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WHAT HEALTHCARE CONSTRUCTION HIRING MANAGERS CARE ABOUT

A CANDID GUIDE FOR JOB
SEEKERS



INTRODUCTION

Landing a healthcare construction role in 2026's hyper-competitive market requires understanding what keeps hiring managers up at night.

With 88% of firms struggling to fill positions and projects facing delays due to labor shortages, you'd think it would be easy to get hired.

It's not.

Healthcare construction hiring managers are more selective than ever precisely because bad hires are so costly. Replacing senior leadership costs \$50,000-\$75,000 per position, and projects can't afford to onboard someone who won't deliver.

This guide reveals what healthcare construction hiring managers actually care about, beyond the résumé buzzwords.



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THE TOP 5 THINGS HIRING MANAGERS CARE ABOUT

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1. HEALTHCARE CONSTRUCTION EXPERIENCE (NOT JUST CONSTRUCTION EXPERIENCE)



What They're Thinking:

"Can this person handle the unique complexity of working in an occupied hospital?"

Healthcare construction is fundamentally different from commercial, industrial, or residential work. Hiring managers need confidence that you understand:

- Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) protocols and classifications
- Working in occupied facilities with minimal disruption to patient care
- Phased occupancy and continuous operations challenges
- Medical equipment coordination and integration requirements
- FGI Guidelines and healthcare-specific codes (NFPA 99, etc.)
- Complex life safety systems and redundancy requirements



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

- **Quantify your healthcare experience** on your résumé. Don't just say "Project Manager with 10 years experience." Say "Project Manager with 7 years focused on healthcare – delivered 12 occupied hospital renovations and 3 ground-up medical office buildings."
- **Name-drop healthcare systems** you've worked with. Baptist Health, Kaiser Permanente, Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic – these names signal credibility.
- **Be specific about project types:** inpatient towers, ambulatory surgery centers, cancer treatment centers, behavioral health facilities, medical office buildings. Each has unique requirements.

Don't oversell. If you've only done one medical office building, don't claim you're a "healthcare construction specialist." Hiring managers will see through it in the first technical question.

2. ABILITY TO DELIVER ON TIME AND BUDGET IN CHALLENGING CONDITIONS



What They're Thinking:

"Will this person keep my project from becoming a disaster?"

In 2026, with labor shortages creating 45% project delays and cost escalation hitting 6-8% annually, hiring managers are obsessed with delivery certainty.

THEY CARE ABOUT:

- Track record of on-time, on-budget delivery (especially in last 2-3 years)
- Experience with labor-constrained environments and creative solutions
- Ability to manage change orders professionally without constant firefighting
- Proactive problem-solving rather than reactive crisis management
- Experience with alternative delivery methods (JOC, progressive design-build, IPD)



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

- **Lead with outcomes, not responsibilities.** Instead of "Managed project schedules," say "Delivered \$45M hospital renovation 6 weeks ahead of schedule despite 15% labor shortage on skilled trades."
 - **Prepare specific examples** of how you've overcome labor challenges, supply chain disruptions, or client change requests without derailing project goals.
 - **Know your numbers.** Be ready to discuss: total project value, your budget vs. actual, schedule variance, change order percentages, safety record (TRIR), client satisfaction scores.
- Don't blame.** If a project went south, own your part and explain what you learned. Hiring managers respect accountability more than excuse-making.

3. TECHNOLOGY FLUENCY (NOT JUST EXPERIENCE)



What They're Thinking:

"Is this person going to slow us down or speed us up?"

Technology adoption is exploding in healthcare construction. BIM adoption exceeds 60% nationwide. Projects using BIM finish 20% faster and 15% cheaper.

AI-driven tools are becoming standard. Hiring managers need team members who can leverage technology to multiply productivity – critical when labor is scarce.

THEY CARE ABOUT:

- BIM proficiency (Revit, Navisworks, BIM 360)
- Digital project management tools (Procore, PlanGrid, Autodesk Construction Cloud)
- AI/data analytics experience (predictive scheduling, cost forecasting)
- Prefabrication coordination (digital workflows with factory partners)
- Willingness to learn new platforms quickly



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

- **List specific software/platforms** with proficiency levels. "Expert in Procore and Revit, intermediate in Navisworks, learning AI-driven scheduling tools."
 - **Give examples** of how technology improved outcomes. "Used BIM clash detection to identify 47 conflicts before construction, saving estimated \$125K in rework."
 - **Show continuous learning.** Mention recent certifications, online courses, or tech adoption initiatives you've led.
- Don't lie about tech skills.** If you've only used basic features of a platform, say so. Claiming expertise you don't have will be exposed quickly on the job.

4 . CULTURAL FIT AND COLLABORATION SKILLS



What They're Thinking:

"Will this person make my team better or create drama?"

Healthcare construction involves continuous coordination with:

- › Clinical staff (doctors, nurses, facilities managers)
- › Architects and engineers
- › Subcontractors and vendors
- › Hospital leadership and regulatory bodies
- › Patients and families (who are often nearby)

Hiring managers need collaborators, not cowboys. One difficult team member can torpedo a project's success.

