





# Think outside the box to position candidacy as value-added

#### BACKGROUND

Sandra came to me with a wealth of nursing experience and some major concerns.

Some of her most impressive experience — and longest tenures - occurred in the 1980s and '90s, and her more recent clinical positions were short term.

Sandra was concerned that she would be competing against younger, less-experienced — and therefore potentially less expensive — candidates. She did not know how to sell herself as value-added.

Sandra was seeking employment with a major health system and knew there would be hundreds of applicants for the position.

She provided nine pages of handwritten notes to me. Most of these were a simple narration of employer names and

#### **RÉSUMÉ SOLUTIONS**

locations, titles Sandra held and a few words about what she did in each



Samantha Nolan

setting. It was clear from Sandra's presentation that she placed a lot of value on some of her earliest roles, including one she pursued on a volunteer basis.

#### **TURNAROUND STRATEGY**

After learning more about Sandra's background, I decided a functional format was necessary. While I take this approach on few résumés, I felt it was vital for downplaying the number of positions Sandra had held in recent years.

This approach also would reduce any redundancy that would have occurred when presenting the same job functions multiple times. In addition. Sandra's accomplishments did tend to be stronger in earlier roles. This wasn't surprising as she spent more time with those employers and therefore was able to contribute more value. Presenting these up front would be critical to positioning Sandra in the best possible light.

I was able to position Sandra in this manner after gaining additional insight during our consultation. One of Sandra's strengths was her ability to identify conditions others overlooked. Her maturity level and volunteer experience launching a free clinic also gave her excellent patientand physician-relations

Dispatch Recruitment Sales Manager

Lytoi Davis

Special Sections Assistant

Melanie McCool

#### RECISTERED NURSE

Rotated through diverse hospital units to provide compassionate, skillful nursing care to acute and critically ill patient.

Dedicated, well-qualified Staff RN with a passion for providing exceptionally skilled nursing care in a caring, patient-centric manner. Excel in managing high-volume caseloads, establishing priorities, and remaining flexible to organizational and patients' needs. Leverage maturity and tenure to train less experienced nursing professionals in assessing, diagnosing, and treating patients. Facilitate appropriate, communicative relationships with patients and their families while navigating difficult situations often involving end-of-life counseling. Possess a degree in nursing and current licensure.

#### NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Gained a reputation for taking the time to listen to patients and identifying health concerns or
  may have overlooked; leveraged experience, interpersonal skills, and a refined bedside manner to corre
  disputation of test professer, micking up on the small things what have saved lives. leveraged experience, interpersonal skills, ents, picking up on the small things that ha
- Successfully planned and managed the relocation of the ICU for Central Hospital—was told by the
  moving company that the ICU was the most organized and efficiently moved unit they had ever worked
  with—executing the move to a new centre from rules away while the ICU was in full operation.
- Partnered with terminally ill children and adults, and their families, while providing appropriate
  medical treatment to reduce pain and enhance comfort; communicated openly with family members, helping
  each work through their feelings by facilitating end-of-life and death counseling. Played an integral role in the establishment of a free clinic for migrant workers and their families, securing involvement from physicians—family practice, surgeons, and pediatricians—musing professionals, medical students, and support staff to assist in running a clinic treating 100+ patients each month.
- Gained foundational experience from an early age, completing a co-op program while still in high school, working for two weeks per month year-round at \$1,0 seph Medical Center prior to graduation. Upon graduation continued as a nursing assistant until receiving ANN degree and RN license in 1983.

#### Professional Highlights

- Performed and charted detailed patient assessments, planned and executed care plans, collaborated with peers and demonstrated the ability to perform well in diverse healthcare settings and units—burn, cardiac/relemetry ER, ICU, med-sung, neuro, oncology, ortho, PACU, patimonary, rebah, renal, and step-down.
- Demonstrated outstanding organization, time management, and multi-tasking skills while managing 100+ patients daily, maintaining a composed demeanor in front of all patients despite often tending to multiple complex cases simultaneously.
- Worked independently while completing initial assessments; charting medical stats, symptoms, medications; instructing patients in self-management and treatment plans; and most compassionate, vigilant, and skilled nursing care.
- Coordinated the solicitation and gathering of medical supplies to send to needy or a free clinic established by myself and two other professionals, providing service families who could not afford private care; secured heavy involvement by area ph
- Cared for a terminally ill five-year-old child requiring the administration of high-rate most importantly, helped his parents enjoy their son by taking care of all healthcare or

functional format. Sandra's work history was presented next, including a list of her employers' names, her dates of tenure and titles she held. This section was placed on page two to play a lesser role in the screening process. Lastly, I presented Sandra's community involvement, education and licensure to complete her two-page résumé.

