

# The Medical Transcriptionist's Guide To Getting a Work At Home Position

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# Your Employment Options



As a new graduate of a medical transcription school you are probably ready to jump in with both feet and get started with a new job. You may have been thinking about the different job possibilities that are open for you now that you have completed your studies.

You may also be worried about the job opportunities available for new graduates without experience. While this is a concern, this book will help you get the confidence to go out and look for a job, and will also give you certain strategies that you can use to help find a position faster.

Having no experience can make it more difficult to find a position, but by no means is it impossible. You will just have to look a little harder and use some strategic methods to make it happen.

Finding a medical transcription job that is right for you does not come by chance. You will need to take certain steps to place yourself in a position where employers stand up and take notice. Here are a few things that need to be put into place in order to stand out in front of the rest of the applicants.

Evaluate your employment options

Market yourself properly

Learn how to network

Create a standout resume

Get known on the Internet

Prepare for an interview

Set up a home office

Start the job and your future

In this section you will be shown how to evaluate your employment options as a fresh MT without any experience.

Why is experience necessary?

One thing that sets a career as a medical transcriptionist apart from other jobs is that you always have more to learn. As with other health professions, you must always be ready to learn something new every day. Also, listening to the different styles and variety of accents builds up auditory skills. Basically, as the years go by and your experience grows, so does your knowledge and ability as a transcriptionist.

So how does this convert to employers needing experienced MT professionals? Well, accuracy and speed build up, which leads to better productivity, which means everything to the employer. Any medical transcriptionist that has these two skills mastered is worth his weight in gold. During a work shift, productivity translates into money, and that is ultimately why you are working. and why the company needs you to work fast.

If you are working for a transcription service you will probably be paid a piece rate for the work produced. The rate of pay may be based on the amount of characters, the amount of lines or on a time-based pay.

As a new medical transcriptionist you cannot expect to be able to meet the same levels of productivity as a more experienced transcriptionist. On top of that, any new MT will need more guidance and feedback from their experienced peers, which will affect the workload of the entire office.

It really does not matter which school you are graduating from, any new prospect will need to be considered as a trainee because there is a lot more to learn in the workplace. The new employee will most likely be expected to work with a variety of different dictators, and must meet certain guidelines for style and formatting.

In order to fulfill the production standards of the new employer it can often take up to six months. All employers know that new MTs are much less productive than the more experienced ones, so it is natural for them to choose the medical transcriptionists that have the most experience. There are companies, however, that hire new MTs fresh out of school and are willing to devote the time needed to get them settled into the new position.

In this case the company will have enough quality assurance staff to provide both feedback and proofreading, or be a smaller slower paced office that can allow you a lot more research and proofreading time. This allows new graduates to start training without the company having to sacrifice a lot of income.

When you are starting a position, keep in mind that the more feedback and guidance you can get from experienced transcriptionists already on the job, the more your productivity will increase. You will advance much faster than at a job that does not have this support system in place. If you can find a position that has a high level of consistency in transcribing it will raise your productivity as well.

### **Levels of difficulty**

There are different levels of difficulty to be aware of when evaluating medical transcription jobs.

Knowing the differences in these levels can be very helpful when you first start looking, because it can be quite overwhelming if you find yourself over your head right at the beginning. The following is a rough guideline to help you evaluate the different levels of difficulty found in standard medical transcription positions.

## **Hospitals**



Hospitals are perhaps one of the hardest medical transcription jobs available for you initially. The work can be very varied and you will have to deal with many different dictators. You will experience a high amount of foreign doctors, and a wider

range of things that you are not familiar with such as drugs, equipment and various procedures. There may be more abbreviations used, and you may be dealing with new interns who themselves are not quite sure of all the abbreviations. A hospital environment will require more help and assistance from an experienced MT. The requirements for administrative purposes will usually be much higher at a hospital in regards to billing and logs etc. You may also have to sign contracts and insurance policies before beginning work at a hospital. This is not to say you should be put off about applying for a job at your local hospital. It's a great start for any transcriptionist, and I personally have had several friends who were new, straight out of school that started off at the hospital, and found it an easy experience.

## **Working for a national company**

First off, let me start by saying, it is usually the national companies that will give you a hard time about hiring you as a new graduate, – not your local doctors' offices and hospitals. National companies require 2-5 years' experience, which might make you wonder how did ANYBODY get hired by them in the first place, right? I mean everybody was once a new graduate surely? So how did all those thousands of employed transcriptionists get experience? Somebody had to have hired them, right?!

The same level of difficulty as a hospital will be found with the national medical transcription services, since they often contract with hospitals and pass the work on to you. Most of these types of services consider you as an employee, not an independent contractor running her own business. As an employee this may entitle you to some benefits, and you may have a choice over what kind of transcription you do and the amount of workload you want to take on. There will still be certain quality standards you will need to uphold according to company policy, and you may have to buy any required equipment. It is not likely that you will be hired by a national company at the beginning without any experience, although it has been known to happen. You also have to wonder if the schools that say they are affiliating with companies that will "waive the 2 year" experience thing are actually telling the truth. WHY would any company hire someone that can't pass their online tests??? There are definitely national companies that will hire new graduates, but only if they can pass their tests. I have had customers that have got jobs with national companies because they tested and passed their criteria.

So let's say you want to work at home for a national company, instead of running your own transcription service, (and you know I believe you should start your own service), but let's say that's what you want to do, and the national companies won't hire you... the rest of this book will help you get a

job to get experience so that you can do that. You may have to initially work for lower pay, or take an in-house position to get back to working at home.

That's what I did when I started out. I took a very low paying \$6.00 an hour position at Hospice, which was about 20 hours per week. I wanted to work at home, but I was smart enough to know that I shouldn't let ANY opportunity pass me by. I would have worked for free to get the experience actually. Anyway, after three weeks, they trusted me, liked my work, and said I could work at home and just come in and pick the work up a couple of times a week!

