

5. Where Are You in Your Job Search and Professional Career?

I often hear statements from doctors who are no longer in residency and are out practicing stating that contract negotiations are for doctors coming out of residency, but since they are established and out working, they do not need this information. They fail to realize how important this is and how doctors sign or resign contracts their entire working career.

Example

I remember seeing a classmate of mine at a convention. I told him that I was about to do a talk on contract negotiations, and he stated to me that it sounds to be an interesting topic that a lot of doctors don't know but need to know more about. I invited him to the session, and his response was that because he worked mostly locum tenens jobs, he did not need to know information on negotiating a contract.



Mistake: Taking what seems to be a great job that does not fit with where you are in your career.

Dr. False Start

Where you are in life clearly determines the type of job that you are looking for. A resident is looking for a job that will use their skill and pay well. For the most part, they are eager to work, young, vibrant, energetic, and want to make as much money as possible. Much of this is due to needing to pay back undergraduate and medical school loans, desiring to live the life of their other professional friends who have homes and nice cars, and desiring to catch up on all the delayed gratification from spending twelve to sixteen years in education past high school. This type of doctor often makes mistakes in picking their first job, due to not clearly knowing the type of work they are getting into and due to a lack of on-the-job experiences.

Dr. Grant Hustle

Other times, you may be on your “grind or hustle” where you are looking forward to making as much legitimate money as possible and going for the highest bidder of services. This is the doctor who is negotiating for the highest dollar. Typically, they don’t stay in one place long because if someone offers “another nickel over lunch money,” they are quickly out the door. They are normally nomadic in nature and do not often make friends where they are or unpack their luggage. Also, this person may have a steady job, but is willing to do extra call, work on weekends, or cover for others in order to increase their income. The contract they are looking for is the dollar with efficiency.

Dr. Ness Egg

Frequently, a late-career physician may be looking to decrease hours, move to an area where they can retire, and maximize benefits that will help them build a comfortable nest egg. Many government or large corporation jobs fit the bill for these people, due to retirement packages and the work being fairly consistent from day to day. Many physicians are attempting to take full advantage of matching funds and are looking for the location to retire.

Dr. E.Z. St. Eddy

Around mid-career, a lot of physicians determine that they are in a lot of debt after living it up those first few years of independent practice outside of residency. At this time, work is no longer a novelty; you have the rhythm of your profession and career. You are still eager to move forward in your profession, but there is a practicality to what you are doing as well. Some of us may hit our comfort zone by then and will hit an easy and steady work rhythm. It would be great if we were working in a job that we find to be our right fit for the rest of our lives, or we may find that this job just isn't it, but we have a better idea of what we are looking for. They are the "I've got a job; I just want a better one" type.

Dr. Ned Job Asap

This group is the physicians who are either trying to get out of a bad situation where they don't like where they are or possibly they had some trouble along the way. Many times you find these people running to something due to having to run away from something else. Oddly enough, the last problem catches up and shows quickly at the next job opportunity. Sometimes there has been an unexpected move, a falling out at the last job, or a change in life. Sometimes a doctor may just be out of work and needs to get back in the job market. These doctors are looking for the first contract that makes sense to take.



Conclusion: You must know where you are in your career before taking a job. Sometimes a great opportunity may have poor timing.