

**ADVENTURES
IN MEDICINE**

Career & Life Planning

Survival Guide



*Search
Strategy*

Discovery Resource
ST-05

Your Search Strategy Guide:

Julia Zimmerman

**Vice President
SwedishAmerican Medical Group –
Physician Resources**

B.A., University of Wisconsin

As a member of the leadership team of SwedishAmerican Health System, Julia directs physician recruitment and retention and serves as administrator of employed physician services. In 1993, she led the development of SwedishAmerican Medical Group with the acquisition of 23 local physicians. With a focus on physician leadership, the group has grown to over 125 employed providers and is the most-preferred group in northern Illinois. According to Julia, "When new physicians join the group, they become members of the SwedishAmerican family, not just new employees. We foster long-term relationships with comprehensive orientation and mentoring programs, on-site child care and sick-child care, and even a concierge service. These unique benefits attract great candidates and help them balance success at work and at home."



Your Search Strategy Guide:

Vickie Austin

**Speaker, Business and Career Coach, and Founder,
CHOICES Worldwide**

**B.A., Arizona State University; Executive Master's in
International Management, Thunderbird School of
Global Management**



Vickie Austin founded CHOICES Worldwide in 1997 to offer strategic marketing planning to entrepreneurs, executives and individuals in career transition. She is a frequent speaker and trainer on career success, networking, negotiation and professional services marketing. She began her career as a healthcare journalist. Her articles have appeared in *National Business Employment Weekly*, *New Perspectives*, and the career sites of the *Wall Street Journal*. She is the author of the e-book *Your Golden Rolodex: How to Network For Results!* When she isn't in front of an audience speaking, she's singing, songwriting and spending time with family.



In This Stage: Search Strategy

When following an adventure trail, a straight line is always the easiest route from Point A to Point B, but when planning your job search, you must blaze a new trail. Without a well-developed plan, you may end up traveling in circles, running into dead ends, or finishing last in line.

Your journey is unique and you must identify your resources, understand your obstacles, and organize the tools at your disposal to reach your final destination quickly and efficiently. In this stage, you will learn who and what can help you on your journey, what may block your path to success, and how to develop your own “golden” opportunity.

Let's get to work.

CONTENTS

Validating Your Values and Purpose.....	2
Search Methods	3
Your Golden Rolodex	7
Action Checklist.....	14



Validating Your Values and Purpose

At this point, you have laid out a road map (stage 1) to secure the right opportunity—having a better understanding of all of the elements in a job search. You have studied and learned how today's landscape is changing, how a hospital operates, self assessed your professional competencies (stage 2), gauged how physicians within your specialty get paid by market (stage 3), and dived deep within your soul to discover and prioritize you **CORE VALUES, LIFE PURPOSE, and LIFE AND WORK PRIORITIES** (stage 4).

Prior to embarking on the “Search” phase, we recommend asking yourself the following questions:

- Can I articulate my core values, life purpose, and my life and work priorities?
- Can I define what type of employer can help me grow professionally based on my professional competencies?
- Can I define the type of community in which I want to live and practice?
- Am I okay with the compensation packages within that territory?
- Do I have a good understanding of how hospitals/groups operate?
- Can I define what type of practice setting in which I would best thrive?
- Do I understand the pros and cons to each type of practice setting?
- Am I prepared to make concessions when choosing a position?

If you cannot answer these questions specifically, you are not alone. After all, you have dedicated a decade of your life to becoming a physician, and re-entering life and choosing a career for the first time is no easy feat. Remember that there is a big difference between acing your exams and applying the information you've learned into diagnosing your first few patients, or performing surgery on your first few cases. The difference is that you've had teachers, professors, and seasoned physicians to help guide you each step of the way.

You can study the job markets, discuss the type of opportunity you're seeking with loved ones, and do the heavy lifting to map out the rest of your life; however, the fact is, you don't know what you don't know—which is another reason to use your resources wisely.