I also found a couple that ran a small transcription service in the next town, and asked the owner if I could come and talk to her. I didn't say I was looking for a job, just that I had finished school and hoped she would answer some questions for me. Well, after a few times that she had to reschedule, she finally said she had some time for me. She showed me how transcription was done in the "real world", what program she used, how she counted her lines, and how she billed work etc. I was totally fascinated! 😊

Anyway, I was getting up to leave, and about to ask her if she would consider me for any overflow work, or whenever she had an opening, when she offered me some work to take home. And that is how I got my very first job as a subcontractor. After three months, I set up my own business and got more accounts. During the time I worked for her, I still did the Hospice work at home, and in fact kept Hospice for about 2-3 years before they got new management and they had cut-backs and stopped using a transcriptionist.

### **Local opportunities**

These kinds of medical transcriptionist opportunities are much easier to get. If you work for a local clinic you will have fewer dictators that you need to get used to, and the requirements at the administrator end will be less.

Medical groups on the larger size will still give you less dictators than you will get at a hospital, and fewer procedures being performed. In fact, many of these procedures are done quite repetitively so there is a lot of consistent work being offered. Sometimes you can get a contract with them to handle any overflow work, due to holidays and sickness from their in-house department.

Smaller clinics usually have only a handful of doctors working for them, which means you'll only have a few voices to get used to. It will also be more repetitive work, since there are fewer procedures done at a clinic compared to a hospital. Usually walk-in clinics have a lot of transcribing work to do, and even more so if they provide care for workers' compensation patients. Also, specialists often require reports from doctors on duty at the clinics.

These clinics usually operate on a year-round basis and letting them know that you are available during any holidays may just help you get your foot in the door. Many applicants will be letting them know that they are not available during these times, and quite often holidays can be very busy. You do have the right to say when you are and are not available, and can still be employed.

Local clinics may also have secretarial work that needs to be done. By establishing yourself as a reliable medical transcriptionist at one of the clinics in your area, you have a good chance of advancement since these facilities are often part of a larger chain of clinics. Once word begins to spread that you are available, you may have a lot of work passed your way!



If you are offered an in-house position, in a large facility that has a "pool" of transcriptionists, you can expect to make about a third less than what the more experienced MTs are making at that same job, since all of your work is going to have to be proofread. This can actually take longer than if they did it themselves. This period of earning a low income will not last long, and you can expect to start earning a much better wage in the not-too-distant future. You will soon get the hang of things and you'll be amazed how quickly your skills and speed improve in the medical transcription field. This is also a great way to get your foot in the door within this industry, plus you will have someone who can proofread your work initially. A lot of large facilities will hire new graduates. It's a stepping stone to working at home, if that's what you desire to be doing.

You can see that there are quite a few choices to look at once you have graduated school. In the next section you will see an even broader range of employment opportunities for a medical transcriptionist that has not yet had the opportunity to get experience. This is, however, a good general idea of the employment available for MTs in the traditional role of working for a hospital, clinic, or other large facility.

Getting hired in a small local doctor's office is also good way to start your career as well, and it gives you that first job so that you can say that you have experience. Taking on a job in this capacity allows you to become comfortable with meeting the demands of an employer, while at the same time becoming experienced.

With all that being said and done, you may just find that anything is a breeze compared to those foreign dictation reports and strange accents you had to transcribe in school. If you took a good course you have had some really challenging dictation reports to transcribe, and if you end up working at a

doctor's clinic with a physician that speaks clearly, you will really appreciate it.

There are numerous places for you to apply to get a job. Don't wait to see them advertised! Send a letter about your transcription service or your resume, if you are looking to get hired. Most transcription jobs get filled before they even think of advertising for the position. In this business, word of mouth fills the jobs unless you get there first. Even if a position is not open, they will hopefully keep your resume or your letter!

Here are some ideas that you may or may not have thought of before.

Alternative Health Services

Correctional Facilities – local, county, state, federal

Children's Protective Services

Home Health Agencies

Walk-In-Clinics

Workers' Compensation Clinics

Visiting Nurse Association

Extended care facilities

Surgical Centers

Ambulatory Care Centers

Veterinary clinics

Physical therapy clinics

Private detective agencies - *A friend of mine now has several in her town that she types for.*

Clinical labs and pathology

Oral surgeons

Acute care hospital units

Social workers – *They usually don't like typing up reports, and I especially enjoyed typing for social workers. It was interesting and easy work. Look up Private Social Workers in your Yellow Pages, although there are many other ways to contact social workers.*

Dentists

Legal offices

Court house

Rehab Centers

Forensic Psychiatry Offices

Speech Therapy Groups

Nutritionists

Home Health Aide Services

Hospice

Senior Services

Managed Care Organizations

Nursing Homes

Authors and Editors of Publications – *My friend Linda transcribes for doctors' offices, but she has one ongoing client that is an author, and she has been typing for him for over ten years now.*

Transcribing for recordings of seminars. – *This is an untapped industry, and seminars of any kind in your area may be recorded via audio and video. Often, these people need the seminar transcribed so that they can make it into downloadable mp3 files, or podcasts, etc. Or they may just want a transcribed report of the seminar for other purposes.*

Now I'm going to let you into another little secret that nobody has mentioned anywhere that I've seen so far.

You can use this to do one or two things. You can use this idea to get experience and be self-employed, or you can use it as experience to put on a resume or reference sheet to get a job.

A lot of people need transcriptionists, and not only in the medical arena. If you are trying to get experience or references, why not try transcribing in other areas as a freelancer so you can get something on that resume?

The sites below are known as "freelance exchange websites". The Internet is a huge place, full of people that need transcriptionists, writers, graphic designers, programmers, and virtual assistants of all kinds, and a lot of these people use these types of sites to find someone that can complete a job for them.

Typically, a person posts the work requirements, how much they are willing to pay, and the time frame in which they need the work completed. These are trustworthy sites, and they are SUPER busy! I'd recommend signing up for one or two of them. Search the listings and see if you find something suited to you. A lot of people will want you to transcribe anything from business recordings, seminars, meetings etc.

[www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com) - This freelance website is very large, and is probably the biggest on the Internet and the most well known. They have several membership levels.

Elance provides a free service called an Escrow Account; a third party account to protect you and the buyer. The buyer puts the funds into this account, until they should be released to you. This is the safest way to make sure you get paid. After you invoice the person using Elance's system you will get paid. A lot of freelance sites also offer the Escrow service.

