

Reinvention and the Road Ahead: Healthcare Hiring



As a result of **Covid-19**, the healthcare industry, and indeed the world around us, have changed significantly. The way we live and work is drastically different than it was just a few months ago.

Sterling Healthcare's Vice President of Client Success, Jenn Tomassi, and her team have talked with many clients and industry leaders about how healthcare talent management has changed,

departments with little or no work to those with overwhelming need. Meanwhile, healthcare talent leaders have had to care for their teams during a time when many employees are at risk of burnout and isolation.

“I am so impressed by our clients’ nimbleness and creativity, and their tremendous accomplishments during this difficult time,” says Tomassi. “I am optimistic that the remarkable changes they have implemented to make hiring and onboarding more efficient will last long beyond **Covid-19.**”

Below we share some of the inspiring accomplishments and insights Tomassi and her team have uncovered in their client conversations, including a lively virtual panel discussion with industry leaders in June. That webinar is available on demand [here](#).

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Finding Talent in A Pandemic

One of the immediately apparent ways the industry has changed is how it finds and hires talent. Recruiting on college campuses, at job fairs, and in person were no longer viable as social distancing recommendations and regulations were put in place. Meanwhile, organizations were under pressure to scale up quickly and get trained professionals onto the front lines of the pandemic.

Sterling’s Healthcare and Life Sciences General Manager, Val Poltorak, discussed the initial challenges the industry faced in a recent article, [Resilience and Remedies: Healthcare Hiring and Covid-19](#).

To source new candidates, our healthcare clients began to use digital solutions for virtual hiring events and career fairs. To improve pipeline and candidate experience, some have implemented chatbots on their career site. This allows them to engage visitors looking at job descriptions, ask initial interview questions, and follow up with candidates who do not finish submitting their applications.

Our clients have also recognized that they already have a tremendous resource in their own workforce and have tried to make it as easy as possible for employees to step up to meet new demands. They have redeployed current employees to new roles and given them development opportunities. They have created internal float pools and travel programs. One client, who leads talent operations at a large university medical center, told us about their commitment to internal mobility and set a goal of three days from application to offer for internal talent stepping up to fill front-line positions.

Interestingly, the experience has not only affected where healthcare talent leaders look for talent, but the skills they seek. Tomassi spoke with a vice president at a leading medical staffing firm who emphasized the value of a candidate with a broad skill set. “He talked about how the nature of work will change the longer we’re in a Covid-19 environment, and the need to be flexible. Certainly, organizations who are tapping their own internal talent are already benefiting from versatility.”



Remote Interviewing

“One client of ours, a nonprofit health system spanning several states, pivoted quickly, making sure their technology was up to the job. They quickly created and implemented a virtual interview process that allowed the candidate to create an interview video, responding to tailored, job-specific questions, that their talent acquisition staff could view efficiently and share with hiring managers,” Tomassi says.

Clients have appreciated both how quickly their teams have adapted to the new technology, but also that the technology “meets candidates where they are,” allowing them to record their interviews at a time and place convenient for them. Candidate experience has continued to be a priority, despite the challenges of the time. This has also meant staying flexible in mode of communication (text is increasingly popular with candidates), as well as offering mobile-friendly application and onboarding processes.

Swift and Virtual Onboarding

With no time to spare, efficient screening and credentialing have been more important than ever. At Sterling, we are proud that we were able to minimize disruption for our clients and support them in getting new staff onto the front lines. Even amidst widespread court closures in the spring, we were still able to fulfill **background checks in over 99% of US jurisdictions**. Our continued investment in technology and extensive partner network — developed over the past 45 years — helped us ensure that we could deliver for our clients.

“We worked with our clients to streamline and expedite their hiring process,” Tomassi says. “We partnered with one client who was able to interview, screen, and onboard 500 new employees in a 20-day period, while maintaining compliance controls and providing a safe environment for workers and patients.” She encourages clients to take advantage of **Sterling as a thought partner** to optimize the screening and onboarding experience.

Once a candidate was hired, our clients moved onboarding and training online as well. It was an interesting challenge for companies that have worked so hard on the warm day-one welcome and in-person experience. However, there were some changes, like the Department of Homeland Security’s adjustments to Form I-9 requirements for remote workers, which were welcomed as improvements that talent leaders would love to see continue post-Covid.



Nurturing the Team

Given the myriad pressures on their teams, healthcare talent leaders have been mindful of the importance of nurturing their people. Tomassi and her team have been inspired by their commitment and creative ideas.

Clients have enlisted behavioral health professionals, both internal and external, to talk to their teams about managing stress. They have made sure that employees have access at their fingertips to all the resources available to them, checking in with each other formally and informally.

“One client referred to March and April of this year as experiencing 47 Mondays in a row, and I think that encapsulates the way many people are feeling,” Tomassi says. “It’s so important not to bottle up stress and tension. By providing outlets, healthcare organizations demonstrate that their people are really their first priority.”

The Road Ahead

The industry leaders we have spoken with all agree that we are in uncharted waters when it comes to what comes next. As one client put it, “We don’t know what to expect — we’ll be called on, we just don’t know how.” They know they will need to stay flexible and compassionate.

leaner processes, creative use of channels and internal resources — are lasting improvements they want to make stick.

Sterling has an entire suite of talent management solutions created for the healthcare and life sciences industries. Learn about these solutions at sterlingcheck.com/healthcare.

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