

CareerCast reports that five of the top ten hardest jobs to fill in 2018 are in the healthcare industry:

- **Home Health Aide**

- **Medical Services Manager**

- **Nurse Practitioner**

- **Personal Care Aide**

- **Physical Therapist**

CareerCast bases its list on Bureau of Labor Statistics growth projections, industry association data, graduation rates, and job listings. What is interesting about this list, however, is that it includes not only skilled roles but also entry-level positions.

What's behind that talent gap?

Top-level positions requiring specific credentials and expertise have always presented recruiting difficulties due to the highly skilled nature of the job.

But entry-level positions like home health aides and medical assistants have become increasingly difficult to fill as well, while the need for talent in this area is growing quickly.

Jay Sanderson, Director of Talent Acquisition at Greenville Health System (GHS) in South Carolina, sees several reasons for this trend. GHS currently employs approximately 16,000 employees and expects that number to increase to about 29,000 over the next year due to the recent merger of a regional healthcare system, Palmetto Health.

Sanderson suggests that the first reason for the talent shortage is simply the number of positions available.

"Entry-level positions are often the most challenging because there are more opportunities for those candidates to find a new position," said Sanderson. "There are so many opportunities available that employees can move on quickly for a minimal raise or other factor."

Second, and just as influential, is a trend for candidates to seek more education and more impactful roles, especially on the part of [millennials](#).

"Since the recession in 2009, we've seen more people pursuing higher levels of education to gain an edge in the job search, which results in fewer people willing to take entry-level positions as they now meet different minimum requirements," said Sanderson. "We have also seen trends among millennials to look for jobs with a greater impact in their career from day one and are challenged with starting at the ground level."

That can be a great motivating factor if it drives younger workers to pursue additional skills and education, but it can also manifest itself in higher expectations for the same role. In previous generations, a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) might stay in the same position for years. But with the advent of technology that makes it easier to find jobs and pursue education, more of these individuals have begun working to receive a bachelor's degree so they can move to a job with higher pay and greater impact.

"We've shown them a better opportunity," said Sanderson.

A third reason for entry-level talent shortages is the greater visibility of talent needs in specific areas. Nursing shortages, for example, have received a lot of press in recent years. That's a great thing, but the push toward nursing has created a drop in the number of candidates who may have pursued other roles.

Why Hiring is Tough in the Healthcare Industry

The greatest challenge in healthcare recruiting is simply a lack of talent. Many healthcare jobs require specific skills and credentials, and there aren't enough qualified candidates to fill them. But there are several other hurdles that recruiters in this industry must overcome as well.

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- Jay Sanderson, Director of Talent Acquisition, Greenville Health System

Let's take a look at some of the most common hiring difficulties we face in the healthcare industry.

- **Lack of Qualified Candidates**—Physician and nursing shortages have been well publicized, but the talent shortage extends to many other areas of the healthcare industry as well. The most urgent needs are for candidates who have 2 to 5 years of experience in their field, with 80% of healthcare organizations seeking to hire in this category.

Percent of Healthcare Organizations Seeking Candidates With Experience

47%   0-2 years of experience (entry level)
80%   2-5 years of experience
34%   6-10 years of experience
20%   10+ years of experience

Source: 2017 Healthcare Recruiting Trends Report, Health eCareers

- **High Turnover**—A recent survey by Glassdoor found that 64% of healthcare professionals plan to find a new job within the next twelve months, and 42% plan to do so within the next three months. Turnover is especially problematic in entry-level or non-specialist positions where candidates can find another position easily. Higher visibility of available jobs coupled with increases in demand have created a candidate's hiring market where candidates can and will leave a job for a better cultural fit or marginally higher pay.

- **Poor Candidate Experiences**—There is nothing more frustrating than sitting around waiting for weeks after your initial interview, wondering whether you're going to be hired. More than half of candidates say strong communication from the recruiter is important during the recruiting process, yet many organizations still drop the ball in this area.

- **Location Challenges**—Healthcare organizations in less-trafficked areas may have greater difficulty persuading qualified talent to relocate, especially if they can't increase compensation packages. In these cases, it can take many months to fill open roles.

- **Compensation Disparity**—With so many open positions available, compensation often plays a key role in the candidate's choice of employer. That's true even for entry-level positions where a slightly higher hourly wage is reason enough to take a new job. Still, money isn't everything. The Glassdoor study found that two out of three healthcare professionals say they would take less money to work in a great culture, and slight differences in pay don't carry as much impact in high-level positions.