Just like when you were in your internship, you had an opportunity to experience several different specialties to see where your interests lie, searching and interviewing is an opportunity to test pilot the elements you have identified as your search criteria.



Search Methods

There is no one right way to secure an opportunity; instead, it may be a combination of multiple methods. Whether you look online, respond to direct mail or a journal ad, network, or contact a physician recruiting firm directly, the key is to leverage each search method, so you can make the right decision for you and your family.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Job Boards and Postings

Everyone is familiar with job-hunting sites like Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com. Similarly there are an overwhelming number of physician job boards to choose from. How do you know which site will actually lead you to the type of position you are looking for?

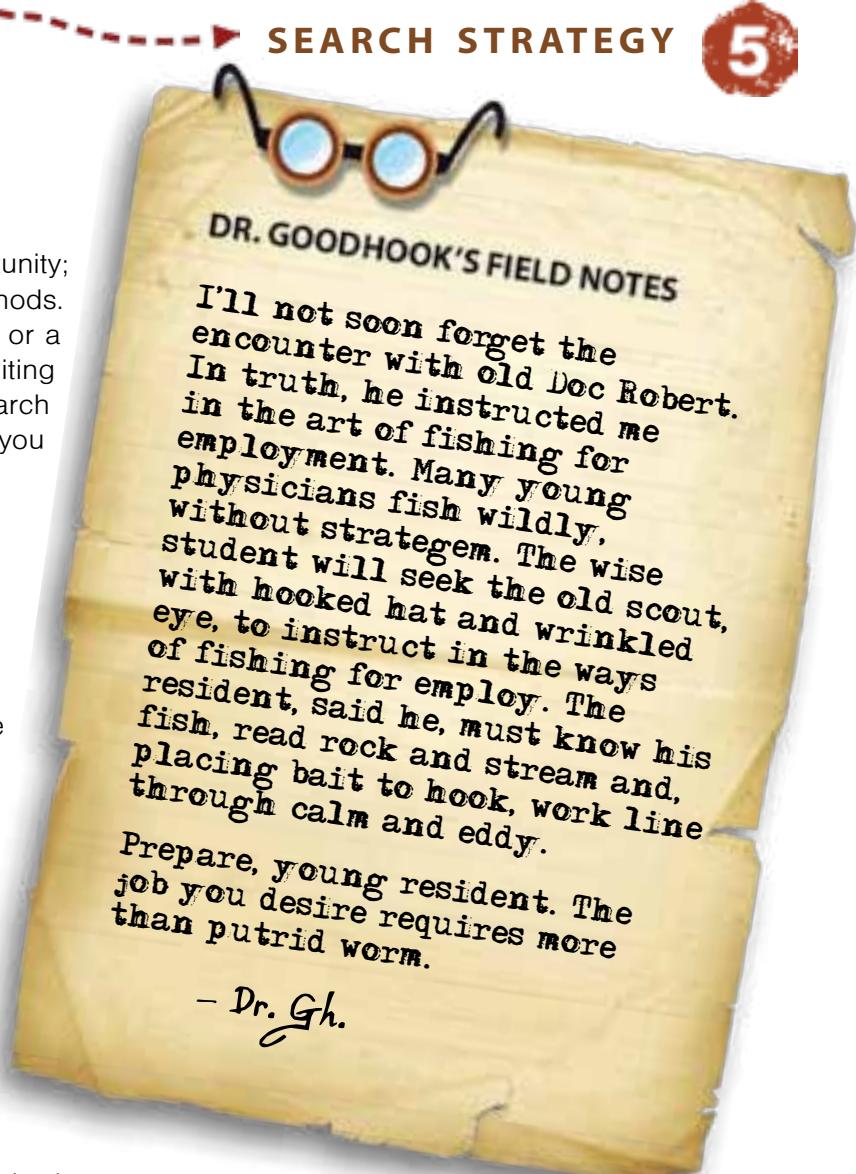
The best online resource is your specialty-specific organization — for example, the American Academy of Family Physicians or the American College of Physicians. Specialty organizations represent the physicians in your specialty and limit access to job postings to members of the organization.