[www.guru.com](http://www.guru.com) - This is a very popular freelance site. It has a good reputation and is also a large well known site. They have SafePay Escrow.

You may find once you get a client on these sites that they continue to offer you work.

There are many other sites like this, such as [www.hiremymom.com](http://www.hiremymom.com) and [www.mediabistro.com](http://www.mediabistro.com). Just do a Google search for "freelance sites" etc.

Now it's time to find that job. It's time to get out all of your marketing ammunition and get ready to sell yourself as the medical transcriptionist that you have become.

## **Marketing**

Marketing is getting the word out to your audience and promoting yourself, your skills and your qualifications. As a new medical transcriptionist you are going to have to take the time to market yourself to potential employers and make them take notice of you. This involves putting together some solid promotional materials and getting them out to any prospective clients you have on your list. You will also use these materials to hand out to people as you network your way to a job. This section will address certain strategies you can use to build these promotional items, and how to best make them work for you.



## Pricing



The first thing you're going to have to figure out is your pricing strategy. You will need to find out what kinds of rates are being charged in your immediate area so that you can keep your prices within that same range.

You may be tempted to offer a lower amount in order to get contracts, but it is not in your best interest to do so. If one medical transcriptionist starts lowering the prices for his services, it will lead to others following suit and the overall price of transcription services will drop. You have taken this training to be a professional medical transcriptionist that can earn a decent wage as others do. Rates need to remain stable so that this business can continue to be regarded as a professional career in the health care field. That is not to say that you can't keep your rates in the lower part of the range when you are starting out, but don't deflate the value of medical transcriptionist services by going any lower than that.

When you consider that you are going to be working for medical doctors and other professionals, you can offer them the services they require knowing that they will be able to pay for them.

Finding out what the pay range is can be challenging, and it may take some creativity to find out the exact answers. While most medical transcriptionists will not tell you exactly how much they make, most will give you a pay range. You may need to talk to a few to get a good idea of what the price range is in your area.

Pricing can be based on characters per line, (a typed line of usually 65 characters, and this can be with or without spaces), lines, (a gross line, anything with typing on it, whether it is one word or many), pages, words per hour, or even the amount of minutes of dictation. Being paid by the amount of "minutes of dictation" is not a fair way of being paid, as some doctors speak far more quickly than others. Just an FYI for you there. ☺

There are a lot of different pricing structures and you can go online to get more information about it. You definitely do not want to base your pricing on anything that you research on the Internet however, because these rates will be different than the ones in your area. The rates for a line can range anywhere from \$.08-\$.20 nationally, and your own fee schedule will need to be based on your local average.

You can also charge different rates for different service levels or transcription types. For instance, you can offer different prices for different turnaround times. When you offer the potential employer a choice of services, they are not looking at whether they want your services or not, they are considering which one would be the best. You can also offer an hourly rate for any kind of services that do not require being charged by the line, such as archiving files etc.

If there is a particular kind of work that you do not want to do, or is more lengthy and cumbersome than regular medical transcribing, you can charge a higher rate than usual. If you do end up getting the project you will make decent money, and if you don't get it you will not have to do work you did not want to do in the first place.

When you are determining your pricing schedule there are a few things you should keep in mind. As a newcomer to the field you do not want to make promises that you may not be able to keep. Your turnaround time must be factored into your lack of experience. You should also think about what kind of extras you're willing to offer such as working on the weekends, free pickup and delivery for tapes, archiving etc. Remember that everything you offer free will be in effect for as long as the contract stipulates, so be very cautious with what you are willing to offer to get started.

Once you have gotten your pricing sorted out and have a solid idea of how much you are going to charge, you need to start your marketing.

## **Networking**

Many jobs in the health care field are filled by networking and through word-of-mouth referrals. By building up a list of contacts you may get an advantage over others that are searching for a job as an MT.

You can start out slowly by talking about your career with neighbors, friends and family. Let them know how excited you are to be starting this new profession. You never know what will come from the conversation. It can be something as subtle as; "Uncle Joe is just starting his medical practice". Bingo. You can discreetly ask for his name and number and you have your first contact. You can extend this networking by talking to your church members and any groups you belong to.

You may get names of other medical transcriptionists that you can contact, and you can let them know that you're available and looking for work. It is completely different from cold calling.



You are able to call them up and let them know that you have a common acquaintance that just happened to mention his name in passing.

Basically it all boils down to getting the word out and finding contacts. You should certainly talk to your own family doctor, dentist, optician and anyone you come into contact with in the health care profession. You can let them know that you have just completed your course and have a lot to offer in the field. You can also politely ask them if they have any colleagues that would need a medical transcriptionist. You never know what kind of doors will open with a simple question.

You can also begin attending meetings with other medical transcriptionists and people working in the medical field. If there are any local meetings of an AHDI chapter you can network there. You can offer to do some volunteer work for people at these organizations to get your name known and visible by other healthcare professionals.

It is also a good idea to keep your connections with your fellow students. If they have found a position in a company then you know that this company is hiring new graduates. You can add this to your list of resume contacts, and can make sure that you put some special attention on the cover letter to make yourself noticed. If they have completed their hiring it is a future job prospect that needs to be noted.

### **Join Groups**

Go to [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) and find medical transcription groups to join. It's a GREAT way to network with other MTs! <http://groups.yahoo.com/>. There hundreds of groups listed at this time.

The next phase requires making marketing material to distribute to the contacts you are acquiring. You should also do some door-to-door inquiries at medical facilities, and you will need material to leave with them. Go to these medical offices and ask them if they are looking for medical transcriptionists.

If they are not looking for anyone at the moment, you can ask them who they are currently using for their transcribing needs. This will give you another lead and you can apply to the company mentioned. Take every opportunity that arises to build up a list of contacts and get your promotional material out there. This is the way you will get call backs for interviews.

### **Marketing material**

A proven and effective method for marketing is to design a high quality brochure or flyer to send to medical offices. They can either be professionally printed or you can use software programs to make them up on your own. You can also buy specialty paper and business cards that you can print up easily using a home printer. If you can't afford professional printing this is a very good second best and much less expensive.

