



SUMMARY REPORT
2005 Survey of Temporary Imaging Technologist Staffing Trends
Based on 2004 Data

Overview

Med Travelers is a national firm specializing in the temporary placement of diagnostic imaging professionals. These professionals include radiologic technologists, nuclear medicine technologists, computerized tomography (CT) technologists, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technologists, and technologists working in a variety of other diagnostic imaging modalities.

This report marks Med Travelers' fourth survey examining trends in diagnostic imaging technology staffing. The intent of the survey is to provide data regarding the current use of and demand for temporary diagnostic imaging technologists in multiple modalities. The survey also examines trends and opinions among hospital administrators and others who use temporary diagnostic imaging technology services and trends and opinions among technologists who work on a temporary basis.

Methodology

The 2005 survey is based on telephone interviews conducted with both health care professionals utilizing the services of temporary imaging technologists and telephone surveys of temporary imaging technologists themselves. In addition, the survey includes data regarding the temporary search assignments that Med Travelers conducted in calendar year 2004.

The survey is divided into three parts.

Part I of the survey examines trends among the users of temporary imaging technologist services – why they use temporary technologists, how they view the skill levels of temporary technologists and related topics.

Part II examines how temporary or “traveling” diagnostic imaging technologists view working on a temporary basis, why they choose to work as travelers, and related issues.

Part III is a review of the temporary diagnostic imaging technologist assignments Med Travelers conducted in calendar year 2004, showing which modalities are in the greatest demand and fill rates per state.

PART I – SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS USING TEMPORARY IMAGING TECHNOLOGISTS

Part I of Med Travelers' 2005 Survey of Temporary Imaging Technologist Staffing Trends includes responses to telephone interviews conducted with the users and/or purchasers of temporary imaging technologist services. The majority of those interviewed were hospital imaging department managers.

When Telephone Interviews Were Conducted

February 1, 2005 to April 30, 2005

Number of Surveys Completed

280

QUESTIONS ASKED AND RESPONSES RECEIVED

1. Are you currently looking for temporary (“traveling”) diagnostic imaging technologists to supplement your existing staff?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Yes	25%	N/A	N/A	N/A
No	75%	N/A	N/A	N/A

2. How difficult is it to find temporary imaging technologist coverage compared to last year?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Less difficult	25%	N/A	N/A	N/A
More difficult	16%	N/A	N/A	N/A
The same	59%	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. In a typical month, how many temporary imaging technologists do you use?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
0-3	93%	93%	N/A	N/A
4-6	4%	6%	N/A	N/A
7 or more	3%	1%	N/A	N/A

**4. Why do you or would you typically use a temporary imaging technologist?
(please select any of the following that apply)**

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Loss of staff	77%	83%	83%	N/A
Adding staff (new position)	19%	27%	12%	N/A
Vacation/continuing medical education	28%	1%	N/A	N/A
Increase in patient base	12%	9%	4%	N/A
Test marketing need	3%	1%	5%	N/A
Other	9%	12%	12%	N/A

5. What are the benefits of using temporary imaging technologists? (please select any that apply)

	2004	2003	2002	2001
No lost revenue	42%	39%	29%	N/A
Immediate availability	42%	46%	29%	N/A
Allows continual treatment of patients	67%	71%	56%	N/A
Prevents existing staff burnout	30%	43%	42%	N/A
Cost	3%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	10%	10%	10%	N/A

**6. What are the drawbacks of using temporary imaging technologists?
(please select any that apply)**

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Cost	82%	88%	79%	55%
Familiarity to department/practice	31%	13%	16%	18%
Learning equipment/procedures	26%	25%	12%	11%
Other	18%	8%	3%	4%

7. What is your perception of the skill level of temporary technologists?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Equal or superior to current staff	61%	67%	N/A	N/A
Adequate	36%	29%	N/A	N/A
Below average	3%	4%	N/A	N/A

8. How are temporary imaging technologists viewed by their colleagues at your facility or practice?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Accepted	82%	78%	64%	N/A
Not accepted	1%	22%	36%	N/A
Tolerated	17%	N/A	N/A	N/A

9. How are temporary imaging technologists viewed by administrators at your facility or practice?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Accepted	70%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Not accepted	6%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tolerated	23%	N/A	N/A	N/A

10. How are temporary imaging technologists viewed by physicians at your facility or practice?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Accepted	82%	86%	80%	N/A
Not accepted	1%	14%	20%	N/A
Tolerated	17%	N/A	N/A	N/A

11. How are temporary imaging technologists viewed by patients at your facility or practice?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Accepted	94%	93%	98%	N/A
Not accepted	2%	7%	2%	N/A
Tolerated	4%	N/A	N/A	N/A

