

Leveling the Field: How Private Practice Can Compete for Top APP Talent

By: Matt Jordan, Jordan Search Consultants

As healthcare organizations face an intensifying demand for Advanced Practice Providers (APPs), including Nurse Practitioners (NPs) and Physician Assistants (PAs), private practices are at a competitive disadvantage against larger hospital systems with more resources. However, with strategic positioning, creative incentives, and a commitment to flexibility and autonomy, smaller groups can not only attract but retain top-tier APP talent.

The Challenge for Private Practices

Larger systems offer higher starting salaries, robust benefit packages, and name recognition. They often have dedicated recruiters and structured onboarding processes that private practices may not be able to match. Yet, despite these hurdles, the APP job market is shifting in ways that can benefit smaller, more agile employers.

What APPs Want in Today's Market

Recent studies and surveys have shown that APPs, particularly younger professionals, increasingly value the following:

- Work-life balance and schedule flexibility
- Autonomy in clinical decision-making
- Opportunities for professional growth and mentorship
- Supportive, non-bureaucratic environments
- A voice in how care is delivered

Private practices can excel in many of these areas—if they learn how to position themselves correctly.

Strategies to Compete and Win

1. Emphasize Autonomy and Clinical Voice

APPs in larger systems may feel like cogs in a machine. Private groups can stand out by offering meaningful autonomy and a collaborative environment where APPs are empowered to practice at the top of their license.

2. Build a Strong Employer Value Proposition (EVP)

Create a clear, compelling narrative around what makes your practice special. Is it your tight-knit team? Your focus on patient continuity? Your innovative care model? Highlight these in job posting and interviews.

3. Offer Flexibility Where It Matters

Whether it's a four-day workweek, hybrid telemedicine schedules, or part-time options, flexibility can be a bigger draw than salary for many APPs.



4. Get Creative with Compensation

While private groups might not match base salaries, they can offer:

- Profit-sharing or productivity bonuses
- Signing bonuses or student loan repayment
- CME stipends and paid time for learning
- Relocation assistance
- Partnership tracks or equity options

5. Prioritize Culture and Work-Life Balance

Private groups can cultivate a culture of respect, trust, and family-like support. Regular feedback loops, recognition, and transparent leadership can foster loyalty and satisfaction that outlasts a bigger paycheck.

6. Streamline the Interview Process

APPs are in high demand. A slow or disorganized interview process can lose top candidates. Respond quickly, follow up often, and make the candidate feel wanted.

7. Leverage Existing Staff as Advocates

Let your current APPs tell their stories on your website, in recruitment materials, or during the interview process. Authentic peer-to-peer testimony is powerful.

Conclusion

Private practices may not have the brand or budget of large healthcare systems, but they do have something just as powerful: adaptability, authenticity, and a deeply personal approach to care delivery. By strategically playing to their strengths and understanding what APPs truly want, small groups can absolutely thrive in today's competitive hiring landscape.

Further Reading

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics – [Nurse Practitioners Job Outlook](#)
- MGMA – [Advanced Practice Providers Remain Key to Practice Redesign](#)
- AMN Healthcare – [Employment Outlook and Job Growth Trends for Nurse Practitioners](#)
- Wikipedia – [Full Practice Authority by State](#)
- Endo – [APPs' Evolving Role in Healthcare](#)
- The Guardian – [Review of Physician Associates in the NHS](#)

