

INNOVATION ACADEMY

CERTIFIED INNOVATION MENTOR PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

Reinventing Healthcare Recruiting Through Innovation

BACKGROUND

Beacon Health System is a regional organization of healthcare providers headquartered in South Bend, Indiana.

CHALLENGE

When Chad Hartzell first joined Beacon's human resources division as director of talent strategy, he was tasked with an overhaul of the organization's recruiting processes. Because healthcare was facing a crisis-level talent shortage, Beacon knew that cutting-edge recruiting would be critical to set it apart from the competition.

Hartzell enrolled in Notre Dame's **Certified Innovation Mentor Program (CIMP)**, both to support his pressing assignment and to develop an overall skill set for innovative problem-solving and decision-making. "It was great timing in terms of the functional role I was being asked to play at Beacon," he says. "But when I saw the list of program attendees, I got cold feet. I didn't know if what I was going to learn would apply to the HR space.

"The first week, when I announced that my individual project was going to be recruiting differently in the healthcare industry, and the next guy announced that his project was changing the molecular structure of radioactive isotopes, I thought, wait—maybe I don't belong here."

But Hartzell glimpsed real possibilities in the tools he was being introduced to, and by the second week of diving deeply into innovation methodology, he was hooked. "When we got into framing opportunities, discovering insights, and the ideation process, I knew it was time to be talking myself into things instead of talking myself out of them," he says.

THE CIMP DIFFERENCE

Hartzell was most intrigued by two innovation discovery lenses taught as part of the Unifying Innovation Methodology™: challenging orthodoxies and using analogs from other industries. "In some organizations, HR is seen as a very traditional space," he says. "It can be difficult to challenge that perspective or find flexibility there."

But looking outside the traditional HR space for ideas led Hartzell to one key thought: why did healthcare recruiters have to have experience in recruiting, or even in healthcare, for that matter? It was the way things had always been done, but it wasn't producing great results for Beacon. Studying other industries helped Hartzell land on a different set of values for new hires: resilience and customer service skills.

"You have to be resilient as a healthcare recruiter, because this is one of the most challenging times for sourcing talent the industry has ever experienced," he says. "And we weren't getting the greatest marks in customer service from our hiring managers. It was time to hire people who had skills in those areas, measure their performance effectively by developing meaningful metrics, and hold them accountable."

Hartzell's work with analogs also led him quickly to a tool he might not have otherwise considered: artificial intelligence, which he and his team then incorporated into their new recruiting platform. "We were the first healthcare organization in the region to adopt AI for recruiting, and we're still the only ones who have it," he says. "Job applicants can text a chat bot and schedule an interview in less than two minutes."

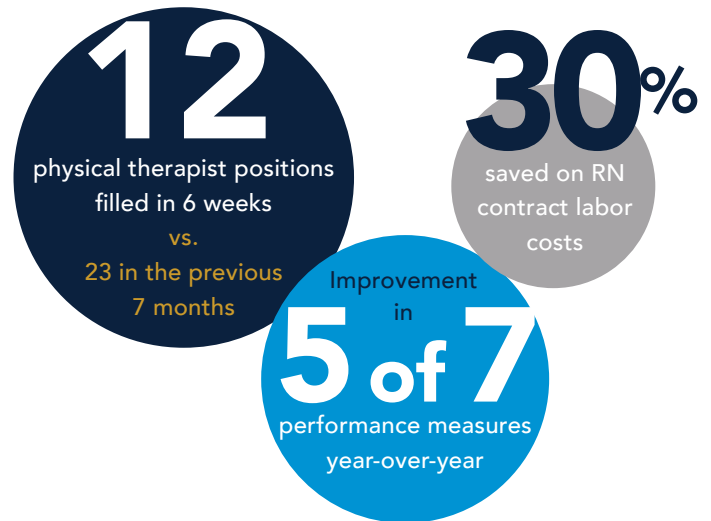
THE BIG IMPACT

The outcomes from Beacon's wide-ranging improvement initiative have been outstanding: applicant volume has increased, hiring managers are much happier with HR, and open positions have filled faster. An example of the impact: a reduction in open RN positions at two Beacon hospitals yielded savings of **30 percent** on contract labor costs.

Even though the innovations were applied to internal processes, the result has been a disruption of the external job market, as the positive experience of job applicants has created buzz around Beacon. "Our recruiting has developed a reputation—our competitors have let me know they're getting pressure from their own leadership teams to do what we're doing," Hartzell says.

Hartzell thinks that if he'd had to forge ahead on his own, without the decision-making framework taught in CIMP, he'd simply have spent months researching trends and possibly hiring consultants to help him remake his process. And he doubts the resulting change would have come so quickly and efficiently—or been so successful.

"I really think the value of CIMP is that there are so many different components of the methodology, so many tools and resources, that you can find the piece that applies to you, learn it quickly, and identify opportunities to use it successfully," he says. "That's true no matter what your organization and no matter what your role."

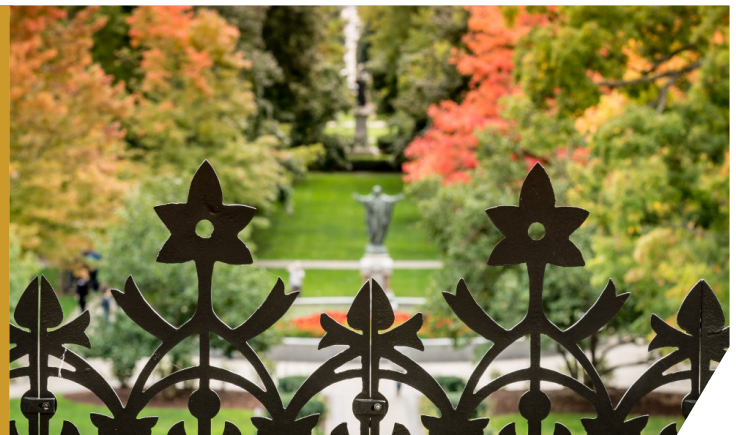


ABOUT INNOVATION ACADEMY AND CIMP

Innovation Academy at Notre Dame's IDEA Center offers a premier educational experience for organizations looking to create a sustainable culture of innovation. Our Certified Innovation Mentor Program (CIMP) provides a master-level education in innovation for front-line practitioners—plus a supportive community for sharing ideas and best practices. To learn more, contact Innovation Academy at innovationacademy@nd.edu.

"The support CIMP provides is an opportunity to chart a new path and work differently, with a level of confidence you didn't have before."

—Chad Hartzell, Executive Director of Talent and Organizational Development, Beacon Health System



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