12. When conducting a search for temporary imaging technologists, how many search firms do you generally work with?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
None	8%	6%	3%	N/A
One	20%	20%	16%	N/A
2-3	56%	60%	59%	N/A
4 or more	16%	14%	22%	N/A

13. What is the most important factor in selecting a firm?

	2004	2003*	2002	2001
Quality of candidate	44%	54%	62%	44%
Cost	11%	59%	44%	32%
Availability of candidate/promptness	18%	30%	44%	38%
Customer service	11%	20%	23%	30%
Malpractice insurance	0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Contract flexibility	2%	10%	3%	10%
Other	14%	2%	4%	2%

**Multiple responses possible in 2003, 2002, 2001*

14. Is the value of a temporary imaging technologist to your department or practice:

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Worth the cost	89%	87%	N/A	N/A
Not worth the cost	11%	13%	N/A	N/A

15. Compared to your staff technologists, temporary imaging technologists:

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Take more studies per day	5%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Take fewer studies per day	15%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Take the same number of studies per day	80%	N/A	N/A	N/A

Part I – Trends and Observations

Part I of the 2005 Survey of Temporary Imaging Technologist Staff Trends underscores current demand for temporary diagnostic imaging technologists as indicated by hospital imaging department managers. It also suggests how hospital imaging department managers view the skills and of temporary imaging technologists and their value to the imaging department.

One quarter (25%) of imaging department managers surveyed indicated they are currently looking for temporary (i.e., "traveling") diagnostic imaging technologists. Because this is the first time this question has been asked, there is no basis for a comparison to previous years. The 2005 Survey, however, suggests that one in four hospital imaging departments is seeking temporary technologists at any given time.

The great majority (93%) of those surveyed indicated that their imaging departments use between zero and 3 temporary imaging technologists during the course of a typical month, while 4% use between 4 to 6 temporary technologists and 3% use 7 or more temporary technologists during a typical month. Based on these responses, the Survey

indicates that the majority of hospitals use temporary imaging technologists on an ongoing basis.

Imaging department heads provided a somewhat mixed response when asked to compare how difficult it was to find temporary technologists in 2004 versus in 2003. Twenty-five percent of those surveyed indicated that it was less difficult to find temporary technologists in 2004 than it was the previous year, while 16% indicated it was more difficult. The majority (59%) indicated that the degree of difficulty had not changed. These responses suggest that the shortage of imaging technologists has eased somewhat, at least in certain regions, but that the challenges in imaging technologist staffing have not diminished overall for most facilities and have in fact increased for some.

When asked to indicate why they use temporary technologists, the majority of those surveyed (77%) cited "loss of staff" as a reason. This response reflects a high level of turnover with the imaging technology field. With multiple job opportunities available, imaging technologists are generally able to relocate without much difficulty. More technologists working on a permanent basis may be shifting to working on a temporary basis, leading to further loss of staff. In addition to reacting to loss of staff, 28% of imaging department heads indicated they use temporary technologists to provide coverage while permanent staff is on vacation/CME.

The majority of those surveyed (67%) indicated that one of the benefits of using temporary technologists is they allow for the continual treatment of patients. Other benefits cited included the prevention of lost revenue and the immediate availability of temporary staff. When asked about the drawbacks of using temporary technologists, 82% of providers cited "cost." However, the majority of those surveyed (89%) indicated that temporary providers are worth the cost.

The survey indicates that temporary technologists are generally accepted by colleagues, physicians, administrators and patients at their temporary assignments. In addition, the majority of those surveyed (61%) indicated that the skill level of temporary technologists is "equal or superior to" their current staff. Thirty-six percent described the skill level of temporary technologists as "adequate," while three percent described their skill level as "below average."

PART II – SURVEY OF TEMPORARY DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING TECHNOLOGISTS

Part II of Med Travelers' 2005 Survey of Diagnostic Imaging Technology Staffing Trends includes responses to telephone interviews conducted with technologists who work on a temporary or "traveling" basis.

