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Academic Surgery

Strategies to Find and Negotiate Your First or Next Academic Job

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Disclosures

- I have no relevant financial relationships to disclose as it pertains to the content of my presentation.
- I do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in my presentation.

Guiding Principles

- Understand yourself
 - Know what you want professionally and personally
 - Take time to reflect on what makes you happy
 - Be honest about the value you add
 - Make sure your negotiations reflect your values
- Understand the job
 - Know what they want you to do
 - Understand how you will be paid
 - Make sure there is consistency in expectations, compensation, and benchmarks

The grass is always greener....



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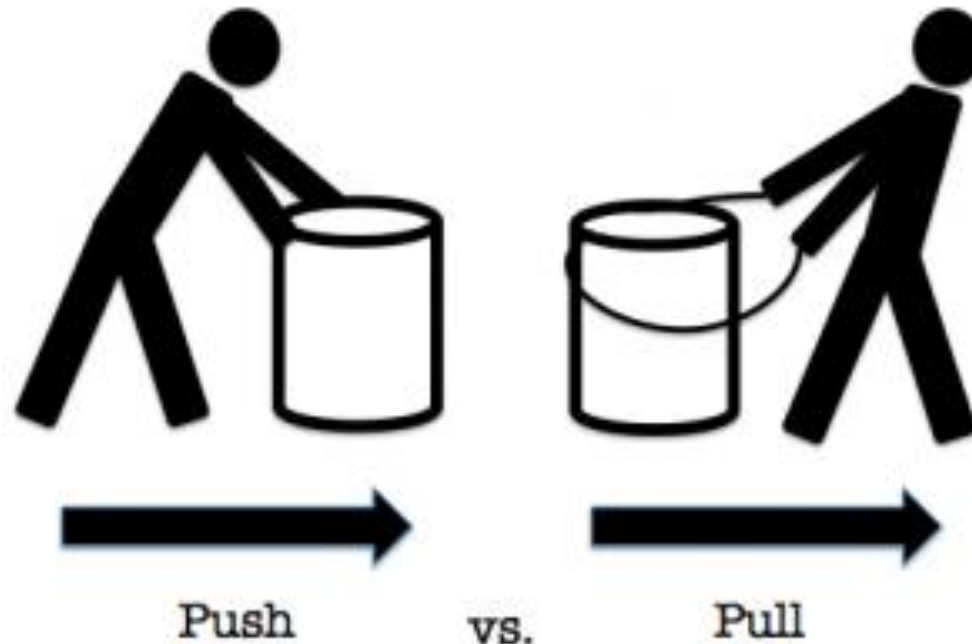
- “One should consider an academic move only for an improvement in anticipated opportunity and environment of $\geq 50\%$.”
- Anticipate 1 year of lost productivity
 - Recruitment and negotiating
 - Decision-making and angst
 - Time off (make sure you take it!)
 - Ramp up phase both clinically and academically

Can you stay?

- Can you reach your goals at your current institution?
- What changes can you make to accommodate?
- Search for new allies, collaborators, ideas, leadership opportunities
- Have clear goals, reasonable ideas about how to get there before talking to your chair.
- Bring solutions to the table
- Don't try to bluff to get a retention

Why are you looking: Push v Pull?

- Are you being recruited to another institution?
- Are you applying for another job?



General Recruitment

- Visit 1: They are evaluating you! So DO NOT:
 - Ask about salary on the first visit
 - “You asked me to look. I’m happy where I am.”

You have to get asked back to have a visit 2.

- Visit 2: your turn to look them over.
- If needed, ask for more visits to clarify issues.

Surgeons are NOT Trained to Negotiate

- We either under- or over-value ourselves
- Do your homework! Know the benchmarks, market, and local environment. Be able to defend your “ask”.
- Be sure to UNDERSTAND what you are offered.
- Do NOT ASSUME anything in a negotiation.
- Quickly changing financial environment that will have an impact.



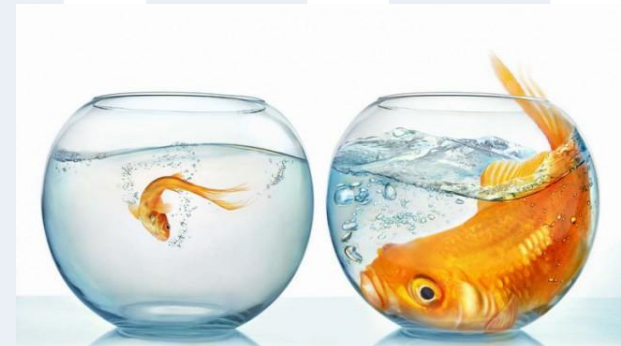
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Understand Yourself

