



The High-Value Doctor Shift

Inside the Minds of 1,000 Doctors Making the Leap from Medicine to Industry



medicfootprints.org

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Introduction

An increasing number of doctors have been exploring opportunities in different industries, ranging from health technology and pharmaceuticals to consulting and entrepreneurship. This educational white paper aims to present key findings from a recent survey of doctors considering or beginning a move into new industry careers.

It is designed for two primary audiences: (1) doctors early in their journey or contemplating a transition into industry and (2) companies interested in hiring or working with doctors in non-traditional roles. By understanding these insights, doctors can better prepare for industry roles, and companies can better support and leverage the unique skills doctors bring to the table.

Key Insights from the Data

- ▶ **Many doctors feel “stuck” at the start:** The majority of respondents (65%) described themselves as ‘stuck and unclear’ about their industry career path. Few have made significant progress, highlighting a widespread lack of direction early on.
- ▶ **High urgency to make a move:** There is a strong sense of urgency among doctors to transition. Seventy-six per cent want to make their industry career move within the next three months or sooner, with 34% saying they wish they could have made the move ‘yesterday’. This indicates that many doctors are eager for rapid change.





About Dr. Abeyna Jones

Dr Abeyna Jones is a physician, entrepreneur, and community leader recognised internationally for redefining what doctors can achieve beyond the clinic. She is the founder of Medic Footprints, a global platform with a reach of more than 100,000 doctors, and the creator of Doctors in Industry, a flagship programme empowering doctors to build six- and seven-figure careers in leadership, consulting, and entrepreneurship.

Abeyna has been featured in the Financial Times, The Times, BusinessCloud, and Sifted, is a finalist for the Black British Business Awards, and has served as a Health Tech Awards judge for five consecutive years.

Her next flagship project is an immersive event designed to create practical opportunities to develop health leaders from the inside out, addressing a major gap in diversity and leadership within healthcare.





- ▶ **Goals vary, but many are undecided:** When asked about their current career goal, 42% aimed to land a high-value non-clinical role (such as in a company), and 25% were focused on launching or growing a consulting/advisory income. However, nearly one-third (30%) admitted they are 'not sure yet' about their goal. This underscores that a significant number of doctors are still exploring their options and could benefit from clarity.
- ▶ **Strong willingness to take action and invest:** Most doctors are not passively daydreaming – 75% said 'Yes, this is the time' to take action towards their career move. Additionally, 64% indicated they are ready to invest in themselves to make the transition happen, with another 33% 'considering it'. This willingness to invest time, effort or money in career development reflects a committed mindset.
- ▶ **Structured support is in high demand:** Over half of respondents (57%) selected a 'roadmap or structured plan' as the kind of support they would value most at this stage, far above other forms of support. Another 33% prioritised 'high-touch mentoring/coaching', while a small fraction chose community support or other resources. Clearly, doctors crave guidance that provides clear steps or mentorship for navigating their career change.
- ▶ **Many have not started the transition yet:** Despite the enthusiasm, over half of the surveyed doctors (51%) confessed they have not yet started trying to move into an industry role. Among those who had started, a large portion (38% of all respondents) said 'Yes, and I need help', whereas only about 11% had started and not indicated needing help. This means the vast majority either have not begun or are in very early stages and looking for assistance.
- ▶ **Flexibility and new work models matter:** An overwhelming 94% of doctors are actively seeking out flexible ways of working that suit their lifestyle. In line with this, when considering the type of work arrangement they would prefer, most opted for hybrid models (54% want a mix of employed and self-employed work) over traditional employment alone. This highlights a desire for better work-life balance and autonomy in their future careers.

These key insights set the stage for the deeper analysis in the following sections. Doctors are eager yet uncertain, motivated yet in need of guidance, and these dynamics have important implications for both the individuals and the organisations looking to hire them.



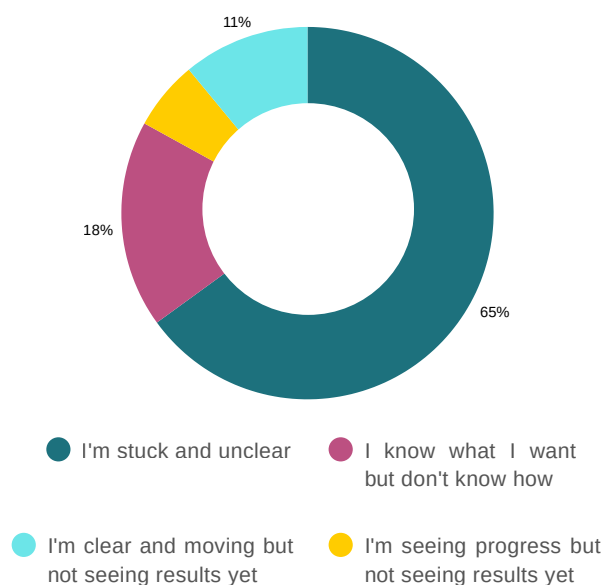


Challenges Doctors Face

Transitioning from clinical practice to an industry career is not without its hurdles. The survey data sheds light on several key challenges doctors face in this journey, spanning from personal clarity to skills and support gaps:

Lack of clarity and direction: A major challenge is simply not knowing where to start or where to go. Sixty-five per cent of doctors reported feeling stuck and unclear about how to progress in their industry career.

Chart 1: How would you describe where you're at right now with your industry career?



