



SSM Health Competes For Physicians By Creating Systemwide Hiring Process

SSM Health
Best Advance in Talent Acquisition Process
August 2018



Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	St. Louis, Missouri, USA
Year Founded	1877
Revenue	\$6.1B as of 09/30/2017
Employees	35,000+
Global Scale	Northwest Missouri, Mid-Missouri, Oklahoma, Southern Illinois, St. Louis, and Wisconsin
Industry	Health Care
Website	http://ssmhealth.com/system



Budget and Timeframe

Budget and Timeframe	Timeline: 12 Months
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	25
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	3
Timeframe to implement	Six Months
Start date of the program	October 2017

Business Conditions and Business Needs

Recruitment of physicians and providers requires a unique and comprehensive approach. A certain finesse, art, and science is applied to identify, constructively attract, build a relationship with, and hire talented professionals who are the core of a thriving health system. These professionals ultimately are responsible for the health system’s ability to deliver quality health care to the communities it serves.

SSM Health, a Catholic not-for-profit health system with more than 20 hospitals and 300 physician offices, faced the challenge of growing its system because it lacked a robust system-wide process for hiring physicians.

Although each market within the system had its own process for recruiting physicians, the system as a whole was deficient in collaboration, work processes and data measures necessary to effectively address the need for growth. Facing more than 170 open physician positions for the year, the outlook for recruitment success remained flat.

At the end of the third quarter 2017, SSM Health leaders invested in enhancing its physician and provider recruitment process – an initiative that would demonstrate immediate impact. The enhanced talent-acquisition strategies aligned with industry benchmarks and data-driven performance. It improved the system’s ability to work collaboratively, allow prioritization of resources for mission-critical searches, and produce enterprise-wide metrics that enable leaders and stakeholders to make better-informed decisions for physician hires.

The result has been an advanced physician- and-provider talent-acquisition process and culture that well positions SSM Health for success now and into the future.

Overview

Growth: Hire the Number of Physicians per Plan

As the system's imperative to create a high performing and data-driven culture took shape, the need for a more effective, consistent, transparent, and predictive process for recruiting exceptional talent ensued.

The plan had a subset of requirements:

1. Performing a provider-needs assessment.
2. Evaluation and discussion of needs at various strategy councils.
3. Provider recruitment-plan validation.
4. Budget integration and financial impact.
5. Defined current physician- and-provider state, expected physician- and-provider reductions, and expected physician- and-provider additions.
6. Stakeholder participation and decision support.

To fulfill the directive of growth and develop support for this strategy, the system implemented several strategic processes and goals:

- Define the "plan" using a commonly accepted form/process for each region/hospital in conjunction with the subset of assumptions above.
- Expand candidate outreach through a systematic approach to outbound sourcing and brand awareness.
- Grow candidate pipelines by creating, building, and sustaining key relationships with physician- and-provider training programs.
- Measure to industry standards using best practices for time-to-fill, interview-to-hire, and fill rates.
- Define key performance indicators (KPIs) and report performance metrics that are informative, consistent, and predictive to all key stakeholders.
- Incorporate best recruitment practices, base knowledge, and disciplined use of applicant-tracking system across all facilities.



- Leverage screened candidates across every healthcare ministry and facility with recruitment needs.
- Improve vendor economies of scale based on multiple needs in the same specialty.

Design and Delivery

At its core, the design and delivery of the physician- and-provider talent acquisition process began with the applicant tracking system (ATS) Taleo.

Refinement of the ATS was required to better align the system's goal and the technology used by the recruitment team. Several field modifications/additions were implemented to accommodate an enterprise-wide approach to reporting on the various stages of physician and provider recruitment. Such changes include:

- Customized opened-requisition forms to allow different field requirements outside the standard general-talent process.
- Search firm usage and tracking.
- Sourcing categories and placement sources.
- Number of applications.
- Number of opportunities presented.
- Number of interviews.
- Number of rejections.
- Number of letters of intent (LOI) offered.
- Decline/reject reasons.
- Number of employment agreements (EA) extended.

