

MedMatica Minutes



May 2010

Healthcare IT is Hot — but are your recruited candidates?

The pace of change and the growing demands in the healthcare IT industry have further accelerated. The percolating shortage of qualified IT personnel is now a major challenge for many healthcare organizations. The demand for qualified personnel continues to grow. For reference purposes, the following link is from a recent Healthcare IT News article that summarizes the forecasted “war on talent” for healthcare IT personnel:

<http://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/war-talent-about-begin-healthcare-it>

The final ruling associated with the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Meaningful Use is nearly complete. Healthcare organizations are getting a clearer picture of what the Act will mean. More definitive plans are now being made to determine whether to chase the almighty dollars associated with the Act. For those that are gearing up to meet the many ARRA requirements, recruiting additional personnel is practically a mandate. With a finite number of qualified resources within the healthcare industry, considering resources from other industries is becoming a necessity. Those of us in healthcare recognize that this business operates 24/7. As a result, the IT support organization needs to operate in the same manner. Since our industry is ultimately about the health of our patients, healthcare IT personnel must deliver the highest quality services. The question therefore becomes, are the personnel you are recruiting prepared and qualified to operate within this type of environment?

Recruiting Tips:

As part of your recruiting strategy, be sure to identify and communicate up front the high expectations associated with the position. The unique demands of healthcare IT positions that should be addressed early in the recruiting cycle to avoid disappointment down the road include:

On-Call – Healthcare organizations tend to operate lean and mean; yet 24/7 coverage is often required for application support. Most organizations staff primarily during regular business hours and leverage personnel on an on demand, on-call basis for off-shift support. This often results in significant demands on personnel at all hours of the evening to address critical application issues. Working in this environment may be a big change from the candidate’s previous role. Clearly setting expectations is an important step in the recruiting process.

Activation Support – Activation of a new application or an upgrade to an existing solution rarely takes place during regular business hours. Most activations tend to take place when patient activity is at its slowest; weekends and evenings are prime targets. Sharing with your candidate that these situations are inevitable will ensure needed participation when the time comes.

Off-Hour Meetings - Meetings with clinicians usually don’t take place during regular business hours. These sessions often occur at 7:00AM or after 5:00PM. IT resources need to be available for such meetings, and candidates should be fully aware of the required flexibility, the impacts to personal time, the commuting demands, etc.

Sharing with candidates early in the recruiting cycle the required flexibility and potential stressors within healthcare IT and how this may differ from their previous roles will go a long way towards securing the right type of talent for your organization. Ultimately it will result in a more stable and reliable organization.

Assistance:

Despite best efforts, internal recruiting can fall short in building the required team for your goals and objectives. Should this situation arise, look to address your needs in a leveraged manner with the following in mind:

1. Consider utilizing outside “remote” support for items such as report writing, configuration, building, and testing. This will reduce travel expenses, increase productivity, and allow existing personnel to focus on more strategic activities.
2. Look to outside support for specific tasks such as Training and Go-Live support. Often these tasks require a significant *temporary* increase in personnel to cover the organization, and using outside support in these areas will help preserve existing personnel for critical tasks.
3. Explore virtual types of off-shift support arrangements that provide clinicians the IT support they require without keeping your staff working nights and weekends.



Industry News & Events

Cerner

- Clinical Excellence Forum May 19-21

Eclipsys

- EUN October 10-13
2010 San Diego

Epic

- Annual UGM, Sept 20-23

NextGen

- NextGen User Group Meeting Nov 7-10 2010

Siemens

- CPOE Symposium Aug 6-8 2010

HIMSS

- Meaningful Use Webinar May 11 2010

MedMatica Growth:

- Inc 5000 fastest Growing Private Companies '07-'09
- 3-Time recipient Philadelphia 100 Award
- KLAS rating of 92.3 for staff augmentation



MedMatica Consulting Associates continues to adapt to the changing Healthcare IT environment. MedMatica’s **HISAssist** service line is designed to provide your organization leverage in its staffing requirements and maximize the limited funds you may have available to address Meaningful Use. If you reach the point where consultative experience is required to meet your organizational goals, turn to an organization that has pioneered the concept of leveraged support by contacting Bruce Generotti at (610) 783-1575.