Positions are posted by physicians looking for partners, by hospitals and medical groups offering employed positions, and by universities and residency programs filling academic positions. Several specialty associations also offer online journals that include a classified section where you will find job ads.

Caution: There may be organizations who post their opportunities on job boards and journal ads whose main purpose is to entice you to contact them (e.g., to build their database). These sites may post legitimate positions; however, jobs may be occasionally outdated and/or fictional. As you inquire about these positions, ask specific questions and listen carefully to their responses to avoid an unproductive job search path.

Social Networks

You are the Facebook, MySpace, Twitter generation, so you know well the vast jungle of social networking. What you may not know is that you are being Googled, tracked, and pursued by healthcare organizations and others vying for your personal information. Many in-house recruiters routinely “Google” candidates when they receive a CV, so it is important to keep an eye on what the Internet says about you.



There are over 500 healthcare organizations now with Facebook accounts and most are there to attract physicians and other providers. Nurses, physical therapists, and even physicians are connecting with new employers via social media, so it may be a valuable resource as you look for your ideal position. Most hospitals include links to their official website and may post videos of current physicians and leadership. Use this tool to research the facility, the physicians they employ, and the culture they project and compare these to your ideal practice.

The big question with social networking is how to stay connected with your friends while also projecting a professional image. The answer is perhaps obvious – keep your personal page private and create a second, professional page that will allow potential employers and networkers to see the physician to whom they would entrust their grandmother's care. Use caution with social networking and always keep in mind that your potential employer may be reading your latest post.

CAREER FAIRS

Many physicians know career fairs as a great place to pick up freebies – the gadgets, treats, and gift cards given away by recruiters to entice physicians to their booths. Career fairs can be a great resource, however, because they provide job seekers an opportunity to network with multiple employers within a short period of time and in a single location. They are a place to gather information and to meet people who may help you in your search, even if you don't find your ideal position.

There are downsides with career fairs, but if you understand the terrain, your visit can be productive. Recruiters are looking for candidates and you are looking for a position. They will have their selling points ready and you should too. Be prepared with copies of your CV and your list of priorities. Prepare questions in advance. Dress to impress because you may end up interviewing with a key player. And most importantly, be respectful. If you visit a booth, take a minute to talk with the recruiters – don't just grab the freebie and run. You may not be interested in their position, but recruiters network too, and if their opportunity isn't right for you, many are happy to share your CV with colleagues.

ALUMNI AND MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS

It's important to network with faculty advisors and residents from previous years. If possible, you should speak with physicians you trust and who know you because they will lead you down the right path. Medical associations represent another opportunity to network with physicians with the same career and clinical focus. These contacts often have knowledge about openings that aren't advertised or posted anywhere. Also, most employers post positions on the job boards of specialty associations. The primary challenge with this resource is carving out time to meet with these people or attending association meetings.

PROFESSIONAL RECRUITERS

There are two types of professional recruiters: Those that work for a health system, hospital, or medical group, known as in-house recruiters, and agency recruiters, or those that work for a placement firm. In some ways they are competitors in search of candidates. In spite of the competition, many in-house recruiters and agency recruiters work together to source quality physician candidates.

In-house Recruiters

In-house recruiters represent solely the physician needs of their organization. In-house recruiters work directly with their physicians and senior leadership and manage the entire recruitment process from candidate selection to contract signing. They are very knowledgeable about their physician practices, organization, and community and will provide you with the detailed information you need to evaluate an opportunity. Most in-house recruiters are also responsible for retention, so they work very hard to find the physician with the right fit for a position. On the flip side, contract negotiation can be more difficult because there is no mediator to lead both parties to middle ground.

