

Finding the Right Fit: The Importance of Cardiac Program Leadership

For the last several years, hospitals nationwide have struggled to find qualified cardiovascular program leaders who possess the right skill set – a mix of clinical knowledge and business savvy. Placed in the right program, these hard-to-find executives serve as catalysts to initiate change and shift momentum in the right direction, ensuring service line growth and profitability through compelling and dedicated leadership. In fact, **the CV specialty is an area where effective leadership can bring the most dramatic results.**

Corazon believes Service Line Administrators, Cath Lab Directors, Physician Leaders, and others in similar roles are critical to overall program performance; thus, these positions must be filled by candidates with very specific qualifications. The most capable cardiovascular leaders should be able to direct and understand clinical operations and engage team commitment, while driving the overarching strategy, financial management, and other “big picture” activities.

But, recruiting leaders for the cardiovascular service line can be a tricky business. Successful cardiovascular leaders are strategically-focused and operationally knowledgeable – a rare combination since many healthcare executives usually bring strengths in one area or the other.

Over the years, Corazon has received many requests from our consulting clients to assist with the search for the ‘right’ leadership talent to direct their program in management and medical director roles. In some cases, Corazon has also provided interim management until the leader of the cardiovascular service line was secured.

Committed to providing the healthcare industry with the highest level of expertise in developing excellence in the cardiovascular service line, Corazon has launched a **Recruitment Service** dedicated to the search and placement of cardiovascular service line leaders who are key to success in the specialty, which can translate into whole-hospital success.

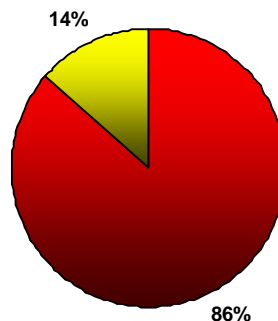
The **Corazon Recruitment** team understands the particular needs of a CV program, putting us in a unique position to evaluate candidates and match them with the needs of each client situation. Due to our Consulting service, we have a vast candidate pool resulting from our nationwide network of clients and contacts in the cardiovascular industry. Furthermore, the Consulting and Recruitment teams work together to screen candidates using a proven search process and unbiased third-party perspective based on first-hand experience with all types of CV programs. We suggest resolutions to contract, location, or other challenges, making every effort to ensure the match is successful for both parties. We’ve completed the search and placement process for a number of high-profile clients, and we have multiple searches currently underway.

As the number of advanced-service cardiac programs grows and more organizations make major investments into this vital clinical service, there is greater market demand for those qualified for key leadership positions. Candidates with the right skills and background can be more selective with a greater number of options to choose from. This scenario heightens competition for talent and drives increases in salary requirements, which together can present significant challenges to recruitment and retention of cardiac and vascular leaders.

So how can a hospital go about finding the ‘right fit’ to lead a CV program? Corazon recommends these strategies for successful placements:

- Clearly define program priorities and the requirements of the position, allowing input from program stakeholders.
- Define clear position expectations based on the priorities of the program and hospital, and ensure all candidates interviewed have the necessary qualifications and experience.
- Define the scope of authority and reporting relationships for the position. Any ambiguity may cause confusion further along in the search or interview process.
- Identify values that ideal candidates are expected to possess and give special attention to the candidates’ fit into the existing organizational culture. We advise clients to adhere to strict standards about the qualities hoped for in a new member of the team.
- Outline a timeframe for the recruitment effort and make the search a priority. The longer a program is in operation without a qualified leader, the easier it will be to lose focus, which can result in lost revenues and/or inefficiencies in quality or operations.
- Cast a wide net to achieve a large candidate pool. It’s best not to assume all qualified candidates will come from one particular location, career background, or position level.

By using these and other strategies, organizations can focus efforts and maintain momentum when recruiting CV leadership. And while the ‘ideal candidate’ will be different for every position at every organization, the key to success is a thorough, well-defined search for that perfect fit for your cardiovascular program.



Corazon recently conducted a **Compensation Survey** to report on industry trends and what progressive programs are doing to recruit and retain cardiovascular leaders. Healthcare organizations are recognizing the importance of having a leader dedicated to the cardiovascular service line, as over 80% of the respondents currently employ a leader specifically for this specialty. Understanding the value of this role has increased competition for the best candidates and fueled the shortage of trained, qualified CV administrators.

Corazon is a national leader in specialized consulting and recruitment services for cardiovascular program development from strategic business planning through clinical implementation. Corazon combines business planning, market and financial analysis, feasibility studies, clinical operations, Heart Hospital design, best practice benchmarking, and staff education for newly established or existing programs. Corazon is a 2003 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Company. Call 412-364-8200 or visit www.corazoninccom.