The pamphlet or flyer should emphasize your strengths as an MT provider. It should make a positive impression on the recipient, and inspire them to call you back for more information. Here are a few things you should keep in mind when you design your brochure to make sure it is a success.

- Sell yourself using your best qualities, skills and experience, but do not fabricate the truth.
- Emphasize your experience if it is MT related, or your training if you have no experience.
- Don't let the brochure be cluttered.
- Make sure there is a lot of white space on it.

- Don't be sarcastic, flippant or too full of yourself.
- Limit yourself to three fonts at the most.
- Use powerful truthful statements that will catch the attention of the reader.

Make sure you proofread the brochure until you are absolutely convinced there are no spelling or grammatical mistakes. Once you have done this, run it by a few people for extra proofreading. It needs to be perfect. How are you ever going to sell yourself as a medical transcriptionist if you can't even make a pamphlet without a mistake?

You can get business cards and Rolodex cards that match the paper you used for your flyer or brochure and print them up. You never know who you'll meet in an elevator, and you should always have a business card handy.

### **Follow-up material**

So you have put out some of your promotion material and have received a phone call asking for more information. At this point you should have another package of material ready to drop off at the office that expressed an interest. In this package you can include the following items:

- A sheet with personal references, preferably medical friends you know.
- Your resume, (which will be presented in the next section).
- A sheet describing the medical transcription classes you took and the practical experience you acquired.
- Samples of difficult reports you did at school.
- A sheet with negotiable rates, and possibly a discounted rate for new clients.

Along with this material you should include a personalized cover letter thanking them for asking for more information. It should include a list of qualities and skills you can present to their business. You can also offer to do a test transcription for them. The cover letter should suggest that they call if they are interested in arranging an interview.

It is common for students to leave out this last request but it is the most important thing to include. It is the call to action for the employer to get back to you. It is the end result of putting out all of this material in the first place.

After you have made your contacts, it is good public relations to send a letter thanking them for their time. Let them know that you appreciate the opportunity to speak with them about your medical transcription business. You never know who will be one of your future contacts and when they hear your name you want them to think positive thoughts about their experience with you. You can also mention that you are looking for work, and if they know of anybody that needs a transcriptionist that you are available.

## The Resume



As a medical transcriptionist you're going to need a resume. If you are new and fresh out of school you may be thinking, "What will I put down as experience?" This chapter will show you how to work with that and make your resume stand out, even without experience, so that you have a better chance of being called for an interview.

Experience is important in the eyes of an employer but it is not everything. There are other qualities that companies look for when hiring, and if you can show them that you possess these qualities on your resume then you will be

that much closer to an interview. Here are the most important qualities employers look for in a new employee:

- Ability to work as a team member
- Honesty
- Ability To Organize
- Motivation
- Strong work ethic
- Great communication skills
- Ability to analyze
- Computer skills

When you are putting together a resume put your heart into it. Gather up all the skills and qualities that you can give to a medical transcriptionist position, and put them in an organized professional manner onto paper. Your enthusiasm and motivation need to be captured in this resume so that the person reading it can feel it and give yours a second look.

Your resume is your calling card for employment. A professional resume needs to be prepared in order for you to have a chance at getting employment. It will open the door to getting an interview and is the tool that will set you apart from other candidates applying for the job. It is important to take special care with your resume and not just throw it together quickly.

Can you imagine a recruiter getting hundreds of applications for one position? This recruiter is probably going to look at each resume in a matter of seconds. You will have to make a good impression on your resume quickly in order for it to be filed as one to be followed up. Here's a general guideline of what to include on your resume, and what you should leave out.

## **Include**

**Personal information** - The most important thing that needs to be included in a resume is a contact number. If your resume is chosen for a call back you need to be sure you can be reached at that phone number.

If you have a cell phone be sure to include that as a form of contact so that if you are called, even while grocery shopping, you can respond. An employer knows that when he does his callbacks there may be distractions in the background and that does not matter for this phone call. The primary concern at this point is simply to reach you by phone to arrange a time for an interview. You should also have an e-mail address as part of your contact information. It needs to be a professional address and not just a nickname you have made up. You can easily set up a professional looking e-mail address using a free service such as Google mail. Your personal information must also include your mailing address, your name and title.

## **Originality**

An original resume will stand out more than a standard one that most people use. You can use a standard resume template as a guide and organize it according to your own needs. You will point out your strengths at the beginning. Remember you have a few seconds to make a strong impression so you want your best qualities to appear near the top.

## **Brief and concise overview**

You will need to sum up in a few words your experience, qualities and education. An employer does not want to look at a resume that is five pages long, so you need to condense all of your information into a one-page resume. If there has been any specific information that has been asked for

by a particular employer, make sure that you include that as well. The employer will be looking for these specific answers in your resume, and providing them will be an indication that you are able to follow instructions.

## **Confidence**

Your title should be listed as “Medical Transcriptionist” even if this will be your first position. It shows that you are totally committed and assume the position of being one.

## **Organization**

Your resume should be well organized and easy to follow so that the person reading it can skim through it at a glance and see all the vital information listed. Make sure you lead off with your most important assets. If you have a lot of experience as an MT then that would come first. If this is your first position then your education would be emphasized at the beginning. You can also use a qualifications category and outline certain strengths you have for this position. This would include any extra training you may have received during your course, as well as any personal skills you possess that make you well-qualified for the job. If you have had a few odd jobs working in the transcription field you can add per diem medical transcriptionist to the experience section.

## **Education**

You should include your school name, but you should not waste a lot of space describing the school itself in detail. Instead emphasize the key points of your experience working with dictation and your familiarity with the work types. Keep this area very condensed unless it is the strength you want the employer to see first.

## **Formatting**

Your resume should be created in rich text format so that virtually any program can open it when it is sent as an email attachment.

It should also be formatted for sending as part of the composed e-mail when companies do not permit attachments. In this case you should use plain text. When an email is opened it should be very easy on the eyes for the end recipient. Use a font size that is between ten and fourteen, and do not include any pictures, photos or images. The only possible design you could consider adding to a resume is a watermark for a hard copy, and even that is absolutely unnecessary.