Perhaps the greatest hiring hang-up according to Jay Sanderson, however, is the healthcare recruiting industry itself. "We tend to follow checklists as opposed to getting to know the candidate and finding a position to fit them," Sanderson says. "We get too caught up in the requirements and minimum experience of a role rather than finding good people that we want in the organization. Aside from roles which have mandated requirements, we need to understand each candidate's strengths and try to build a job description around them."

Of course, certain jobs have non-negotiable requirements. But when you find an exceptional candidate who doesn't quite check all the boxes in terms of years of experience or job history, think twice before dropping that resume in the rejection pile.

9 Keys to Hiring Qualified Healthcare Talent

With the health of the industry (and by extension, the health of individual organizations) at stake, recruiters are eagerly vying for top candidates. A majority of healthcare employers intend to hire more candidates in the future than they do now, but it will take careful strategy to meet those hiring goals in the context of an intensely competitive hiring market.

To find the candidates you need to fill your open roles, consider the following keys to successful healthcare recruiting:

1. **Hire for cultural fit, especially for non-specialist roles.** Look for candidates who will be great for your organization rather than simply checking off a list of requirements. People who love their jobs tend to remain in them longer, and that's a great way to reduce turnover. Cultural fit is also important to candidates, with 66% reporting that they would take less money for a job with a great culture and 56% saying they would take less money to work at a hospital that places the highest value on helping people.
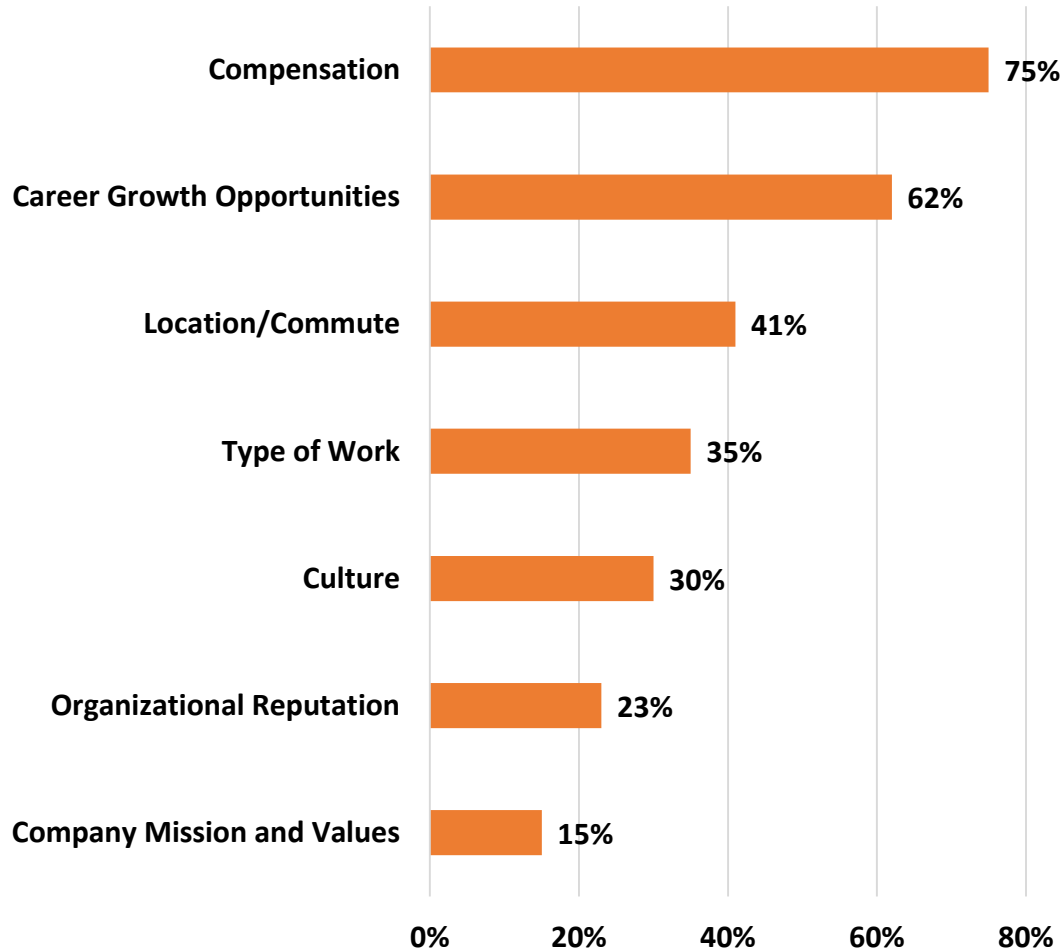
2. **Be willing to fit the role to the candidate.** When you find a rock star candidate, look for ways to adjust the position requirements to their experience if possible. Of course, you can't hire an unqualified neurosurgeon just because he's a nice guy, but you might be able to offer training to a stellar Organizational Development candidate who doesn't have prior healthcare experience.