#### RESULTS

Sandra was kind enough to contact me to let me know she was extremely excited about being offered a job with one of her target employers — one of the region's largest health care systems.

skills. I used these, along with her fantastic accomplishments, to differentiate her résumé. This painted a picture of an experienced professional who could offer a refined bedside manner and an expansive nursing skill set.

For Sandra's résumé, the key to success was a unique Notable Accomplishments section. Following a brief qualifications summary, this accomplishment-focused section provided a window into the value Sandra could provide. Exploring examples of her participation in capital-improvement projects, process improvements, the launching of a free clinic and her reputation for patient-care excellence, this section proved vital to differentiating Sandra from her potentially less expen-

Following the Notable Accomplishments section

Sandra's new two-page résumé

> was a Professional Highlights section that reviewed key aspects of her nursing roles. Combining all past ex-

periences to create one strong section provided a more engaging read than a reverse chronological résumé would have. If I had used the more standard format for her résumé, the hiring manager might have been turned off by the recent movement in her career and the number of positions she had held, not to mention the redundancy of describing very similar roles in many positions.

As is preferred in a

Central Hospital, Houston, Texas Staff RN (1996-1997) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT EDUCATION & LICENSURE ACLS Certified Texas RN License

FORMATTING

sive competitors.

Would you like Dear Sam to critique your résumé? For possible inclusion in a future column, send your résumé and/or questions to dearsam@ladybug-design. com. Do you need help writing an interview-winning résumé? Contact Samantha and her firm, Ladybug Design, at (614) 570-3442 or visit www.ladybug-design.com.



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# Demand growing for occupational therapy assistants

(ARA) — Many unemployed workers and new high school graduates are enrolling in higher education programs in hopes of gaining a competitive edge in today's uncertain marketplace. Before choosing an area of study, it helps to do a little research on the prospects of employment after graduation.

You'll find that health care seems to be a bright spot in employment projections. Ten of the 20 fastest growing occupations are within the health-care field, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Career Guide to Industries. In addition, industry projections anticipate 3.2 million new jobs will be created in the 10-year span between 2008 and 2018.

Of the many different avenues one can take in the health-care field, occupational therapy assistance can be an appealing choice. Health-care professionals in this field administer rehabilitative services to help others achieve a better quality of life. Considering the increasing number of trauma survivors, children with sensory disorders and the aging baby boomer population, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects employment opportunities in the field to rise by 30 percent through 2018.

If you are a "people person" who enjoys helping others, this field may help you find professional fulfillment as an occupational therapy assistant. Kristine Deeken, chair of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at Brown Mackie College - Akron, shares her knowledge of the field.

"Occupational therapy assistants work under the direction of an occupational therapist to help clients



that exhibit any type of impairment, whether mental, physical, emotional or developmental," said Deeken. "It's a matter of getting them to perform self-care and everyday tasks more independently."

Occupational therapy assistants work with clients of all ages, implementing treatment plans that are created by an occupational therapist. "Anyone with a limitation or deficit brought on by disease, accident or birth defect is a candidate for occupational therapy," Deeken added. "Any disease process, like a stroke, heart attack, mental retardation or dementia can cause limitations."

Through the use of meaningful and purposeful activities, occupational therapy assistants challenge clients to be as independent as possible. "Any type of hobby or leisure activity can serve as a challenge,"

said Deeken. "Even gardening and arts and crafts become therapeutic. When we add function to the exercise, the clients don't feel like they're working."

Group treatment, with three or more clients at a time, is often used by occupational therapy assistants in nursing home settings. "Patients with similar diagnoses, and similar functional levels, can participate in cooking groups or bowling groups," Deeken said. "OTA students learn specific theories and frames of reference to deal with group dynamics during treatment."

After graduating from an occupational therapy assistant program, certification is required before a person is eligible to work in the profession. Graduates must pass a test administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT).

