



Consultants Corner

Nursing Leaders, Employers Find Online Connection

— by Cheryl Hooper

Finding strong nursing leaders these days is not an easy task. Consider the media reporting of medical errors and financial difficulties of the health care industry, compounded with an aging workforce exiting the profession, the overwhelming responsibility of 24/7 accountability in nursing leadership roles, on-going regulatory compliance, competitive salary constraints and staffing shortages: all contribute to the challenge of recruiting strong nursing leaders.

My health care experience as a former nurse recruiter, owner of a health care search firm and seasoned human resources professional allows me the opportunity to develop business relationships and interact with hospital decision-makers, recruiters and a cross-section of health care businesses executives. They agree these contributing factors make it more difficult to attract the strong nursing leaders that are so desperately needed.

Not only is locating strong nursing leaders difficult, matching them to the employer's wish list in the job criteria is not easy. The list includes: a sense of business savvy, proven leadership abilities, specialized clinical expertise, Masters degree preferred, specialized certifications, mentoring skills, excellent interpersonal skills, flexibility and a good sense of humor (this is a must!).

These requirements are reflective of the changing health care environment. For example, technological advances increase the demand for nursing leaders to have more clinical knowledge in a variety of specialty settings. The budget-

ary constraints and added responsibility to manage more with less make it necessary to have a sense of business savvy, and of course, the proven leadership and interpersonal skills are essential to mentor, support and manage the staff.

From the nursing leader's perspective, finding a challenging leadership role is important, but some feel stereotyped and pigeonholed, making it difficult to grow within their careers. Moving from one health care sector to another presents a challenge.

I spoke with a nurse manager with a diversified health care background with a desire to find a leadership role where she can utilize more of her business expertise. In her experience working as a nurse manager, she found the traditional internal clinical training available, but would recommend senior management to offer more management development education.

A cardiac nurse manager said finding the right environment and culture was just as important as the challenge within the role. She expressed the importance of professionalism and follow-up during the interview process.

Nursing leaders with their MBA and Doctorate expressed to me their desire to utilize their education and have the autonomy of decision-making. A challenge to grow as a leader, support from senior management and upward mobility within their careers were at the top of their wish list. Of course, a work and family life balance would be appealing.

Finding strong nursing leaders is a challenge, especially in a world connected to computers, faxes, phones,

voice mail and the occasional conversation with a real live person. We do not have time to waste and we need to connect quickly. This convinced me that something vital was missing and a new resource was needed.

The positive feedback from nursing leaders led me to my new venture, NursingExecutives.com, an online job site exclusive to nursing leaders at the executive, middle management and administrative level. It is a cost-effective recruitment tool to allow nursing leaders to post their confidential profile for future job opportunities. It allows health care employers the ability to contact nursing leaders discretely or post viable opportunities through our web site.

Since it is essential to interact in the world of high technology, the functionality of Nursingexecutives.com is designed with simplicity. I find some nursing leaders and employers still intimidated by the computer age and I needed to eliminate the fear factor by implementing a user-friendly system. The unique approval process screens the nursing leader's profiles and the employer's job opportunities to determine eligibility and access to this niche market.

Confidentiality is another key feature built into the NursingExecutives.com system to protect the users while sharing sensitive information online. There are features within the system that automatically block the nursing leader's e-mail addresses when responding to job opportunities. If hospitals or health care businesses want to keep a low profile when seeking an executive, they have the option of viewing the nursing

leader's approved profiles and making contact using discretion, instead of posting a job online. Employers can also preview the nursing leader's profiles prior to paying for access, while still protecting their confidentiality.

NursingExecutives.com is a valuable recruitment tool to start the process, but key decision-makers and recruiters will use their expertise to make the final match.

As the president of NursingExecutives.com, I've taken the steps to access technology to reach out to nursing leaders and employers throughout Connecticut, New England and across the country. Daily traffic to the site is increasing and I'm encouraged at this early development stage.

NursingExecutives.com is unique because it is based upon doing more with less. We have stayed away from the high-volume approach of sifting through hundreds of "not applicable" resumes. Our web site is really in a niche market that makes your search quick and simple.

The approval process streamlines the career profiles within the categories of executive, middle management and administrative nurses and the positions posted follow the same guidelines, which makes it a win/win situation for the nursing leaders as well as hospital or health care businesses.

During the next two to three years, I expect to see exciting new opportunities unfold for the nursing leaders in Connecticut and New England, and look forward to hearing success stories as nursing leaders and employers make that special connection. ✚

Cheryl Hooper is president of NursingExecutives.com, a unique job site for talented nursing leaders to connect with today's diverse health care sector and the business world.