## **Proofreading**

You are going to have to proofread your entire resume a few times and then pass it along for someone else to proofread as well. If there are any typing or grammatical errors your resume will end up in the garbage as fast as the interviewer has time to read it. This is your chance to make a good impression on the employer so make sure that your resume is in top form before sending it out.

## **Cover letter**

Most companies do expect a resume to include a cover letter. It should be one page in length and be a general summary of why you are qualified for this position. You should not add any extra information to the letter that it is not already stated in the resume. It is the first thing that the employer will see, before taking a look at the resume, so make it good and sell yourself on the front page.



## **Customization**

Sometimes it is not enough to just make one resume to blast out to all the different companies.

In many cases these resumes will be pushed aside because they have not been customized to include specific details that the employer requested. You may not be emphasizing something important that the company is looking for, based on its own business philosophy. Taking the time to customize your resume is invaluable and very necessary in many cases.

## **Not necessary**

### **Age and Ethnicity**

It is illegal for a company to discriminate against an employee based on age and ethnic background. There are a few things you should leave out in your resume to make sure that it is viewed fairly by the people hiring. You do not have to list, for example, the year you graduated high school, as this is an indication of your age. Some positions are looking for older MTs while others are looking for newer ones that will stay around for a while. There are concerns about older MTs not being as up to date as younger ones, and concerns as well about younger MTs not being as experienced. In both cases this information can be quite false, and your main concern with putting out a resume is to get in for an interview. Once you are at the interview you are able to handle these concerns on a one-to-one basis with your potential employer. The goal of a resume is always to get an interview.

### **Any Unnecessary Information**

You should not include any information that is not related to the job position itself. This includes the number of children you have, your marital status, your religion, and your ethnicity. You should also not include any photo in your resume as this shows the reader your age bracket and ethnic origin.

Letting your employer know that you have children can cause problems too because they know you will have to take some extra time off work to handle their specific needs. Some employees are distracted from their work with phone calls from their children during work hours. By law you do not have to let an employer know any of this information, and you definitely do not want them to know any of it before your interview.

### **An Objective**

As an MT you do not have to include this in your resume and it is a waste of space considering more important qualifications and skills you want to emphasize should be at the beginning. Most employers will not even realize that it is missing.

### **Ancient Employment History**

You do not have to go far back in time with your history of employment. You should not go back any further than ten years unless it is completely relevant to the position you are applying for. If it is related you can mention it, but it is not as important as your recent employment history.

### **References**

Most employers are aware that you can supply references on demand so there is no need to mention it. Also, listing references takes up space on your resume that can be used for better purposes. The only time you would need

to list a specific reference is when you have been referred by somebody that the company considers reliable, such as another employee. In this case it is something that you want to have stand out and should in fact be listed as close to the top of the page as possible.

### **Unrelated Employment**

If this is the only kind of employment you can list, then you should pick out the specific duties and experience that may be considered important for a medical transcription position. These types of items may include computer skills, professionalism, honesty or long-term commitment. You may want to make a quick summary of the various skills you have acquired, but keep it brief.

Don't let your resume be a failure. Follow the guidelines above to avoid an ineffective resume. Sometimes it is a simple thing that is overlooked such as poor formatting, irrelevant information or a resume that is simply too long that stops you from getting that one important interview.

Most employers are looking for experience, but if you can make your resume stand out from the rest of the crowd then you have a fighting chance of getting that interview you desperately want. By emphasizing your strong points at the beginning of the resume you have a much better chance of being considered even without experience. If you don't send out any resumes because you have a fear of being inexperienced, then you have a 100% chance of not being hired. Many people have gone into an interview with no experience and ended up being hired for the job, even when competing with highly experienced professionals. They are hired due to their passion for the job and their willingness to take on a challenge.

Employers know that some of the best people they have hired have not come from the more experienced pool. In fact, some companies will take on new recruits fresh out of school when they see a desire within the candidate to be a long-term employee.

This way they can work with the newcomer and get them accustomed to the company's methods without any considerations from past employment. If you present yourself as a person that is willing and able to be molded into the perfect employee that company is searching for, you have a good chance of getting hired even without experience.

It never hurts to try, and persistence is the key. There are employers out there that are willing to take a chance with new graduates even when they say they want experienced medical transcriptionists. Get your foot in the door for that crucial interview and you have a shot at getting hired.

## **The Interview**

After you have got the marketing ball rolling and have put out a lot of resumes, you may feel inclined to stop and wait for an interview call. This is not the time to stop however; this is the time to push your marketing efforts even more. You can't sit back and wait for the phone to ring for an interview request. The call will come when you are busy and actively promoting yourself. You will be called when you are least expecting it, and you will be one step closer to getting hired. The time to stop your efforts is after you have been hired for a job and are working as a medical transcriptionist.

The interview phase of your job search is one of the most determining factors as to whether you will get the job or not, and there are some things you should do to get prepared. It can be the make-break point of getting this job,

especially if you and another person have both scored pretty evenly in the pre-employment testing.

Here are some key points to keep in mind when you have an interview scheduled, and want to make it the best possible.

1. Be on time for the interview.

This is your one chance to show your employer that you are reliable. Although basic, being on time is a strong indicator of an employee that can meet deadlines. Turnaround time in the medical transcription field is a priority, and transcriptionists often need to meet strict deadlines. You need to be reliable for this job and this is your chance to show that you are up to it. Being late for the interview, or even calling to have it rescheduled, may cost you the job. Do whatever you can to be there and to make it on time.

2. Be Professional

A professional does not bring his cell phone or PDA into the interview. Don't bring any unnecessary distractions with you, and be sure to give the interviewer your total undivided attention. A true professional enters the interview focused on the business at hand and nothing else.

3. Schedule your travel

In order to be on time for the interview you should have your travel plans organized before you leave the house. The last thing you need to have on your plate is a traffic jam that makes you delayed for your appointment. Plan on getting to the location at least half an hour early. This gives you some time to factor in traffic and possibly getting lost. You should check and make

sure that there is parking in the immediate area of the interview location. If you end up parking three or four blocks away you may be late.