When Telephone Surveys Were Conducted

February 1 through April 30, 2005

Number of Surveys Conducted

320

1. Years of Diagnostic Imaging Technologist Experience:

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Less than 1 year	4%	3%	3%	4%
1-5 years	26%	23%	23%	48%
6-10 years	28%	27%	28%	17%
11-20 years	22%	23%	26%	12%
21 or more years	20%	24%	20%	19%
10 or fewer years	58%	53%	54%	69%
11 or more years	42%	47%	46%	31%

2. How long have you worked as a traveler?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Less than 1 year	12%	13%	39%	N/A
1-3 years	54%	56%	42%	N/A
More than 3 years	34%	31%	19%	N/A

3. How long do you intend to work as a traveler?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Until finding a permanent position	4%	9%	4%	N/A
Less than 1 year	4%	5%	2%	N/A
1-3 years	36%	40%	36%	N/A
More than 3 years	56%	46%	58%	N/A

4. Are you currently in a permanent position?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Yes	4%	5%	5%	N/A
No	96%	95%	95%	N/A

5. Are you currently looking for a permanent position?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Yes	4%	12%	6%	N/A
No	96%	88%	94%	N/A

5. What are the benefits of working as a traveler? (please select any of the following that apply)

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Higher pay	69%	71%	68%	68%
Travel	44%	41%	35%	39%
Freedom/flexibility	35%	31%	35%	43%
Professional development	26%	30%	35%	43%
No politics	20%	23%	12%	5%
Other	8%	2%	N/A	N/A

6. What are the drawbacks of working as a traveler? (please select any of the following that apply)

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Away from home	53%	56%	47%	N/A
Uncertainty of assignments	37%	38%	18%	N/A
Lack of benefits	6%	8%	2%	N/A
Quality of assignments	24%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	12%	9%	20%	N/A

7. How many firms do you work with?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
None	2%	3%	3%	N/A
1	23%	14%	16%	N/A
2-3	45%	42%	57%	N/A
4 or more	30%	41%	24%	N/A

8. How do you select a firm? (please select any of the following that apply)

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Number of opportunities	56%	59%	57%	N/A
Location of opportunities	58%	57%	51%	23%
Pay rates	58%	56%	54%	90%
Good service	58%	55%	56%	N/A
Reputation	49%	43%	38%	39%
Malpractice	11%	11%	4%	8%
Other	10%	11%	4%	8%

9. How do you select an opportunity? (please select all of the following that apply).

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Location	69%	72%	70%	N/A
Pay rate	68%	69%	60%	N/A
Length of assignment	48%	40%	33%	N/A
Type/size of facility	25%	28%	18%	N/A
Patient load	10%	20%	9%	N/A
Available shifts	10%	7%	4%	N/A
Quality of equipment	12%	9%	4%	N/A

10. How far are you willing to travel?

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Nationwide	78%	77%	72%	N/A
Specific regions only	10%	11%	6%	N/A
Home region only	8%	9%	17%	N/A
Home state only	4%	3%	5%	N/A

11. As a traveler, are you:

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Accepted by colleagues	94%	93%	92%	N/A
Not accepted/tolerated	6%	7%	8%	N/A
Accepted by physicians	96%	96%	94%	N/A
Not accepted/tolerated	4%	4%	6%	N/A
Accepted by patients	98%	98%	99%	N/A
Not accepted/tolerated	2%	2%	1%	N/A

12. What value do you bring to a hiring facility? (please select any that apply)

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Maintain patient care	65%	61%	60%	N/A
Prevent staff burnout	40%	42%	39%	N/A
Generate revenue	11%	11%	16%	N/A
Add a specific skill	14%	9%	15%	N/A

Part II – Trends and Observations

Part II of the Survey Temporary Imaging Technologist Staffing Trends underscores several characteristics of diagnostic imaging technologists working on a temporary basis.

Temporary or traveling technologists surveyed do not fit into any one category in terms of their years of work experience. Of those surveyed, 26% have one to five years of technologist experience, 28% have 6-10 years, 22% have 11-20 years, and 20% have 21 or more years of experience. It appears that technologists from a variety of different experience levels are attracted to temporary practice.

The majority of those surveyed (54%) have between one and three years of experience working as travelers, 12% have less than one year of experience, and 34% have more than three years of experience. The survey reflects the fact that the traveling field is still relatively new and that most travelers have only been working on a temporary basis for a limited number of years.

However, the majority of those surveyed (56%) indicated that they intend to keep working as travelers for more than three years, suggesting that a significant number of technologists have made traveling their permanent mode of practice. Indeed, only eight percent indicated that intend to work as travelers for less than one year or until they find a permanent position.

Of travelers surveyed, only four percent indicated they currently are in a permanent position. The great majority (96%) are not “moonlighting” from permanent jobs but are working exclusively as travelers. Only 4% indicated that they currently are looking for permanent positions, while 96% indicated that they are not.

When asked about the benefits of working as travelers, 69% of those surveyed identified “higher pay” as a benefit. “Travel” was cited as a benefit by 44%, “freedom/flexibility,” by 35% and “professional development” by 26%.

