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Recruiting for the compliance office in a tight market

by Cheryl Gilbert, CIPP/US, CIPM, CCEP

The last couple of years had seen employment in healthcare sputter to serious lows during “the great resignation” when one in five healthcare workers left their jobs^[1] and then skyrocketing employment growth, increasing by over 400%.^[2] Healthcare compliance departments have not been impervious to these staffing pendulum swings and face recruitment challenges in an ever-changing market. Traditional pipelines for talent are not as robust as in the past. A recent survey by Gartner found that 46% of human resources (HR) leaders surveyed listed recruitment as one of their top five priorities for 2023, and 50% expect increased competition for talent.^[3] Rethinking your recruitment strategies can give you an edge in growing your pipeline of qualified compliance candidates.

Recruit yourself as a recruiter

Given the growth in healthcare hiring, your open compliance position may be one of many your HR department is working to fill. Further, there may be nuances to your opening that require time and understanding. For example, does the recruiter know what the alphabet soup of all those certification acronyms actually means (CHC, CCEP, CHPC, CIPP, CFE, etc.) in the context of your position? Do they understand that not all compliance experience is the same, e.g., healthcare compliance versus financial compliance? While you want to ideally see an array of candidates, you want to make sure they are *qualified* candidates to avoid wasting time—yours, your organization’s HR staff, and the candidates. How can you facilitate this?

To foster communication and collaboration with your HR department, if you plan on handling recruitment tasks normally managed by them, you should have an initial conversation to explain what you want to accomplish and how it will benefit your department, their department, and the organization. Schedule weekly status calls with them so all stakeholders can stay on track and have a specific regular time to get questions answered.

Listing for success

The starting point is your job listing. Is it recycled from a previous job listing? Is it based on a generic organizational template? Was it written by a compliance professional who understood the qualifications being sought? Does it need to change because the role has evolved? Objectively but thoroughly review the job listing before it is posted. Is it consistent with the current written job description for that role? Does it accurately describe the day-to-day tasks and qualifications of the ideal candidate? Is it written in an appealing way that would attract qualified candidates? Is it comprehensible?

If you are continuously recruiting for the same role and find you are not hearing from qualified candidates, there

is a good chance your job listing needs to be updated. Job descriptions too broad or too narrow (seeking that nonexistent “unicorn” with a too-broad skill set that may not exist) may deter applicants. List the essentials and appeal to candidates by stating how an employee can grow into a role. Check out other job listings, such as those on the Health Care Compliance Association (HCCA) job board, for example.^[4]

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