Agency Recruiters

Agency recruiters sometimes represent many different organizations at the same time. There are large, national organizations with hundreds of recruiters and clients all across the country, and there are small, one-person offices. Both will connect you with multiple opportunities and may offer valuable advice for gathering references, formatting CVs, coaching for interviews, and contract negotiation. It is important to note that agencies may have limited knowledge of the hospitals and communities they present. Agency recruiters are liaisons between you and the hiring organization, who will pay a placement fee if you are hired. Remember that some may be motivated more by money than by your ultimate job satisfaction, so choose carefully.



GUIDE POINTS

How to Work With a Recruitment Firm

A recruitment firm can be a valuable tool if utilized properly:

- Before you entrust your CV and your reputation to a recruiter, determine how they will identify positions that meet your criteria and how they will help you during your search.
- Work with only one or two firms/recruiters. Working with multiple firms will not increase your chances of finding your ideal position; on the contrary, it may work against you. An employer who receives your CV from multiple recruiters may see you as a desperate candidate no one else wants.
- Give your recruiter a concise, up-to-date CV, three recent letters of reference, your list of priorities, and your “elevator speech.” This will allow the recruiter to represent you with detail and accuracy.
- Establish phone call guidelines with the recruiter including the best time to reach you, and a designated number. Return calls promptly and at least once per day.
- Make it clear to your recruiter that they must discuss a position with you before submitting your CV. Your CV should not be presented for a job in which you have no interest. If the employer is interested in you, the recruiter should tell you who will call and when, so you can be prepared to ask and answer questions.
- Consider your recruiter a coach who can provide valuable advice on interviewing, asking and responding to questions, identifying red-flag situations, and negotiating contracts.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Most professionals in any industry understand the concept of “networking.” Successful professionals network on a continual basis, expanding their networks with each new person they meet. People network on the golf course, at Chamber of Commerce meetings, their children’s soccer games, church, and even at the grocery store. They understand that each new contact may provide links to more new contacts, thereby expanding their contact base exponentially.

Few physicians, on the other hand, understand networking. They tend to think only in terms of building a practice, but in reality, building a practice is networking. You see one patient, who then tells a friend, who tells a family member, and pretty soon you have a full schedule. That is the power of word-of-mouth advertising, and it can help you find your ideal practice in addition to filling your waiting room. In spite of the multitude of resources available, the actual mechanics of networking elude those in career transition, including most residents entering the real job market for the first time. Unfortunately, networking carries a stigma and a host of misconceptions.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS OF NETWORKING

NETWORKING IS ONLY ABOUT...	FALSE
• Using people	✓
• Attending a group event	✓
• Meeting only new people	✓
• Lots of hard work and time	✓
• Being an extrovert	✓
• Knowing a lot of people	✓

The Real Truth of Networking

If you’re like most people, you may fall prey to these misconceptions and potentially miss out on the power and magic of networking. Let’s look at the other side of these misconceptions.

First of all, many people think that in order to network, they have to use people, and they are, understandably, uncomfortable doing so. Or, while they’ve heard the saying that “it isn’t what you know; it’s who you know,” they focus on the “who” instead of the “you.” They assume that they don’t know anyone — at least, not anyone important. Some are too proud to ask others for help.

Additionally, many people think that networking is a group dynamic, best done at trade shows, business-after-hours events and conventions — in essence, what may be called a “group grope.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Networking is a one-on-one phenomenon, built one relationship at a time; and when the art of networking is positioned this way, folks heave a tremendous sigh of relief. Relationships you’ve made with attending physicians, professors and peers can be the most valuable resources during your search.

Due to the misconception that networking is hard, onerous work comprised of attending a lot of bad cocktail parties and dreary conventions, many avoid networking and miss the gold that's right under our noses — **THE PEOPLE WE ALREADY KNOW.**

Your Golden Rolodex

Networking on a professional level with people you see every day — program directors, attendings, nurses, hospital administrators, and even those in your own circle of friends — can help you create something business and career coach Vickie Austin calls your “Golden Rolodex.” For the graduating resident looking for a first job, this is the first place to begin. Your “Golden Rolodex” is comprised of everyone you know. This collection of contacts is your most important tool, but you may be hesitant to use it. You may worry that people will think you are just using them, or you may believe that networking is a group dynamic to be done only at conferences or trade shows. Networking is more about developing one-on-one relationships with others and honoring the people you already know.