# Surgical technology can be a fulfilling career option

(ARA) — Projected growth of the health care industry is widely reported, presenting myriad job training options for new high school graduates and people who are switching careers. One can take many different paths within the health care industry. One such direction is working as a surgical technologist.

Employment opportunities for surgical technologists are expected to grow faster than average from now until 2018, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports, citing a number of reasons for growth. One reason for an increase in surgeries is the aging baby boomer population. Another reason is technological advances, such as laser and fiber optics, which allow an increasing number of procedures to be performed.

With an eye toward employment opportunities in health care, many people are investigating the prospects of becoming a surgical technologist. Just what does a surgical technologist do?

Heather Gasaway, chair of the Surgical Technology Department at Brown Mackie College - North Canton, offers insight into the field.

"A surgical technologist works as a member of an operating room (OR) team under the direction of a surgeon," says Gasaway. Surgical technologists prepare the operating room for each procedure. They should understand exactly what the surgeon will need and set up the room with the required instruments.

Commonly called "scrubs," surgical technologists sterilize

"A surgical technologist works as a member of an operating room team under the direction of a surgeon."

— Heather Gasaway, Brown Mackie College

equipment and ensure that everything works properly.

Typical daily duties include scrubbing for surgery, dressing in gown and gloves, setting up the sterile field, draping, passing instruments and maintaining the highest level of sterile technique during the procedure.

Gasaway recommends that candidates for a career in surgical technology possess a strong interest in science. The program at

Brown Mackie College - North Canton includes courses in anatomy, physiology, microbiology and pharmacology. "It's an intensive program. People with focus who love a challenging atmosphere thrive in the profession," says Gasaway.

A handful of states currently require certification for those working as surgical technologists. "Eventually, everyone in the profession will need to be certified.

It's a way to control the quality of the profession," Gasaway says. Two accrediting bodies serve as credentialing agencies for the profession: Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) and Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Schools (CAAHEP).

"Once certified, surgical technologists must maintain Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to remain certified," Gasaway continues. "Just as with many of the allied health professions, CEU's are a requirement to maintain licensure. The accrediting agencies work with colleges to ensure that the curriculum provides the student with the knowledge and skills to graduate and enter the field as an entry-level practitioner."

# New venues for healthcare careers

#### By Shelly Field

Monster Contributing Writer

If you think working in healthcare is only about hospitals, healthcare facilities, physicians' offices and clinics, think

While there's absolutely nothing wrong with a job in a traditional healthcare workplace, if you're itching to make a career out of your different interests, maybe it's time to consider other alternatives while still using your healthcare training.

You, like many other creative healthcare professionals, can parlay your skills, education and talent into jobs in less conventional environments. There are thousands of prospects, no matter what you do in the healthcare industry. You just have to dream them up and look for them. Here are some to consider:

#### THOUSANDS OF PROSPECTS

• Many recording acts take nurses on

tour with them to handle minor medical emergencies and dispense medications. If you love rock and roll, traveling around the world for long periods of time and living out of a suitcase, this can be a really fun experience.

• Many movie studios have nurses on the set to deal with the cast and crew's minor injuries or medical emergencies.

Doctors are also routinely used on movie sets, television shows and commercials to make sure medical story lines are credible.

Additionally, some physicians become medical experts for news shows.

- Many casinos and casino hotels in Las Vegas and throughout the country employ medical personnel to handle guest emergencies as well as staff emergencies and medical needs.
- Alcohol and drug counselors who love public speaking may want to consider a position as a spokesperson for a corporation or large nonprofit. In such a

role, a counselor helps promote awareness about drug and alcohol abuse or a specific organization's program.

• Medical products, pharmaceuticals and equipment provide a wealth of opportunities for spokesperson positions.

#### **HIDDEN JOB MARKET**

Sometimes these jobs are advertised only in trade journals and local newspapers, or aren't advertised at all because the potential employer may not want a ton of calls or resumes, or might have someone in the position who is not working out.

Those who successfully find positions in the hidden job market usually are not shy about sharing their career hopes and dreams with others. They network at every opportunity.

In some cases, you may have to create a job yourself.

Just because there isn't a job, doesn't mean there can't be one. Show someone a need and a potential solution, and they might just hire you.