The employer does not want to hear any excuses, and has in fact heard them many times before. He will not be impressed.

#### 4. Dress appropriately

In this modern age it is sometimes difficult to determine what kind of dress should be worn for an interview. As a medical transcriptionist you will be a healthcare professional and must dress like one for the interview. Choose clothing that is understated yet very professional. Wearing a suit is appropriate attire for both women and men when going for an interview as a medical transcriptionist.

#### 5. Be fresh and neat

Your appearance says a lot about who you are and your work habits. It is essential to appear neat and clean for the interview. Make sure that you have showered and brushed your teeth and hair. Check your clothing to make sure that there are no stains on them, that they are not wrinkled, and that everything is tucked in straight. You should try to get a good night's sleep the night before so that you appear awake and alert for the interview.

#### 6. Arrive alone

Make sure that you do not bring your children with you to an interview. Even if you plan on leaving them in the waiting room while you are conducting your interview, it will be considered inappropriate. Do not take any friends or other relatives along either. It makes you look less confident.

## 7. Go prepared

Learn about the company by doing some simple homework before going in for the interview. You can visit the company website and study its philosophy and policies on business. This will prepare you for any possible questions about the business, and it also lets the employer know that you are serious about your application to work for this particular company. It is a good idea to bring in your own copy of your resume so that you can follow along as the employer is going through it. Having your resume at your side gives you the information you need at your fingertips in case you get nervous during the interview. It is also extremely important to know what kind of wage you are looking for so that if and when the subject comes up you are prepared. This involves finding out the typical wages and salaries for medical transcriptionists in your area as discussed earlier. Don't forget that as a new graduate you may be offered a lower wage to start. If that occurs, it is appropriate to ask what kind of employee potential wage growth is possible.

### **The Interview with the Recruiter**

If you have put in an application to a medical transcription service you may end up having an interview with the company recruiter. This recruiter is working in the best interests of the company and is important to keep that in mind during the interview. He will try to put you at ease, make you feel welcome and encourage you during the interview, but it is best not to get overly friendly with him. Remember that anything you say will be passed along to the employer so you must treat the interview as a professional meeting. Any impression the recruiter has of you will be passed along as well, so stay confident, upbeat and focused.

There are a few standards to be aware of before this interview takes place. You can ask the recruiter what you could possibly do to become a stronger candidate for the job, but it is not appropriate to ask how many other interviews he will be holding with other candidates. Also, avoid trying to find out any information about other prospects.

The recruiter can sometimes make you feel as if you can confide in him. You may feel like asking him advice and career guidance, but this will not be taken favorably. Keep your chin up and exude confidence during the entire interview.

### **Preparing for the Questions**

The best thing you can do to get ready for the interview is to prepare some answers for the kinds of questions you're likely to be asked. This is your time to shine and show the employer that you have everything it takes to fulfill the job requirements. Be prepared for some common questions that will give the employer an indication of your background and communication level. Here are a few common questions asked at an interview.

“Can you tell me something about yourself?”

This is not the time to talk about your family, interests or hobbies, but rather the time to discuss something that can be related to the field. Talk about your strengths in previous jobs and your accomplishments that are related to the position you are applying for.

“Why do you think you should be hired for this job?”



Make a quick list beforehand of what skills and strengths you can bring to the company to help it meet its goals. Doing a bit of research about the company before the appointment is a great idea.

You will know about the business philosophy and goals and will be able to relate it to your own experience and assets. As a student fresh out of school, you will have to convince the employer that you will play an important part in their services and have something unique to offer. Perhaps it is a passion for medical transcription that you have. An employer will look at this very favorably as opposed to someone who is merely seeking a position for money. Something else that can make him sit up and take notice is your loyalty and long term commitment to one employer. A company does not want to take graduates fresh out of school, spend a lot of time training them about company methods and then have them leave in a year. Let the person doing the interview know that once you join a company you're prepared to stick it out for the long run.

“What are your salary expectations?”

Come up with a reasonable answer that you think is fair for a new medical transcriptionist that is just starting out. Try to avoid coming up with a specific salary amount – an adequate answer would be some sort of pay range. It is then appropriate to ask them what kind of wages they are willing to offer, and whether they have a transitional plan for new medical transcriptionists. This comes in the form of a base salary which then transitions to a per unit wage.

### **Appropriate questions to ask during the interview**

Your interview will not only depend on the answers that you give, but on questions you ask as well. It is best to prepare a list of questions you would

like to ask so there is no awkward silence when you are asked if you have any questions.

By reading about company policy you will be able to measure what they consider important in their employees. You may want to ask them how they measure success in a medical transcriptionist, or why their company has the best career path for an MT.

### **Phone interviews**

Quite often an interview needs to be conducted by phone, and in many cases it can be very challenging. It is difficult to read any body language, thus making it difficult to gauge the interest and attention of the interviewer.

You're going to have to put your full attention on the phone call and pay particular attention to everything the interviewer is saying. It will need to take place in a distraction-free environment. Any pets and children need to be taken out of the area, and friends and family told about this appointment so they can stay out of the immediate space as well. You need to use all of your power of attention to make this interview a success.

One thing you might find helpful is to close your eyes and visualize what the interviewer is talking about as he says it. This may help you understand the concepts he is describing at the time. You should also have pen and paper ready to take notes, and have a copy of your resume by your side. You may need to refer to it. Answer all of the questions with confidence and enthusiasm, and this will be noticed by the interviewer.

Getting a friend to help you practice a phone interview is invaluable. You may think that you are ready for that phone call, but if you have never experienced one before you might be quite surprised. This kind of interview

is completely different than one that takes place face-to-face, and taking the time to practice it with a friend will give you more confidence.

It is quite common for a person to feel a bit panicked about a job interview. Some people get so nervous they are tongue-tied during the entire process and never really get a chance to say what they would like to say. Preparing for the interview as much as possible will lessen the potential of this happening, and allow you to convey your best aptitudes for this kind of profession, and why this company really needs you as their new medical transcriptionist.