To create and grow your Golden Rolodex, you must first understand **HOW** to network. The following guidelines have been adapted from the e-book, Your Golden Rolodex: How to Network for Results! © by Vickie Austin, founder of CHOICES Worldwide (www.choicesworldwide.com).

1. Be yourself. Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, reflective or outgoing, the most important skill for successful networking (as well as interviewing) is to be yourself. When you try to portray yourself as someone you’re not, others will sense it and pull back. You must be authentic and comfortable, no matter what your personality type. When you can be yourself, engage in a conversation with someone and be interested in what they’re up to, style ceases to be an issue. Substance is the key.

BONUS QUESTION:

How many people could you potentially have in your Golden Rolodex, multiplying 3 to the 10th power?

- a. 19,683
- b. 59,049
- c. 177,147

Write down three people you know who have inspired you in the past (teacher, friend, mentor, etc.).

Answer: B

My 30-Second Elevator Speech:

Past + Present + Desired Future + Request = Success

2. **Start your “Golden Rolodex” with those you already know.** GR = 3^{10} . This equation is the key to building your Golden Rolodex. Think of the three people who wrote your letters of recommendation for residency application. They are already in your list of contacts. With a single conversation, each of those three contacts could connect you with three more contacts, and – well, you get the picture. By the time you add in fellow residents, honor society colleagues, nurses, neighbors, and so on, your Rolodex really does become Golden.

3. **Organize and store your contact information.** As a product of the technology age, you may have never used a Rolodex—a physical collection of business cards or contact information, indexed alphabetically at your fingertips. These days there are all kinds of ways to store that data. Whatever you decide to use, it's important to have a reliable means of organizing your growing list of contacts. This can be your cell phone or an Outlook folder on your laptop. Your contact list needs to be updated continually and easily accessible. And always remember **TO BACK UP YOUR DATA!**

Remember to always ask your new contacts for their business cards or phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses if they don't have cards. With their permission, you can store their contact information, and it's always a good idea to keep some private notes to include something you remember about each person. Perhaps a contact talked about new project, or a new baby in the family. Maybe he or she shared a story with you about a first job or gave you an excellent recommendation for a restaurant. This tidbit will help you remember each contact and often will give you something to mention the next time you talk with him or her.

4. **Create a 30-second “Elevator Speech.”** There may be times during networking when you have only a small window of time to introduce yourself and

make a good impression. This is why it is important to have a prepared and rehearsed “elevator speech”. The best 30-second speech presents the who, what, when, where, and why of your job search.

To write your speech, begin with the **PAST** (e.g., why you chose medicine), briefly note the **PRESENT** (where you are in training), describe your **DESIRED FUTURE** (you’re hoping to establish a traditional practice in the Midwest), and finish with a request of your new contact, such as their ideas for a successful interview or a recommendation of places to apply.

PAST + PRESENT + DESIRED FUTURE + REQUEST = SUCCESS

Examples:

“I received my medical degree from the University of Illinois and just finished my family practice residency at the University of Iowa. I’m now in the process of looking for a position with a family practice group or a clinic based here in the Midwest so I can continue to make a difference with families and their healthcare. I’d be interested in your opinion on how I can position myself for this transition...”

“My interest has always been in cardiology and I just completed a fellowship in cardiology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. I’m currently exploring opportunities to join a large group practice on the East Coast and looking for ideas on how to do that...”

