

# The Journey of Recruiting

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I have recently been recruiting an associate to join my practice. This has been an enlightening process, to say the least.

With help from the practice management teacher from a well-known acupuncture program, I have done a thorough job of analyzing my business finances, making projections, and developing a clear contract to offer. I have thought very carefully about this process and have interacted with many people regarding the position.

The responses to my ad has been quite varied. I've had people fresh out of school, eager to just get a position, highly qualified medical doctors who do acupuncture, and many people just looking for a change from their present situation. I developed a style of responding to their e-mails with some information about myself and my practice, and sending my current resume which includes my whole educational background and work history. In many cases there was a series of e-mail exchanges where we were able to get to know each other better, and clarify whether it seemed like we should go forward with a phone or face-to-face interview.

Many people never responded again after I sent my first e-mail; this I found to be impolite. I had tried to answer every applicant promptly, and let them know exactly where they stood. This age of electronic communication allows a degree of anonymity and what I think of as rudeness (call me old fashion), but I still have attempted to leave no transaction hanging or unresolved. (Apologies to anyone I missed.)

The most interesting applicant that I had, by a long shot, was a person who sent a resume that only included a work history for the past 10 years, though after some research I found that the person seemed to have graduated from high school in 1984. I'll call this person "Ted." Ted claimed to be very experienced in a variety of areas, including psychology and medicine, but as far as I could tell, had gathered this experience by doing an undergraduate degree in psychology, volunteering in crisis counseling and taking EMT training at a community college. No report of having actually worked as an EMT.

Ted claimed to have 'long standing background in the field' but had just graduated from acupuncture school in 2007. In his practice of three years, Ted reported doing acupuncture, massage, facials, Chinese and western herbology, medical diagnostics, and mental health evaluations. In his volunteer work at the local crisis center, he said that he performed psychiatric evaluations on people in jail and on mental health patients. This was of interest to me, because in my state, acupuncturists are only allowed (under their scope), to do acupuncture and related Chinese medicine therapies. Additionally, psychiatric evaluations are only legally done by M.D. psychiatrists. Medical diagnosis, in my state, is only allowed to be done by medical doctors, physicians assistants, and nurse practitioners. So, I had some questions about the resume, to say the least.

When researching more about the applicant, I found comments that he was a very intuitive person,

very spiritual, and that he had written numerous articles about Chinese medicine and spiritual topics. He is also, apparently a Reiki Master and does reconnective healing. That is all fine. I know a lot of acupuncturists, including myself, who have training in a variety of energy work modalities. However, I do not mention those on my website or in my professional resume, because in my state they are outside my scope. I don't even mention them to patients, even if I might sometimes employ them in my work.

In another e-mail, Ted responded that the percentage I was offering was 'miniscule,' compared to the his education, experience, and the amount of money he spent on his education. I thought this was interesting, because he had so little experience as an acupuncturist, compared to my nearly 20 years. There was a critical and insulting tone in his e-mail that didn't feel right to me. Especially given the information I had about him being intuitive, spiritual, and an energy worker. But after another exchange, he politely said that it did not seem like the right fit. OK.

A few days after my exchange with Ted, a colleague from a nearby city shared that she had a response from Ted to her job advertisement, had a phone interview with him, and had just gotten an e-mail from him, in which he had critiqued the phone interview they had just had. After the critique, which my friend experienced as insulting and painful, Ted invited my friend to become a client of his psychological business consulting service where he worked with acupuncturists to improve their businesses. I was dumbfounded. I realized that the time I had taken to examine this application and resume, and follow-up with a series of e-mails had been a complete waste. I thought I was dealing with someone who was really looking for a job. What this person appeared to be doing was answering job listings as a method of researching how acupuncturists go about hiring other acupuncturists, in order to further his practice management business. I was not even sure if the claims made on the person's resume were truthful. I was hurt and furious.

My perspective on this was, that if Ted had contacted me and asked if I would mind him going through an example job application and interview process with me, so he could learn more about how acupuncturists generally go about the hiring process, I'd have generously donated my time for him. I really believe that we all need to help each other learn and grow in this field, and that we need to be open and honest with each other in order to grow our profession. So, I emailed him to that effect. His response was a scathing, insulting, and attacking critique of my comments. He insinuated that I was dishonest. It was as if he had turned into the opposite of the healing, spiritual person he had painted himself to be. He commented in his post, "you have nooooo idea of who I am." This seemed threatening to me. I felt like I was talking to Mr. Hyde.

In an ethics course I took a few years ago, we had a segment on the importance of representing ourselves completely, accurately, and honestly on our resumes (that means not leaving out any time period, education, or work experience) and in all professional communications. It was emphasized that this is crucial to protect our patients and our profession, in addition to the fact that as practitioners of medicine (albeit Chinese) our honesty and integrity are integral to the role of being a healer. In class, we were presented with stories of doctors who falsified resumes and got jobs in medicine, and even did surgery without having been licensed or in some cases even completely trained in the areas they claimed to have been.

This hiring process has been quite a learning experience for me, and I have been acutely reminded about how important courtesy, professionalism, and integrity, is to our relatively new profession.

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