### **Pre-Employment Testing**

After you have completed your interview you will be asked to take a pre-employment test. This testing may take place at an office, or you may be asked to do it on the Internet, or you may be given a CD to take home and return. There are two different types of testing: the objective test and the transcription test. You may be asked to do both, or you may just be required to do the transcription test. In either case, here is an idea of what it's all about and how you can prepare yourself to do well on any of them.

#### **The objective test**

Many companies will want to test your knowledge of basic anatomy, medical terminology grammar and punctuation, along with asking you to take the transcription test. These tests can come in the form of multiple-choice, matching up answers, or fill in the blank questions. If you have any problems or need any clarification before starting you can ask the test administrator beforehand. Also, keep in mind that these tests are usually timed.

## **The transcription test**

Your transcription skills need to be evaluated, and this is your chance to let the employer know how proficient you are at transcribing. It is nice to have a good idea of what you're walking into before the test starts, and this is a brief explanation of what the testing will be like. These guidelines should be followed for a timed Internet transcription test as well.

You are not going to have a simple test, but at the same time you're not going to have one that would be difficult for an experienced transcriber. The employer will usually set you up with a few files using different dictators from various medical fields. The test is set up to evaluate your skills and you will be judged on the following qualities:

- Your accuracy
- Your recognition skills
- Your use of judgment when applying your skills
- Your level of interpretation

If you are unsure of something during the testing do not hazard a guess. It is better to leave an area blank than to insert something that is completely false.

Here are a few things you can ask prior to the test if you're taking it on site:

- Can I bring references?
- Can I bring my own headphones?
- Is there a preferred format?

Be sure to always proofread your report before handing it in. It is not acceptable to have any spelling mistakes on this test. If you are lucky, there will be a spellchecker, but you cannot rely on it 100%. It is okay to flag your blanks in the report, and the employer will probably be impressed that you know how to flag and give feedback.

### **The transcription test in a remote location**

If you have walked away from an interview with a CD in hand, or have been sent one by mail, then you should know that perfection will be expected in this kind of testing environment. You are not going to be timed and you will have references available, so you are expected to hand it back with no mistakes.

### **Getting ready for the test**

Setting yourself up for the testing is much the same as for the interview. Dress professionally, arrive on time and be physically and mentally ready for the test. On a physical level you want to make sure that you have had enough sleep the night before and have eaten well. Mentally you want to be relaxed and focused. Your ability to stay calm during the test is a direct measurement of how you perform under pressure, so take a deep breath, relax and do your very best.

If you are an absolute wreck just thinking about the pre-testing, you can find a few places where you can practice in order to get comfortable and know better what to expect. You can contact transcription agencies and hospitals and tell them that you would like to take a practice test because you have recently graduated. Some places will say no and others yes. If you score very well on the test they may just keep your results on file for future reference.

If your interview has gone well and you have scored highly on your pre-testing then you are well on your way to getting your first job.

## **Improving Your Chances Of Getting Hired**

If you'd like to take the Registered Medical Transcriptionist test, you can put RMT after your name. It looks quite impressive! Most graduates should be able to pass this test. This certification tells any employer or potential client that you are a qualified medical transcriptionist. To become a Certified Medical Transcriptionist, i.e., CMT, you will need to have two years' experience. You can also learn about this through AHDI.

Here is a pdf report that explains it to you from AHDI.

<http://ahdionline.org/Portals/0/downloads/RMTCandidateGuide.pdf>

### **IMPORTANT:**

You want to stand out from the crowd, regardless of whether you are applying for a job by sending a resume or promoting your own transcription service. Since you only have one page to promote your resume, and usually your transcription service account seeking letter, you should give people a link to your own website.



It should be a professional website that helps you sell your skills and services. The medical transcriptionist that doesn't have one is at a disadvantage. This is a place that you can put on your resume or your account seeking letter. This is where prospective

employers or prospective clients can go to learn more about you, and it gives you the chance to have your own platform that explains more about you and your medical transcription skills. You can enhance your resume by having a proper web site, and you can explain more about your transcription services, including rates, TAT, and company policies etc., by having your own web presence. It's a must-have!

If you are not sure how to set up a professional looking website and you don't want to spend thousands of dollars, I have set up a special discount link for you where you can either get a resume site designed or a business site designed. My friend Leva does excellent work and is only offering this discount to purchasers of this ebook, and my newsletter subscribers and students. She usually charges over \$1000.00 to design websites. You can see her prices at [www.fivestarwebdesign.com](http://www.fivestarwebdesign.com). But for me, she has agreed to heavily discount her prices. She will design a TEN page site for medical transcription business owners for only \$377.00. That's a really awesome deal!

To learn more about having your own Resume Site click the link below:

<https://paydotcom.com/r/89016/medtran/25607906/>.

If you would like a business site made, click this link:

<https://paydotcom.com/r/87687/medtran/25181180/>

## **Start A Blog**

Start a blog about your transcription career or your transcription business. Gather some interest and get some regular readers. It's a good way to network with others. You don't need any particular skills to start a blog if you use Blogger, which is owned by Google. It's just a point and click

template driven program that creates really nice blogs, and they look professional. They have lots of templates to choose from. They have improved Blogger so much over the years, it has some really awesome features now.



Blogging can be a fun way to express yourself and your views and get to know others in your field. You can let your blog visitors leave comments on your blog, which you can choose to pre-approve first, so that your blog doesn't get spammed by people visiting just to leave website links to

other places. Or, if you want to use a blog as another Internet platform to sell your medical transcription skills, or talk about your business, you can do that as well without allowing comments from other people on your blog. It's entirely up to you. It's definitely a complement to having a website, and will increase your chances of exposure. You can learn more about easy blogging by going to <https://www.blogger.com/start> and signing up. It's free and it's easy!