More granular construction of process improvements included tracking time to fill, time to start, and conditional status formulas for measuring time-frame stages to identify service-level agreement (SLA) gaps (e.g., scheduling of interviews, legal employment agreement drafting, employment agreement offer sunsets, etc.) and elongated/inefficient/stalled processes leading to a candidate's loss of interest.

Continuous compliance audits, together with leadership-driven usage, have allowed more comprehensive and informative data sets for analysis.



2018 Excellence Awards Case Study SSM Health





Figure 1: Compliance Audit

REPORT - SAMPLE	On Hold	Open	Grand Total
1-Primary	2	55	57
2-Specialty	3	44	47
3-APs and Associate Staff	3	43	46
Grand Total	8	142	150

Entity/Personnel Area - Name	Req. Identifier	Approved	Provider Category Value	Category1	Medical Specialty Value
Sample Hospital	17014005	10/19/2017	Physician	1-Primary	Pediatrics
Sample Hospital 2	17015265	11/20/2017	APC	3-APs and Associate Staff	Pediatrics

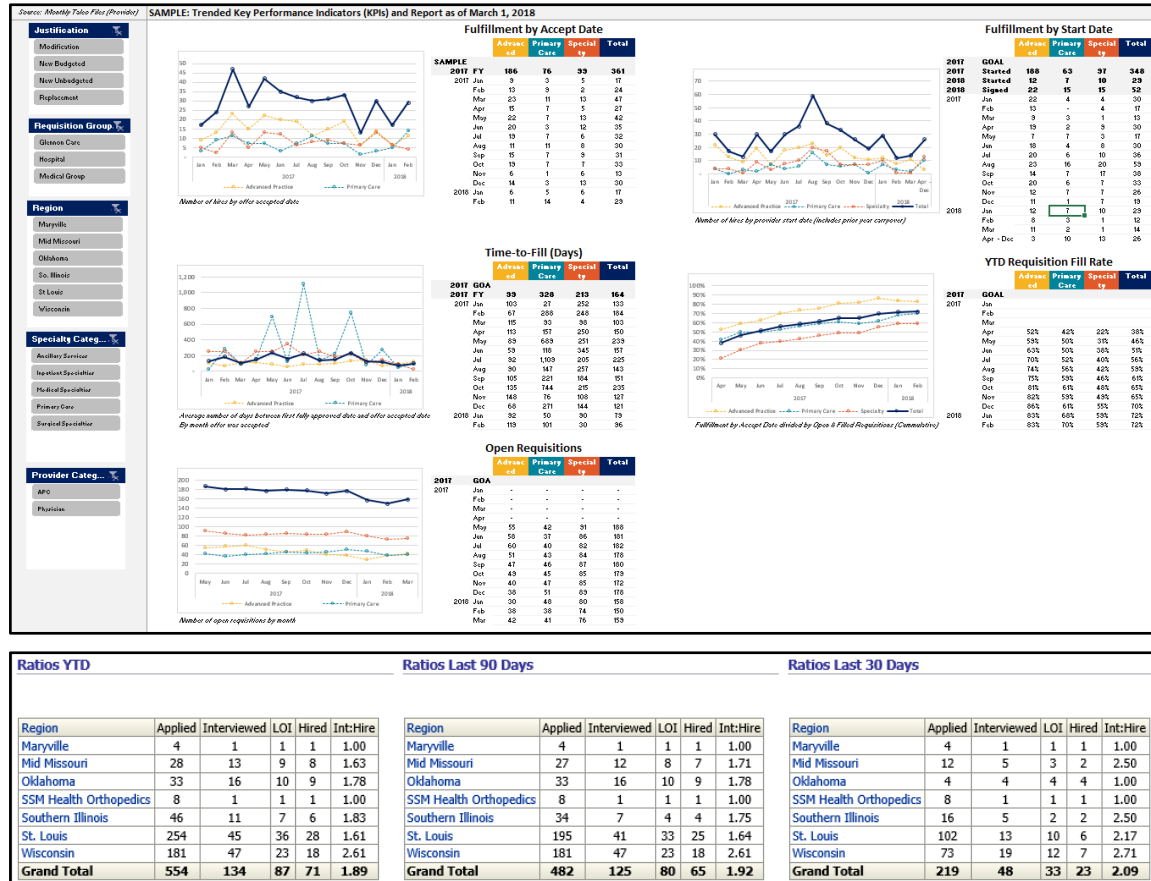
Entry	Req Identifier	Approved	Provider Category	Title	Medical Specialty Value	Name	FTA	Status	Submission	Phone Interview	HIM Review	HMCat	HRI Response	Score Sent	Interview Sent	Interview	LOI Sent	LOI Received	Legal Requested	Legal Returned	EA Sent
Sample Org 1	17014005	10/19/2017	1-Primary	Physician-Pediatrics	Pediatrics		804	Other to be made	09/29/2018	01/26/2018	02/02/2018	01/31/2018	02/02/2018	02/21/2018	02/28/2018	03/05/2018			01/22/2018		
	18004432	3/25/2018	1-Primary	Physician - Pediatrics	Pediatrics		1	Ready to Proceed with Offer	03/27/2018	03/09/2018	03/09/2018	03/09/2018	03/09/2018	03/21/2018	03/26/2018	04/02/2018			03/28/2018	04/02/2018	04/02/2018
SSM Health (Swk) Medical Group	8013965	9/29/2016	2-Specialty	Physician-Endocrinology	Endocrinology		508	Considering	02/09/2018	02/09/2018	02/09/2018	02/22/2018	02/23/2018	02/23/2018	02/26/2018	04/02/2018					