Professionally

- High profile, pedigree - the “H” tax
- Specific clinical mentoring
- Specific collaborator(s)
- Upward mobility (rate of ascent)
- Big fish in a little pond v little fish in a big pond
- Be clear about your area of contribution - Have a “major” and a “minor”
- Articulate a clear plan



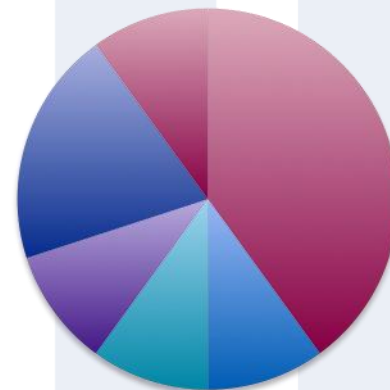
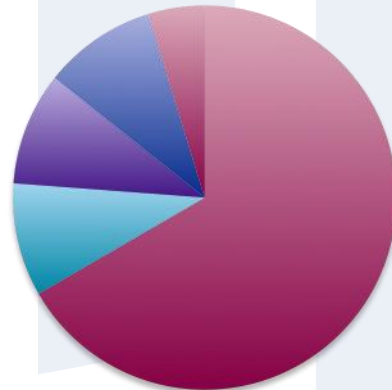
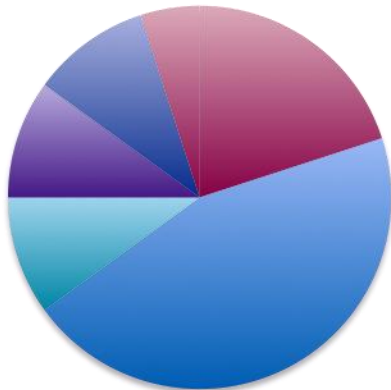
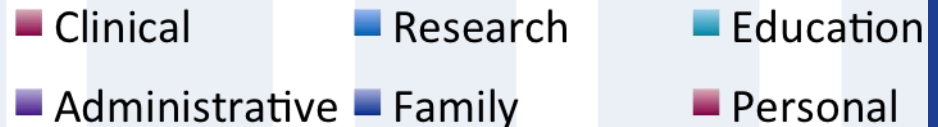
Personally

- Major city
- House with a yard
- Good schools...or low taxes
- Lots of money (payor mix)
- Easy commute facilitates more family time
- Near extended family



You have to compromise

- “I let the fellows manage the patients and am there when I need to be. I provide the minimum care possible to ensure that I am meeting my ethical responsibility.”
- “Say no to everything not related to your research program.”
- “I am a B parent.”



Negotiations Must Reflect Values

- There is likely a set amount for the recruitment
- Appreciate that your compensation will go up over time.
- However, you will rarely have more than one opportunity to establish your lab, your outcomes program, your clinical expertise.....
 - A dollar-value is difficult to assign to great clinical or academic mentors.
 - Start-up funds are critical to gather preliminary data if you want to get funded.

Understand the Job

What are you being hired to do?

