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Debunking the Mail Myths of Retained Physician Recruiters

What does your mailbox offer you these days? Important correspondence? My mail is 90% product offers, catalogs, and generally items I immediately deposit into the trash. While advertisers are crafty and try to make mail look hand-written and personal, it continues to be just that: unsolicited advertising.

I recently read an article from a retained physician recruiting firm touting the benefits of mail. I feel compelled to respond. So you trust I am qualified to talk on this topic, my first five years in the industry was retained. TIG also employs at least ten people converted from the retained world. This article summarizes our combined experiences.

Myth #1 – Direct Mail Generates Candidates

Sure it does, if that's the only source used. Send 100,000 pieces of mail a month and you will indeed find a candidate (or maybe even two...hooray). A firm may tell you they use emails and digital, but mail is their bread and butter. At \$1.40-\$4.00 a piece, mail is a huge revenue producer.

The typical campaign requires anywhere from 5,000 to 10,000 pieces, with difficult searches needing even more. At the low end, it will cost \$7,000. I also met with a client who spent \$50,000 on mail and ***never filled the search.***

How does \$50,000 just disappear like that? The average response rate to mail is .5%. Yes, that is a decimal point. ***Half of one percent.*** That's it. 25 candidates saw your jobs for 5,000 pieces of mail. And who knows if those 25 were even viable candidates. And remember - mail is a single event. You get one shot. Then into the trash bin it goes (until you fork out more cash, of course).

On the other hand - a well-executed, truly personalized digital campaign, targeted to a defined candidate demographic, with retargeting and follow-up can generate 200 to 400 leads in a 10-day period, for about \$2,000 (See Table 1).

Myth #2 – Personalized Mail Campaigns

What does 'personal' mean to you? At the very least, it means knowing someone's **name**. Retained firms send "personalized" campaigns that don't include your name, brand, colors, or even jobs details. How is a candidate supposed to get excited about your job if they know

nothing about it? But of course, this is how they keep candidates from calling you directly, resulting in them losing a placement fee.

On the other hand - Fully personalized email and digital campaigns can achieve return rates of 20%, as long as they are full of rich detail and information that allows candidates to self-educate. Candidates care about location, salary, and work-life balance. They want to know these details **before** they talk to you, so they can make an informed decision. This helps them avoid wasting their time, **and yours**.

Myth #3 – Candidates from Your Campaign are Yours

So let's say one of those mail pieces happened to bring in a lead. Do you receive the details about this candidate? Are you provided with their name and disposition? Better yet, when is this candidate presented to you? With retained recruiters, they get first dibs on any response. So even if **your** marketing got the candidates attention, the recruiter will still only present that candidate to the bidder with the highest placement fee. You'll never even know the candidates name.

On the other hand - If your campaigns are digital, you can expect detailed reports on how the campaign is performing and see every single candidate that expressed an interest in you specifically. That means knowing their name, how interested they are, and, if they provided it, contact information.

If you have an unlimited budget for sending 95.5% trash-can filler, by all means, use retained firms. However, if you'd like a fresh approach which puts those same, qualified candidates in front of you with **no placement fees**, consider calling The Inline Group.

Snail Mail vs. Digital – See Who Comes Out the Winner

Table 1

Characteristics	Mail	Digital – Without Video
Audience	1 specialty for 1 search	Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants
Audience/Reach	5,000	182,734
Cost Per Piece	\$1.79	\$0.034
Total Cost	\$8,950	\$6,337
Variations of Ads and Copy	1	104
Ability to Track Responses & Success of Each Ad	No	Yes
Actual Candidates Reached	Unknown	63,730
Actual Leads Created aka Candidates who take the “Call to Action” (Candidate requests more information or applies for job.)	25 Industry Average is a response of about ½ of 1%	313 – over 10 days
Cost Per Lead	\$358	\$19
Frequency	One Time	On-going everyday
Ability to Retarget Candidates Who Click, but Do Not Actually Take Action	No – unless you want to buy a second campaign	Yes – retarget the entire audience less those who took action, or retarget those who showed interest but did not take the “call to action”