	17002253	10/20/2016	2-Specialty	Physician-Rheumatologist	Rheumatology		820	Considering	04/05/2018	04/05/2018	04/05/2018	04/05/2018	04/05/2018	04/05/2018	04/05/2018	04/05/2018					
	17002445	4/5/2016	2-Specialty	Physician-Plastic Hand Surgeon	Hand & Upper Extremity		833	Ready to Proceed with Offer	12/29/2017	12/29/2017	01/15/2018	01/17/2018	01/17/2018	01/17/2018	02/14/2018	02/21/2018	02/26/2018	02/26/2018		04/12/2018	
							553	Considering	05/27/2018	01/16/2018	02/22/2018		02/16/2018	02/16/2018	02/02/2018	04/05/2018					
	17002450	3/20/2016	2-Specialty	Physician - Cardiology - Congestive Heart Failure	Cardiology		260	Other to be made	06/07/2017	02/26/2017	06/09/2017			06/16/2017	07/02/2017	07/20/2017	08/07/2017				
	17002454	10/4/2016	1-Primary	Physician-Family Medicine or Internal Medicine	Family Medicine		483	Ready to Proceed with Offer	03/02/2018					02/07/2018	02/14/2018	02/20/2018	04/03/2018			04/03/2018	
	17002570	04/20/2016	2-Specialty	Physician-Palliative Medicine Division Chair	Palliative Medicine		577	Considering	03/04/2018	02/23/2018	02/23/2018	04/12/2018									
	17002621	10/09/2016	3-APs and Associate Staff	Nurse Practitioner - Psychiatry	Psychiatry		390	Other to be made	12/06/2017	01/23/2018				01/23/2018	01/23/2018	02/12/2018	02/12/2018				
	17002630	4/16/2016	3-APs and Associate Staff	Advanced Practitioner - Palliative Care	Palliative Medicine		714	New	03/29/2018						03/04/2018	03/22/2018	02/12/2018	02/16/2018			
							728	New	04/12/2018												
							724	New	04/05/2018												

Source: SSM Health

Integration

As a data-driven performance organization, SSM Health installed Taleo, a third-party data analysis program (Oracle Business Intelligence) to allow for several data-pivoting tables, enabling greater examination of data on defined performance indicators while at the same time providing the flexibility for ad-hoc reports required/requested by key stakeholders and system management.