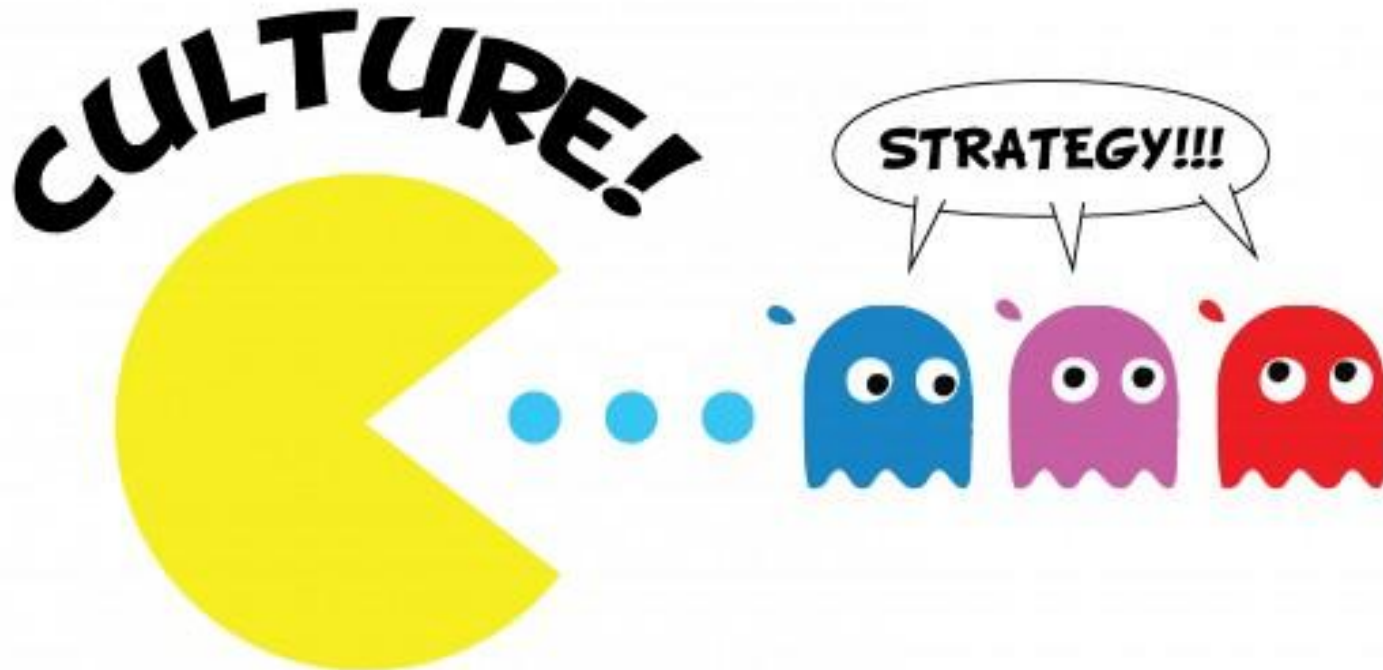
- What is the clinical need?
 - Talk to future partners about their current practice
- Are you creating a new clinical program?
 - What are the hospital / department commitments?
- Is this primarily a research position?
 - Are there sufficient resources and time?
 - Are academics valued?
- What is the envisioned “protected time”?
 - 25% research time is not a research job

What are you being hired to do?

- Who is your boss(es)?
- What do they think the job is?
- What do your partners think the job is?
- What do the administrators think the job is?

- Is the conceptualization consistent?
- Does it align with the resource and time commitments?
- Will the job be valued in the current culture?

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast”



Understand the Compensation

- “Surgeon-scientists want to be compensated like surgeons, not scientists”.
- Understand the compensation plan
 - What are the incentives? Salary v “eat what you kill”
 - What is protected time and how is effort calculated?
 - Do they reward/finance academic success? How?
 - Dean / chair tax (8 - 25%)
 - Malpractice insurance
 - How is clinic space, clinic staff, administrative support financed?
 - Personal benefits - retirement, tuition

Start-up Package - Clinical

- Minimally have a salary guarantee which is competitive for geographic region for a defined period of time (AAMC, MGMA)
- Should incorporate specific equipment needed (ie ultrasound, robot time)
- Define
 - “Block OR” and clinic time
 - “Team” or partner assignment
- Incorporate clinical support persons

Start-up package- Research

- Define protected time, assign compensation structure to include this
- Written commitment of mentorship and collaborations
- Support for equipment, lab set up
- Research assistant and level (tech vs PhD) - support for FTE v start-up coverage
- Access to core resources
- Separate, contiguous space to grow your program with other like-minded researchers

Start-up Package- Research

- **Funding: Departmental vs. Institutional**
“I did not say that, the Dean promised that one,” or “It says you get it in your contract, but not from where” ...
- **Bridge funding:** How much, for how long; from where, and the specifics of how to achieve it



How will they measure success?

- Metrics need to be specific and measurable
- Do the metrics align with the job and the resources?
- Make sure you can meet them
- Examples of metrics
 - CDA funded by year 3
 - R01 submitted by year 5
 - RVU target by year 3 - may be benchmarked
- If this is your first job, the initial metrics must be about you, NOT the program.

What else do you need to know?

- A thorough understanding of the position and its environment are necessary.
- Have others of similar qualifications been successful?
- What is the departmental attrition rate?
- Where did the last person holding a similar position go, and why?
- What is the recent extramural funding success rate?

Do your homework!

- Discuss with mentors, other recent recruits
- Know the benchmarks and be able to defend your ask with numbers and rationale
- Assess for red flags:
 - Too many assistant professors, not enough senior faculty?
 - Impending leadership turn-over?
 - Is this position dependent on one individual?



Aligned Expectations are the Key

- Level 1

- Know what you want and what you need to get there
- Know who your boss(es) are
- Know what the job is
- Know what the resources / support are
- Know what the metrics of success are

- Level 2

- Be sure it is the job YOU want
- Be sure bosses are aligned in conceptualization of the job
- Be sure the metrics are consistent with the job
- Be sure you have the resources sufficient to be successful



Thank You!

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