THEY CARE ABOUT:

- › Emotional intelligence and ability to navigate sensitive situations
- › Communication skills (clear, concise, professional)
- › Conflict resolution abilities
- › Humility and teachability (especially critical in tight-knit teams)
- › Safety-first mindset (zero tolerance for shortcuts in healthcare settings)



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

- › **Prepare collaboration stories.** How did you resolve a conflict with a subcontractor? How did you handle a difficult owner request? How did you coordinate with clinical staff to minimize disruption?
- › **Show you understand healthcare's unique stakeholders.** Demonstrate empathy for patients, respect for medical professionals, understanding of operational constraints.
- › **Ask about team culture in interviews.** It shows you care about fit, not just paycheck.

Don't badmouth former employers, coworkers, or clients. Ever. It's the fastest way to disqualify yourself.

5. RETENTION LIKELIHOOD



What They're Thinking:
"How long will this person stay?"

With hiring taking 90+ days for senior roles and replacement costing \$50K-\$75K, hiring managers are terrified of people who'll leave after 12 months.

They're reading between the lines to assess:

- Job stability (frequent job-hopping is a red flag unless clearly explained)
- Geographic commitment (are you likely to relocate again soon?)
- Career trajectory alignment (does this role fit your long-term goals?)
- Compensation expectations (are they realistic for the role/market?)
- Personal circumstances (family roots, home ownership, community ties)



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU:

- **Explain your job history.** If you've had several short stints, provide context. "Project completion," "company closure," or "relocated for family" are acceptable. Serial job-hopping for 10-15% raises is not.
- **Show local commitment if relocating.** "My spouse just accepted a position here," or "We're buying a home in the area" signals stability.
- **Articulate your career goals** and how this role advances them. Hiring managers want to know you see this as a career move, not a stepping stone.
- **Be realistic about compensation.** Research market rates. Asking for 40% more than market value signals you'll leave as soon as you get a better offer.

Don't play games. If you're using the offer to negotiate elsewhere, be honest. Most hiring managers would rather know upfront than waste time and energy on someone who's not genuinely interested.



SECONDARY FACTORS (STILLIMPORTANT)

CERTIFICATIONS & CREDENTIALS

Certifications matter but aren't deal-breakers for experienced professionals:

HIGH VALUE:

- PMP (Project Management Professional)
- CCM (Certified Construction Manager)
- OSHA 30-Hour
- LEED AP (especially for green healthcare projects)
- EDAC (Evidence-Based Design Accreditation & Certification)

NICE TO HAVE:

- First Aid/CPR
- BIM certifications (Revit Professional, etc.)
- Six Sigma / Lean Construction

EDUCATION

REALITY CHECK:

Once you have 5+ years of healthcare construction experience, your degree matters far less than your track record.

A bachelor's in construction management or civil engineering is preferred but not required if you have proven results.

REFERENCES

Hiring managers will check references – especially for senior roles. Have 3-5 strong references ready:

- Former direct supervisors
- Project owners/clients you've worked with
- Peer project managers or superintendents

Make sure your references know you're job hunting and have briefed them on the types of roles you're pursuing.



COMMON MISTAKES THAT KILL YOUR CHANCES

RÉSUMÉ RED FLAGS

- Generic résumés not tailored to healthcare construction
- No quantifiable outcomes (just responsibilities listed)
- Typos or formatting issues (shows lack of attention to detail)
- Unexplained employment gaps
- Exaggerating titles or responsibilities (easily verified)

INTERVIEW RED FLAGS

- Can't explain healthcare-specific challenges you've solved
- Vague answers lacking specific details or numbers
- Negative attitude about former employers/projects
- Poor questions or no questions at all (shows lack of interest)
- Unprepared (didn't research the company, projects, or role)
- Unrealistic salary expectations without market research

CULTURAL RED FLAGS

- Ego or arrogance (especially claiming you know better than everyone)
- Inability to admit mistakes or discuss failures/lessons learned
- "Not my job" mentality (healthcare construction requires teamwork)
- Dismissive of safety protocols or regulatory requirements
- Resistance to technology or new methods



HOW TO STAND OUT (IN A GOOD WAY)

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

BEFORE ANY INTERVIEW:

- Research the company's recent healthcare projects
- Understand their project delivery approach
- Know their key markets and clients
- Review their values/mission
- Connect with current employees on LinkedIn

PREPARE SPECIFIC STORIES

USE THE STAR METHOD (SITUATION, TASK, ACTION, RESULT) FOR:

- Overcoming labor shortages on a project
- Managing a difficult stakeholder situation
- Delivering creative cost or schedule savings
- Preventing or resolving a safety incident
- Successfully implementing new technology

SHOW STRATEGIC THINKING

DON'T JUST TALK ABOUT "DOING THE WORK." DEMONSTRATE YOU UNDERSTAND:

- How projects fit into the owner's strategic goals
- Industry trends affecting healthcare construction
- The business side of construction (margins, risk, contracts)
- How to balance competing priorities (cost, schedule, quality, safety)

BE AUTHENTIC

The best candidate isn't the one with the perfect résumé – it's the one who's honest about strengths and weaknesses, shows genuine interest in the role, and demonstrates they'll be a reliable, collaborative team member who delivers results.



THE BOTTOM LINE

In 2026's labor-starved healthcare construction market, hiring managers need you as much as you need them. But they're looking for the right fit, not just a warm body.

FOCUS ON DEMONSTRATING:

1. **Real healthcare construction expertise**
2. **Proven ability to deliver despite challenges**
3. **Technology fluency and willingness to learn**
4. **Strong collaboration and communication skills**
5. **Likelihood you'll stick around**

Show up prepared, be honest, demonstrate value, and you'll stand out from the crowd