Travelers must balance the lure of higher pay and the freedom of the road against the drawbacks of working temporary assignments. The majority of those surveyed (53%) cited being “away from home” as a drawback of traveling, 37% cited the “uncertainty of assignments,” and 24% cited the “quality of assignments” as a drawback.

In finding temporary search assignments, the majority of those surveyed (75%) use at least two temporary staffing agencies, while 30% use four or more. Twenty-three percent use only one staffing agency and two percent do not use an agency. When asked how they select a temporary opportunity, 69% of travelers surveyed cited the location of the opportunity, 68% cited pay rate and 48% cited the length of the assignment. The majority (78%) do not feel tied to any one geographic area and indicated they are willing to travel nationwide.

The great majority of travelers surveyed (94% or more) indicated they are accepted by colleagues, physicians and patients at their traveling assignments.

PART III

Part III of the 2005 Survey of Temporary Diagnostic Imaging Technologist Staffing Trends includes a review of the temporary technologist staffing assignments Med Travelers completed in calendar year 2004.

Total Staffing Assignments

1254

Number of Assignments Filled

983

Modalities of Staffing Assignments by Days Required

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Radiologic technologist	19%	21%	29%	38%
Nuclear medicine technologist	16%	20%	19%	17%
Ultrasound/vascular technologist	16%	11%	11%	11%
Ultrasound sonographer	9%	10%	6%	4%
MRI technologist	10%	6%	7%	2%
Echo cardiographer	10%	5%	3%	3%
Interventional technologist	10%	4%	1%	3%
CT technologist	7%	8%	16%	13%
Mammographer	3%	9%	4%	2%

Fill Rate by Modality

	2004	2003	2002	2001
Mammographer	80%	89%	75%	N/A
Ultrasound/vascular technologist	76%	70%	45%	N/A
Radiologist technologist	75%	86%	62%	N/A
Nuclear medicine technologist	74%	78%	65%	N/A
CT technologist	73%	67%	58%	N/A
Ultrasound technologist	73%	77%	48%	N/A
MRI technologist	72%	83%	71%	N/A
Interventional technologist	71%	68%	38%	N/A
Echo cardiographer	67%	84%	72%	N/A

Part III -- Trends and Observations

Part III of the Survey indicates current demand for temporary imaging technologists by modality, as reflected by the type of staffing assignments Med Travelers conducted in 2004. In an ongoing trend, the 2005 Survey indicates that the demand for radiologic technologists (RTs) continues to drop relative to other imaging modalities.

Whereas 38% of Med Travelers' staffing assignments were for radiologic technologists in 2001, only 19% of its assignments were for RT's in 2004. By contrast, assignments for modalities such as ultrasound/vascular technology, MRI, and Interventional Technologists have increased. Staffing assignments for Interventional Technologists represented only 3% of Med Travelers' total assignments in 2001, but 10% in 2004. Assignments for MRI technologists represented only 1% of the total in 2001 but 10% in 2004, while assignments for echo cardiographers represented only 3% of the total in 2001 but 10% in 2004.

These assignments reflect the growing use of a broad range of imaging modalities with an increasing number of applications beyond that of standard x-rays. It should be noted, however, that RTs still represent Med Travelers' number one staffing assignment. The use of plain film (x-rays) does not appear to have abated in recent years, but it has been supplemented by a growing number of imaging modalities that are being used with increasing frequency.

Fill rates by specialty assignment (i.e., the percentage of assignments for which temporary technologists were found) were generally consistent in 2004, typically ranging from 71% to 76%. The most challenging modality to fill in 2004 was echo cardiographer, with a fill rate of 67%. Demand for cardiology services is increasing across the board in response to population aging, obesity, and related factors, spiking demand for echo cardiographers, of which there is a relatively limited supply.

Similar supply and demand trends have increased the difficulty of filling assignments in MRI, Nuclear Medicine, and even RT (plain film.) Fill rates in RT, for example, decreased from 86% in 2003 to 75% in 2004, further underscoring the fact that demand for RTs remains strong even though the relative number of RT staffing assignments Med Travelers conducts is declining.

However, it should be noted that fill rates in 2004 were generally higher in most modalities than they were in 2002. For example, the fill rate in Interventional Technologists was only 38% in 2002 but increased to 71% in 2004. These numbers reflect the fact that the severe nationwide shortage of imaging technologists that was prevalent several years ago has abated somewhat. While temporary imaging technologists remain in great demand and are still challenging to find, the shortage is not as profound as it was 24 to 36 months ago.

For additional information about this survey or about Med Travelers, please contact:



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