3. **Understand candidate motivations.** Entry-level candidates choose jobs differently than high-level candidates do, so adjust your hiring strategies accordingly. For example, a medical assistant candidate might be swayed by slightly higher compensation, but an experienced physician will likely place high value on excellent culture and opportunity.

4. **Strengthen your employer brand.** Candidates care about compensation, but other considerations sometimes matter even more. Upcoming generations of workers want jobs that make an impact in the organization and the community, provide opportunity for personal growth, and offer flexible work arrangements. You can attract these candidates by strategically positioning your employer brand in job postings and promoting your culture through referrals and reviews.

5. **Build a strong network for referrals.** Referrals rank among the best sources of quality candidates. Employees rely on the opinions of colleagues (67%), friends (56%), and family (33%) when choosing a job, and they are also likely to read reviews about your organization (94%) before making a decision. Candidates who join your team as the result of a referral are often more engaged and tend to stick with your company longer.

67%
of employees rely on the opinions of colleagues when choosing a job

6. **Pursue passive candidates.** In light of the physician and nursing talent shortages, passive candidate recruiting may be your best option for finding highly skilled talent for key roles. Candidates value honesty and transparency during the recruiting process, so be open about the pros and cons of the position and give the candidate strong motivations to leave their current role. This is especially vital if you are hiring in a geographic location that struggles to attract top talent.

Reasons Healthcare Professionals Would Leave a Job

Reason	Percentage
Compensation	75%
Career Growth Opportunities	62%
Location/Commute	41%
Type of Work	35%
Culture	30%
Organizational Reputation	23%
Company Mission and Values	15%

Source: The Resourceful Recruiter's Guide to Recruiting – Healthcare, Glassdoor

7. **Improve the candidate experience.** Great candidate experiences begin with treating candidates with respect. Communicate quickly and frequently, respond to inquiries in a reasonable timeframe, be clear about expectations and process, and be courteous, even if you don't extend an offer. Even candidates you don't end up hiring will have something to say about you to their friends and colleagues, so be sure you give them a positive experience to share.

8. **Improve the sales side of recruiting.** Recruiting involves a healthy dose of good salesmanship, especially if you are targeting passive candidates. Even in standard interviews, however, remember that most candidates have a choice about where they want to work. It's your job to convince them that your organization is the right fit.

9. **Use all the technology tools at your disposal.** Job boards, social media, and talent acquisition technology should all contribute to your recruiting strategy. The right technology platform can help you reduce your time-to-fill, cut costs, identify the best candidates, screen candidates not only for credentials but also for cultural fit, and manage your job postings. On the candidate side, job boards, social media, and mobile applications appeal to candidates as they become more reliant on these tools to find the perfect fit.

Conclusion

Over the next decade, we're going to see the demand for quality healthcare professionals ramping up to unprecedented levels. At Hire Velocity, we specialize in designing talent strategies that transform organizations. We help you overcome the challenges of healthcare recruiting with:

- Customizable RPO services
- Specialty search strategies
- Technology assessments
- Talent analytics
- Employer branding
- Retention strategies and best practices

When you hire the best talent, you not only strengthen your organization from a business perspective, but you also have the opportunity to build better patient experiences.

And that is the true heart of healthcare.

About Hire Velocity

At Hire Velocity, we are passionate about designing talent strategies that transform organizations, and make the impossible possible for our clients. By combining high quality delivery teams with the most advanced recruiting and social media tools, we utilize two of our greatest assets—our talent and technology – to discover, measure, maximize, and deliver results.