5. **Take a research approach to networking.** The most successful networkers are naturally interested in other people and they also know that people love to talk about themselves. The desired outcome of networking is to build relationships. The task is much more effective if you give your contact your attention and a real interest in what he or she has to say. Think of yourself as a researcher instead of a nuisance and put both you and your contact at ease.
6. **Develop your “Power Questions.”** Your primary goal of networking at this stage of your career may be to gather data that can lead you to your ideal practice. After you and your contact are comfortable and past the “research” stage, you will need to ask questions that can open the door to other contacts or opportunities. The following “power questions” are effective because they flatter and show respect to your contact and the answers may lead you to an opportunity you wouldn’t otherwise have.
7. **Request the privilege of someone’s time and expertise.** When you have your “Golden Rolodex” ready, your elevator speech rehearsed, and your power questions prepared, you are ready to go after the big prize – a networking appointment. Make a call, send an email, or knock on a door, but remember to ask for the privilege of their time to discuss their ideas, opinions, and recommendations for your job search. Be sure to share your life-purpose statement (Stage 4) that communicates your passion and vision which is much bigger than what you can accomplish alone.

- 8. Conduct a “Golden Conversation.”** Once you have an appointment scheduled, keep it and arrive on time. If meeting in person, dress professionally, as you would for an interview. When you connect, thank the person for his or her time and reference the source of your connection, be it a friend, relative, or mutual acquaintance.

Conduct your “research” by asking get-to-know-you questions. Then give your elevator speech and ask a few more questions. Finally, share your life-purpose statement and ask your power questions.



GUIDE POINTS

Power Questions

Here are some powerful questions to ask people in your Golden Rolodex:

- Tell me about your own career path. How did you get to where you are today?
- Now that you know my life purpose, do you have any ideas for me on how to proceed with my campaign?
- What do you think of my strategy? Is there anything else you would do if you were me?
- Are there any additional resources that I may not have identified yet that you think I might need to accomplish my mission?
- What would you do if you were in my shoes?

9. Mind your networking manners.

Throughout the networking process and the interview process it is important to always exercise good manners and proper etiquette. This is simple common sense, but you would be amazed at how often this is forgotten. Return all phone calls and email promptly. Make formal introductions when meeting people. Don't fidget or talk with your mouth full. Ask for permission to use someone's name or reference. Always send a thank-you note after getting a referral or following a meeting.

**GUIDE POINTS****Conduct a Golden Conversation**

- Begin with some type of acknowledgement. Thank them for their time, insight and/or expertise.
- Reference the context of your relationship. If you were introduced by a mutual acquaintance, reference that name and your appreciation for the introduction.
- Provide the contact with the reason you're calling or writing — your 30-second commercial.
- Make a request:
 - You would like some time with them (face-to-face or on the phone).
 - You would like their ideas, opinions and recommendations about your life purpose and how you are conducting your search.
 - Ultimately, you would like referrals for people they know who could help you on your continued mission.
 - Ask for permission to use their name, if you are following up with the people they recommended. This may seem too formal but it's an important request to make because people's names are like currency and you're asking to use their name to open doors.
- Follow up.
 - Keep track of the referrals and recommendations.
 - Make those contacts.
 - Let the person who made those introductions know that you made the connections.
 - Acknowledge him or her for the time spent and the contribution to your search.
 - Stay in touch.

EXERCISE: GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TARGETS

Identify five people in your Golden Rolodex list to talk with before you begin the first round of phone and on-site interviews.

TARGET

Name:

Their position:

When:

EXERCISE: BUILD YOUR NETWORKING STRATEGY

Check off the resources you plan to use. Then identify your planned level of usage (from low to high). Finally, write out your action items for each resource you plan to use.

RESOURCE	USE?	LEVEL OF USAGE	ACTION ITEMS
Online resources (job boards and postings, social networks)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Career fairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Alumni and medical associations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Professional recruiters	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	
Personal and professional network	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High	

Stage 5 Action Checklist

Make sure you have completed these tasks by the end of this stage:

- Identify which job search resources you will use, and to what extent you will use them.
- Research job openings.
- Select recruiters to work with. (*Optional*)
- Create your Golden Rolodex of people.
- Write and memorize your 30-second elevator speech.
- Have at least one golden conversation.

"Think twice before you speak, because your words and influence will plant the seed of either success or failure in the mind of another."

— Napoleon Hill