

## **How do I make the most of my current residency training so that I can distinguish myself during the job seeking process?**

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Making yourself stand out from other applicants during the job seeking process is not easy. There are a lot of excellent residents who may be candidates for the same position that you are seeking. During your residency, you need to work to set yourself apart from other residents to chart the course of your professional career.

### **1. Have a written personal strategic plan for your professional future.**

If you have written your own personal mission statement and have a vision statement for your short- and long-term career, you already are a step ahead. This is not something that most residents have. Going through this process helps you really reflect on your strengths and weakness, personal and professional values, and professional goals. Having a well-thought-out answer to “*Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?*” shows maturity and introspection. And, it will help you know if the job is right for you.

### **2. Seek and ye shall find.**

Opportunities are not just going to fall in your lap. Seek out things that may not be offered as part of your residency but that you have an interest in. If you want experience in an area that is not a standard part of your residency, ask to do an elective rotation that may not have been done before. Or set up 1-day or even ½-day experiences outside your normal residency training.

### **3. Do your “homework.”**

Be able to answer any questions about practice-related issues and “current events” in the clinical pharmacy world beyond your institution. Know the lingo and be knowledgeable about different types of practice. You are a valuable commodity if you are familiar with the current clinical pharmacy landscape. Even if you have not had exposure during residency, know what all the current terms mean, such as CMM, ACO, interprofessional practice, patient-centered medical home, FQHC, the quadruple aim, and quality measures. Know the difference between CMM, MTM and pharmaceutical care. Know what community measures are and how/why they are incorporated into practice and why they are important. Do you participate in collaborative drug therapy management in your residency? If not, read and understand what it is. Read and know what the latest developments are regarding clinical pharmacy. What is the latest with the structure and framework of pharmacy specialty board certification? What are the specialties that exist? What are the recent ACCP white papers and position statements about? What advocacy issues are current and important? Do you know about the pharmacist’s patient care process and can you describe the steps and details? If not, read up and be more knowledgeable than many other residents about the critical issues facing clinical pharmacy today.

- 4. Facilitate your own professional development.**

Don't rely on your residency director or preceptors for all of your professional development needs. Seek out opportunities. Get involved in national organizations; just being a member is not enough. Join a committee. Go to national meetings. Go to local and regional meetings. Developing a plan for professional development will be a big help in your future career.
- 5. Identify a mentor and meet regularly.**

You might have an assigned mentor. You have your residency director. But, if you don't *really* connect with that person/those people, have an informal mentor whom you can really talk to. Someone who has been through it before (and can tell you what he or she looks for in job candidates and what makes these candidates stand out) can be invaluable, especially when you have a special connection.
- 6. Know how to set up your own clinical practice.**

Maybe you had the opportunity to set up your own brand-new clinical practice during your residency (huge advantage!) or maybe you didn't. If you didn't, interview other practitioners to determine how to do this. What are all the important steps in determining that this is done correctly? What mistakes did they make? You can also attend programs or presentations about this and read articles or book chapters that discuss it. Very often, the job you take after residency will involve setting up a practice in a place where no pharmacy practice existed before. Do you think you will get the job if you have no answer to the question of how you will go about starting your new practice?
- 7. Make sure you get teaching experience during your residency.**

Even if you are not interested in a faculty position, many clinical pharmacists will take students on rotations, so get experience precepting students. If it is not a standard part of your residency, make sure you get the chance to do this. Experience doing lectures or presentations is so valuable during residency. No matter what job you are looking for, public speaking is almost always sure to be part of it. The more, the better. If only one lecture is required during residency, ask if you can do more.
- 8. Do volunteer work.**

You are busy during residency. But you should make time to do at least a little volunteer work. And, the added benefit is that you will feel good about helping those less fortunate than you. And, it doesn't have to be medical- or pharmacy-related volunteer work. Just give of your time and effort to help those in need.
- 9. Do more than just work.**

Having other interests and participating in other activities sparks discussions during interviews, and you may discover connections. Play on a softball team. Sing in a choir. Run a marathon. Learn to paddleboard. Start a band with friends. Take tennis lessons. Play in a volleyball league. During your interview, if your answer to "What do you do for fun?" is "Nothing; I am too busy for anything fun," the discussion falls flat on its face. People want a colleague who is an interesting person.

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