

“Better Here” Recruitment Web Site

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BACKGROUND / There are not enough trained physicians in North America to meet the demand for their services. Analysts predict a shortage of up to 200,000 physicians by 2020. In Canada, analysts project a shortage of 2,200 physicians each year. In British Columbia, six regional health authorities are responsible for providing health care. Finding enough doctors to provide needed services has become increasingly difficult, and in some cases hospitals have closed or reduced their services due to a lack of physicians. Interior Health, one of these health authorities, operates 45 hospitals and health centres—served by more than 1,200 physicians. Interior Health will need at least 915 new physicians by 2012 to maintain current operations.

NEED/OPPORTUNITY / STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE/NEED

Interior Health needed a high-impact physician recruitment web site to help recruit enough physicians to meet current and projected demand for service for its 720,000 residents.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Interior Health had the opportunity to create a physician-focused recruitment web site that would effectively promote the advantages of living and working in the Southern Interior of British Columbia. The web site needed to differentiate Interior Health from competing recruiters by offering a better lifestyle through a unique brand “personality” in order to gain attention from physicians. It needed to create an emotional connection by speaking to physician concerns about fatigue and work overload. And it needed to promise something better. The web site also needed to engage community and physician stakeholders in the recruitment process.

INTENDED AUDIENCE(S) / PRIMARY AUDIENCE

The primary audience was Canadian physicians at all stages of their careers. International physicians would also encounter the web site through online searches.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH	IMPLICATION FOR WEB SITE STRATEGY
<p>Demographics: Canadian physicians are aging (the average age is 51.3 years), and more female physicians are entering the profession (53 percent are female).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Key messages should address the interests of females, a younger population and those looking to reduce their workload.▶ The images and creative approach should reflect the diversity of potential candidates (age, gender, ethnicity).

AUDIENCE RESEARCH	IMPLICATION FOR WEB SITE STRATEGY
<p>Lifestyle values: Physicians have a strong focus on leisure time and pursuit of personal interests. Fifty-five percent of graduating doctors choose a “lifestyle-friendly” specialty over the 9 percent who choose a “lucrative specialty.” —<i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Web site content, creative and navigation needed to showcase lifestyle advantages. ▶ Key navigation had to promote lifestyle benefits—a controllable lifestyle, access to recreation, workplace flexibility and high quality of life outside of work.
<p>Motivations: The primary reason for physician relocation is lifestyle. Income alone is not sufficient. Features that attract physicians include educational/cultural opportunities for children, employment opportunities for spouses and more time away from work.—<i>Canadian Medical Association Journal</i>, 2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key messages about work-life balance, community involvement and lifestyle advantages needed to be included. ▶ The web site should address questions about location by including one page that profiles each community and the lifestyle advantages for that location.
<p>Trust: Physicians trust peer opinions. Half of respondents turned to peers first when investigating job opportunities; 57 percent stated that peer referrals were the most helpful.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There should be a shift away from the health authority as the “voice” and toward a peer “voice” to communicate a position of trust and personal relevance—supported by images and testimonials.
<p>Job search preferences: Forty-five percent of physicians begin job searches online, and 40 percent of physicians read recruitment ads in journals. —<i>New England Journal of Medicine</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ This supports a web-based solution and promoting the web site through print journals and electronic communication tools.

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

The secondary audience included community recruitment partners—city administrators and stakeholder physicians who partner with Interior Health to entice physicians to move to their community.

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS	IMPLICATION FOR WEB SITE STRATEGY
<p>Recruitment expectations: Communities expect that Interior Health will supply enough physicians to fully service each of the 77 communities within the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use the web site to support shared responsibility; allow recruitment partners to show how the lifestyle promise could be delivered in their community.
<p>Partners as community champions: Community administrators and physicians are most aware of the advantages of living in each location and are the primary advocates for the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Allow each community to “own” the brand, and profile lifestyle benefits and images on the web site. ▶ Provide physicians an easy way to register and post a job vacancy.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES / Goals: Develop a physician recruitment web site that is memorable, addresses the audience's lifestyle interests and gains visibility in the competitive recruitment market. The web site needed to drive physician inquiries about living and working in the Interior Health region as well as support community stakeholder engagement.

Objectives: All objectives were measured between 15 May and 16 December 2008.