For example, if you're a physician or nurse in an area with a radio or television station, contact them with your credentials and tell them what you're interested in doing. Pitch some of your ideas for shows and see what happens.

So, if you want your career to mix your interests and skills, talk to people and be willing to take a risk. The very worst that can happen is someone may say no. The best? You might find a new and exciting venue for your healthcare

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Wheeling Hospital is the nremier medical facility in its narket. Our advanced Su Center performed over 17,000 surgeries last year, more than any other local medical facility And we perform more types of surgery than any other area hospital.

#### We're Moving Forward

For example, a year from now we'll see the opening of Tower 5, a new seven-story, 145,000 square-foot addition to our hos pital. The \$53 million tower wil house a new Emergency Depar ment, three intensive care units. The Center for Pediatrics physician offices and private pa tient rooms. And, we recently in itiated our \$23 million Electron-ic Medical Records system, mak ing us one of the most advanced EMR facilities in the U.S.

#### **Competitive Wages** & Benefits

recent years, while many hosnitals across the nation have cut staff, pay and benefits, we haven't. Wheeling Hospital has been profitable and we expect that trend to continue. We offer: Medical-Dental-Vision: 401(a) and 403(b) Plans; Life In surance; AD&D, STD and LTD; PTO & Tuition Reimbursement.

#### Location, Location, Location

Wheeling is located along the majestic Ohio River. The city and surrounding area is a great place to live with a cost of living well below that of other region of the nation. The area has a wide-array of educational, so cial, recreational and cultural amenities. We're an hour from Pittsburgh & about two hours from Columbus & Cleveland.

#### Ready to Apply?

Send your resume today by mail, fax or via online to:

Human Resources Wheeling Hospital 1 Medical Park Wheeling, WV 26003 Fax: 304-243-6317 or visit wheelinghospital.org/about/car eers/positions.aspx (click on position to apply)

More About Us Please visit our Web site at: www.wheelinghospital.org



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# Medical, health interests merge

(ARA) - If you've ever considered pursuing a career in the medical and health technology fields, now might be the time to take action. Federal funding is helping to encourage growth and fuel demand for trained professionals.

President Barack Obama signed into law in 2009 a plan for economic recovery designed to pull the United States out of a deep recession. Encompassing \$789 billion in funding for stimulus programs, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act included funding for the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act to promote the adoption of Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology in health care. Beginning in 2011, individual doctors and eligible medical providers can receive Medicaid incentive payments over a five-year period if they adopt a certified EHR and achieve five "meaningful use" goals adopted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

As a result, the Act is expected to create over 50,000 new health information technology jobs, according to the Office of the National Coordinator of Health IT. With doctors across the country making the switch from paper charts to electronic medical records, there's a strong demand for specialists trained on the latest medical record technology.

Moving forward, students interested in health information technology careers must prepare themselves for the technological advances of the future.

At some universities, curriculum has already been created to meet the demands of the evolving health care landscape. This September, DeVry University health IT students completed their first semester trained on Practice Fusion's Electronic

Medical Record (EMR) system.

Practice Fusion provides a free, Web-based EMR system to physicians. With charting, scheduling, e-prescribing, billing, lab integrations, unlimited support and a personal health record for patients, Practice Fusion's EMR addresses the complex needs of today's health care providers and disrupts the health IT status quo.

The school introduced Practice Fusion this summer to online students in its Health Information Fundamentals Practicum course, providing them with additional tools to facilitate their success in the program. Through the program, students learn real-world medical terminology, health information system security, ICD-9 disease coding, health information regulation and practice management skills. Students also use the Practice Fusion system for charting, scheduling and billing as part of their practicum require-

"It's critical that our HIT students receive as much hands-on, real-world experience as they can before entering the health care workforce," says David J. Pauldine, president of DeVry University. "EMRs have the potential to deliver more efficient and safer care for patients and doctors - university graduates need to be ready for the switch."

With Bureau of Labor Statistics naming health IT as one of the 20 fastest-growing occupations through 2012, Practice Fusion's CEO, Ryan Howard, is encouraged by EMR's adoption into health IT program curricula by nationally-reaching

"Electronic Medical Record systems deliver real benefits to the U.S. health care system from reducing health care costs to preventing medical errors," says Howard.