## **Starting Your Own Medical Transcription Service/Business**

If you are planning on taking on contracts and working at home you definitely want to start with the easiest work possible. It is challenging enough to just get started without having to deal with work that is overly difficult. It can be very overwhelming when this happens. Working with only one or two doctors is an ideal start because the workload won't be too hard on you. I wouldn't recommend sending letters to a "group practice" until you have more experience and other subcontractors lined up to help share the workload! Unlike working for a GP or Internist, other specialties are repetitive and you will be typing the same types of reports and procedures every day. Specialty doctors will also prescribe the same medicines all the time. With a GP or Internist you will be constantly looking up words and medications, especially with GPs, because patients come in with such a wide variety of symptoms and illnesses. Another FYI for you! ☺

You will become accustomed to any specialty within a few weeks, and soon notice that you are typing on auto-pilot! That is the nice thing about getting your own accounts. You will know who you are typing for every single day! You will soon master their voice characteristics and tone, and transcribing their reports will be second nature to you. All specialties are repetitive, and transcribing the same types of reports every day helps you build up speed and whiz through the dictation. Who wouldn't like that?

It's not difficult to start your own transcription business! If you have read my ebook – The Step By Step Guide To Medical Transcription At Home, at [www.medical-transcription-at-home.com](http://www.medical-transcription-at-home.com) you will see that it is in fact EASIER to start your own service than to try and get a job working for a national company. It's also far more flexible and far better paid! A national company will pay you a small amount compared to what you would get if you set the rates yourself! Why not make \$30.00 an hour working for yourself with your own accounts instead of perhaps half of that working for a national company?

I do not recommend sending a resume if starting your own transcription service is what you plan to do. You want to come across as a professional business service.

Most of the time when I got accounts the doctors never asked about my specific transcription experience, and only rarely asked for references. Since you have a medical transcription service, they will "assume" that you know what you are doing. References will not necessarily include other doctors you've worked for in the past. Doctors want to know they can trust you as a person. Your actual work will demonstrate to them whether or not you have enough experience.

If you start small, with just one account, you won't feel overwhelmed. You will see how quickly you get used to that account, and then you'll want to branch out and get more of them! Doctors do expect you to have questions. Don't feel bad about asking questions, or leaving a blank and asking what the word was.

So long as you are not leaving lots of blanks, they would rather know that you are concerned enough about having the note be correct. Finding accounts is a matter of timing. Sometimes you send out letters and you get immediate responses, other times it can take a couple of months. I always recommend sending out at least 50 letters per week. A lot of physicians will keep your information on file until they need you. Be creative about marketing your transcription service. Think of other means of inexpensive advertising. You don't need an Ad in the Yellow Pages. That is a big monthly expense, and once you have accounts they generally stay with you for years!

An Ad in the local newspaper about your transcription service is a less expensive idea, and since doctors read the newspaper, it could bring quick results. There are many ways to market your business!

**Hint:** If you already have one account and are looking to expand your business, be sure to ask the doctor's office for a "roster". They get them from the hospital and it will list all the doctors with their names and addresses, including zip codes, which saves so much time when you are transcribing a letter to have this information at hand. It will also make it easier when it comes to sending out account seeking letters to have the information available instead of having to go through the Yellow Pages. Unfortunately, you will probably have to do this to begin with when you are looking for doctors. Be sure to keep a file of everywhere you have sent your letter, and on what date you mailed it to each doctor, because you may decide to do a mailing to the same doctors every 2-3 months. There is nothing wrong with sending another letter or flyer, so long as you give it a couple of months between mailings.

**Here is an account seeking letter example for you:**

Your business name  
Your address  
Your telephone number  
Your website address

Doctor's Name

Address

Date

Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for accepting this letter of introduction.

"Your business name" offers a reliable medical transcription service with prompt 24 hour turn-around time. All work is treated with utmost confidentiality, and we are HIPAA compliant.

We will work with your schedule, whether it be once or twice a week dictation or every day of the week. You will find our service economical and cost effective, eliminating the expense of in-office transcription, such as medical and retirement benefits, equipment and supplies. Digital dictation with secure email encryption is available, and we can easily set this up for you.

We also offer a pick-up and delivery service for physicians using cassette tapes. Back-up copies of the medical records are available should you at any time require a copy of a note.

If you would be interested in this excellent service for your medical transcription, or have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Your name

(Attach a business card with a paper clip)

### **A New Level**

Once you have got your first client you have reached a new level. You are now an experienced medical transcriptionist. All it takes is that first job and you have made it.

Treat your first client like gold. He is the one that can give you further references. Take your time getting to learn everything you can about your provider's voice and specialty. Get well organized for this client, and make sure that you proofread everything as you meet his service needs.

This is just the beginning of a long career for you, and a well-deserved one. You will find that getting more clients is much easier now, and you may soon find yourself in a position of having too much work. You have gotten over the hurdle of finding employment and you are now on the road to more experience and better pay.

As a new medical transcriptionist always keep your eyes and ears open for new learning opportunities. Things can change fast in the technical world and the more you keep up with today's fast-paced changes the better prepared you will be for tomorrow. Enjoy your new career as a medical transcriptionist.

## **Resources**

### **PLACES TO LOOK FOR JOBS**

Magazine for Health Information Professionals – Including Jobs

<http://health-information.advanceweb.com/main.aspx>

### **National Companies that Hire**

[www.mtjobs.com](http://www.mtjobs.com) - Free to post your resume

[www.mtstars.com](http://www.mtstars.com) - Classifieds and a job seekers board

[www.diskwriter.com](http://www.diskwriter.com)

[www.transcendservices.com](http://www.transcendservices.com)

[www.jlgmedicaltrans.com](http://www.jlgmedicaltrans.com)

[www.riunlimited.com](http://www.riunlimited.com)

[www.silenttype.com](http://www.silenttype.com)

[www.alltype.net](http://www.alltype.net)

[www.amphionmedical.com](http://www.amphionmedical.com)

[www.spi-bpo.com](http://www.spi-bpo.com)

### **Count Lines And Invoice Program**

[www.count-lines.com](http://www.count-lines.com)

### **Blog Building**

<https://www.blogger.com/start> - Easy to Build Blogs

<http://wordpress.org> - For more experienced web designers

### **Yahoo Groups**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/> - A Great Way To Network

### **Inexpensive Professional Web Design**

To learn more about having your own Resume Site click the link below:

<https://paydotcom.com/r/89016/medtran/25607906/> .

If you would like a business site made, click this link:

<https://paydotcom.com/r/87687/medtran/25181180/>

### **My Free Newsletter**

<http://www.medical-transcription-at-home.com/free-medical-transcription-news.html>