

Dear Mary Pat: How Do I Get My Foot in the Door? (24 Things to Do to Break into Healthcare Management)



So you've been trying to become employed in healthcare, or you've tried to enter healthcare management, or you're trying to move from one job in healthcare to another. You've read my [post about my search for a job](#) in healthcare and have been soldiering on, but you're just not getting anywhere. You might have education, but no experience or you might have experience but no formal education.

Healthcare is no different from any other field. It's a hodgepodge of what you know and who you know. What everyone is looking for is expertise and authority and that can't always be demonstrated by a degree or years of experience. A new buzz phrase is "What is your value proposition?" or "How will you pay for your salary and make me (doctor, practice, hospital, health plan) money besides?"

If you want to enter the field or climb the ladder in healthcare management, you need to demonstrate that you have something of value that someone wants. Try some non-traditional ways of gaining expertise and demonstrating value, like the ones I list here. Yes, each of these will take time in addition to your current job, but it has the potential to give you a hand up to your next job. If you don't currently have a job, you have lots of time to work on the list below, and when potential employers ask what you've been doing while unemployed, you have a great answer!

1. Blog about the field you want to enter – learn about the

field and write about it.

2. Write about being in the middle of a transitional field and your experiences along the way – if you're a compelling writer, I'll publish it as a series on my blog!
3. Create a site of resources for others that already do what you want to do.
4. Interview others in the field you want to enter and publish the interviews.
5. Ask people if you can shadow them for one day or a half day to understand what they do to see if you're on the right track (who would say "no"? I wouldn't.)
6. If you haven't used voice recognition, invest in a basic copy of Dragon and learn it inside and out.
7. Learn how electronic health records (EHRs) work. If you've never used one, gain experience by finding someone who has one and volunteer your time to write a user's guide for them, or to use their user's guide and critique it for them. Do that for as many different EHRs as you can find.
8. Think creatively about jobs in a department you want to be in, just not in the job you want to be in – call temp agencies, computer schools, software companies, any healthcare entity going through a conversion, etc.
9. Tell everyone (if you're free to talk about it) what you're looking for – you never know who might help you find it.
10. Volunteer to do an informal project for someone in the field – some topic they need information about but never have the time to do.
11. Join the [American College of Medical Practice Executives](#) (ACMPE) and pursue board certification and become a Fellow in the college. These credentials are quickly becoming the standard in the field.
12. ~~Get a Google Health account and learn how to use it inside and out.~~
13. Get a Microsoft Health Vault account and learn how to

use it inside and out.

14. Get accounts on any other personal health record (PHR) platform you can find.
15. Publish case studies on common problems in other fields and how they were solved, and apply those solutions to healthcare problems.
16. Put a chart on your resume showing each skill you have and how it transfers to healthcare and brings added value to your potential employer.
17. If you don't yet, get a Twitter account (free) and start conversations with others in the field.
18. If you don't yet, get a LinkedIn account (free) and join groups that are talking about the things you want to learn about (Twitter will give you more info and friends, LinkedIn will make you more business connections)
19. If you aren't already, sign up for websites that focus on what you are interested in, read them religiously and comment on their posts.
20. If you don't already, get your resume on visualcv.com (still free I think) Add any goodies you can to your visualcv that demonstrate you know your stuff – recommendations, videos, charts, white papers, etc.
21. Find someone to mentor you who is well-positioned (locally, regionally and nationally.)
22. Volunteer to do some pro bono work for your local professional group – your state MGMA, your state medical society, etc.
23. Join Toastmasters and polish your “elevator speech” so you can effortlessly let others know who you are and where you're heading.
24. Let me know what you plan to do, and how I can help.

Best wishes,

Mary Pat