Figure 2: Data-Driven Performance



Source: SSM Health

Through better alignment with physician- and-provider best processes and reporting practices, greater insight and predictive confidence for recruitment success has been achieved across the entire system

Measurable Benefits

The measurable benefits experienced by SSM Health's enhanced process include:

- Fulfillment of physician needs in 2017 with an overall 34% reduction in open-physician requisitions, from 173 to 114.
- Exceeding the system number of planned-physician needs in the first quarter of 2018, 32 planned vs. actual of 33.



- Enterprise-wide collaboration and executive alignment with the business strategy for growth.
- Realistic validation of time-to-fill days for greater strategic-planning confidence.
- Dramatically increased the visibility at the executive, stakeholder and recruiter levels.
- Challenged searches that require further examination/consultation and resources.
- Greater understanding of the physician- and-provider recruitment timelines.
- Increased focus on organic sourcing of quality candidates.
- Sources of placements.
- Strategically targeted the use of retained search firms.
- Recruitment seasonality by specialty.
- Concentration of effort on system needs and mission-critical searches.

Return on investment (ROI) is measured on the number of physicians hired to plan, stakeholder satisfaction throughout the process, candidate-interview experience and quality of hire as measured by the stakeholder/retention.

Prioritization of five key-performance indicators is used as a baseline foundation for the achievement of growth:

- Offers accepted (number of fills to plan).
- Fill rate (as compared to industry benchmark from the Association of Staff Physician Recruiters).
- Time to Fill (days to fill a position in a specialty compared to industry benchmark from the Association of Staff Physician Recruiters.)
- Interview-to-hire ratio (analyzing quality of candidates for presentation).
- Employment start date (timeframe to revenue impact).

Overall

The advanced process has achieved great results – fulfilling the business need for growth through physician hires in 2017 and exceeding the planned number of physician hires in the first quarter of 2018.

The ability to show – at a system-level – full transparency of effort, accountability and demonstrated predictability of success continues to lend tremendous insight, collaboration and confidence to the health system’s strategic planning.

While data collection and reporting are critical to the overall success of the initiative, equally as important are interpretation and analysis of data and its benefits. For example, it is critical to understand when to pivot resources, negotiate economies of scale with vendors for multiple positions, apply revisions to strategic sourcing and have meaningful, consultative discussions with leaders and key stakeholders.

All these benefits are designed to support successful outcomes and provide the flexibility and validation needed to adjust recruitment strategies at any time.

Lessons Learned

- **Keep things simple and digestible.** Use a one-page dashboard. It is easy to wrap data into a highly matrixed and confusing report. The dangers of paralysis-by-analysis may confuse executive leaders without proper context to the overall strategic plan. The process works only if people use the system and put the data in the right place. Training and routine audit is essential.
- **Continuous quality improvement.** Listen closely to the recruiters and find the challenges they have with the system immediately so there are no delays in developing solutions.
- **Challenge the status quo.** It’s not enough to just use the system to report and view. Question the process, ask for the details and challenge the data to support continued progress.

The Future State

- Comprehensive, stronger, systematic, and state-of-the-art approach for candidate sourcing to increase employer-brand awareness and equity.
- Innovative platform to drive candidate intakes and pipelines using technology.



- Core value propositions at system- and regional-market levels for physician- and-provider recruitment messages.
- Efficient and disciplined use of applicant tracking system and metrics to advance key-performance indicators to industry-top quartile.
- Cadence of performance metric reporting to key leadership stakeholders and system management to stabilize reactionary recruitment and enhance proactive recruitment strategies.



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