Objective No.1	Get them there. The initial objective was to have physicians visit www.better-here.ca to learn more about why "It's better here." Goals: Thirty web site visits per day, half of visits from new viewers.
Objective No. 2	Keep them there. Once at the site, the team wanted visitors to stay and view different communities and job opportunities. Goals: Two minutes on the site per visit, four pages viewed per visit.
Objective No. 3	Encourage action. The corporate objective was to hire more physicians. The web site needed to address audience interests in a way that encouraged them to make contact with the recruitment team. Goal: Generate 100 enquiries from physicians within six months.
Objective No. 4	Support partnerships. Interior Health needed to engage community and physician recruitment partners in web site development. Goals: Fifty percent of communities submit lifestyle profiles; 20 physicians register vacancies.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

WEB SITE STRATEGY	TACTICS
Showcase lifestyle: Extensive audience research convinced the team that the web site needed to showcase the lifestyle benefits of working in Interior Health communities.	Development of the brand "Better Here" accessed through www.betterhere.ca and supported by the key message "Life's better here."
Create a visual impact: Physicians review many recruitment web sites and advertisements. The web site needed to stand out from competitors.	Create a fresh, high-impact web site with minimal copy, unique lifestyle images, peer testimonials and creative brand presentation.
Use peers to help recruit: Doctors trust peers and rely on their opinions about work and lifestyle options.	Use peer testimonials to describe lifestyle benefits in a physician "voice."
Support stakeholder engagement: Recruitment partners wanted to profile lifestyle advantages in their community.	Provide a web page for each community as a place to describe why "Life's better here" and to provide images to showcase their lifestyle.

WEB SITE STRATEGY	TACTICS
Use navigation to support work-life balance: In addition to profiling the work-life balance, the web site needed to provide more detailed information about the communities, the vacancies and how to apply for them.	Two home page portals provided direct access to work (vacancies) and life (community) options. The high-level navigation addressed each of the key elements, and internal links and search functions supported the navigation.
Make it easy to find critical information: The “Better Here” web site functionality needed to reflect best practices in web site development.	Simple navigation, intuitive links, easy-to-find contact information and minimal copy aided web navigation. Critical information was never more than two clicks from “home.” Search functions were intuitive.
Be seen first: In a competitive recruitment market, it was important that www.betterhere.ca was well positioned in web search results.	The team identified common search terms and added them to each page. A link-building strategy identified key partner web sites that directed traffic to www.betterhere.ca.

IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES / IMPLEMENTATION TIME LINE

Research began in April 2008, and the “Better Here” web site was launched at the end of May 2008.

BUDGET

The web site budget of CDN\$24,500 included research, creative strategy, copywriting, custom programming, image purchases and uploads, search engine optimization, the software platform, and year one of web hosting.

CHALLENGES

1. How to measure early success: Interior Health’s leader of physician recruitment needed to demonstrate early results to support the web site investment, yet had no budget for evaluation.

Solution: The team was able to use Google Analytics to monitor web site traffic and demonstrate “reach” at no cost.

2. Minimize ongoing costs for web management: Interior Heath is publicly funded and must demonstrate effective use of taxpayer resources—especially since funding is intended for the provision of health services.

Solution: The team built betterhere.ca on a content managed platform and trained staff to manage content areas. They created online forms that automated the posting of physician vacancies and page templates that required minimal additional content. This approach also led to the consistency of presentation seen on the job and community pages.

MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION / All measurements were collected from 15 May 15 through 15 December 2008.

Objective No. 1: Get them there	In the first six months, 8,700 unique web visitors viewed www.betterhere.ca. The site averaged more than 51 visits per day, and 77.3 percent of web site visits were from first-time viewers.
Objective No. 2: Keep them there	Once on the “Better Here” web site, visitors spent an average of over three minutes on the site and viewed more than seven pages each visit.
Objective No. 3: Encourage action	Within the first six months, the “Better Here” web site generated 440 inquiries from physicians.
Objective No. 4: Support partnerships	In the first six months, 27 communities (53 percent) submitted community profiles and images, and 134 physicians submitted vacancy notices. “We love it...it is better here in Ashcroft and I love the chance to tell people why.”—community administrator “The overall design of the web site is slick. I liked the graphics and layout. This would target me nicely, and I’d be all over it.”—emergency physician

OTHER SUCCESSES

On 4 December 2008 the Minister of Health for British Columbia issued a news release congratulating Interior Health on the success of the “Better Here” web site. This news release resulted in 17 media interviews and positioned Interior Health as a provincial leader in physician recruitment.

“The ‘Better Here’ web site is getting noticeable attention across the province. Other health authorities are commenting on the effectiveness of the brand and are now trying to catch up.”—leader of physician recruitment for Interior Health

“I heard last week about IH’s physician recruitment web site—it is putting pressure on some health authorities to make theirs better to match or exceed it. Says you folks are on the right track!”—chief financial officer, Interior Health