In fact, only 25% know exactly what they want to do in an industry role. This lack of clarity extends to end goals as well; about 30% are still unsure what their ultimate career goal is (Table 3). Uncertainty about path and goals can stall progress and dampen confidence.

Chart 8: Do you know exactly what you want to do in industry?

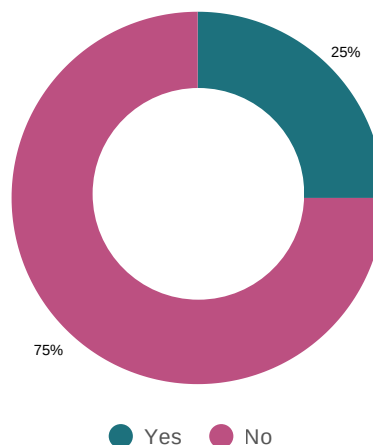
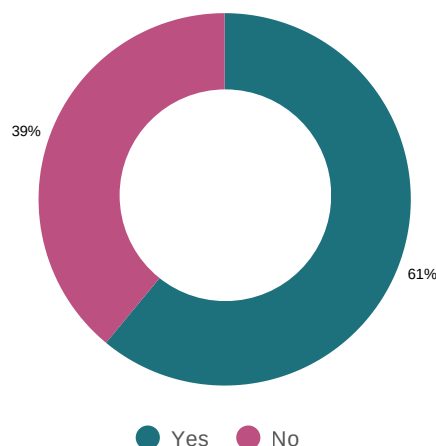


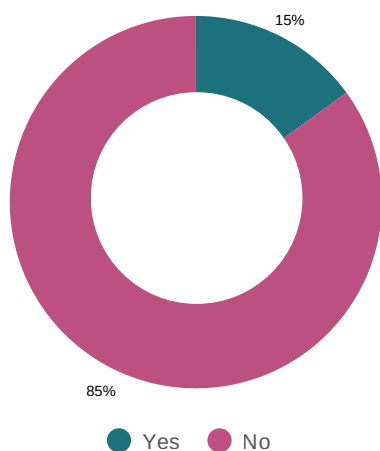


Chart 9: Can you describe the value you offer companies in industry beyond simply being a doctor?



Translating skills to industry: Many doctors struggle to articulate their value outside clinical roles. The survey found 61% cannot clearly describe the unique value they offer to a company beyond simply 'I'm a doctor'.

Chart 15: Do you have a strong online presence showcasing your expertise/the value you offer?



Additionally, the vast majority have not established a personal brand or visibility in professional circles; 85% do not have a strong online presence showcasing their expertise or value. These factors make it challenging for doctors to market themselves effectively for industry opportunities.





Chart 18: Do you have any practical non-clinical experience working in a business or in entrepreneurship?

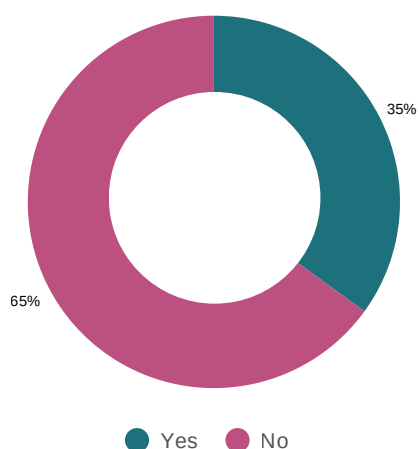


Chart 19: Are you familiar with financial literacy including forecasts, balance sheets and/or profit & loss statements?

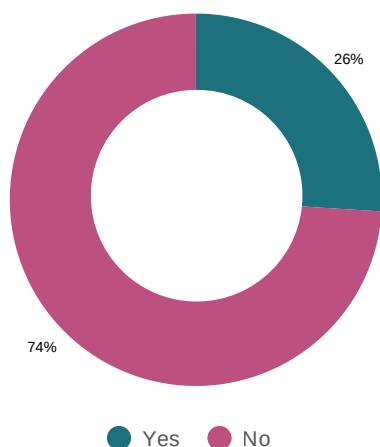
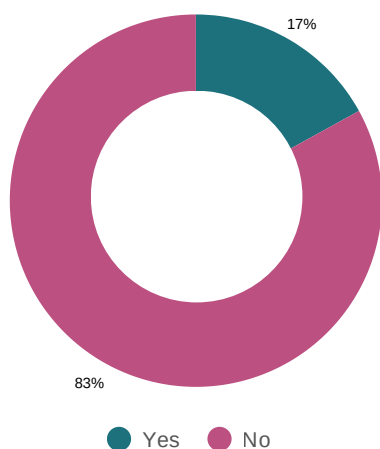


Chart 14: Do you have 24/7 access to a supportive likeminded community of doctors moving to industry, where you can also tap into new emerging opportunities?



Limited experience and business acumen:

Most doctors are coming from a purely clinical background, often with little exposure to the business or corporate world. According to the survey, 65% have no practical non-clinical experience (such as working in a business or start-up) Furthermore, 74% are not familiar with financial literacy basics like reading balance sheets, profit-and-loss statements or financial forecasts. This skills gap means many doctors feel unprepared for the commercial aspects of industry roles, such as understanding business metrics, financial decision-making or product strategy.

Lack of support network: Another commonly cited challenge is isolation in the journey. A striking 83% of respondents said they do not have 24/7 access to a supportive community of like-minded doctors who are also moving into industry. Without a peer network, doctors lack avenues to share experiences, get advice, learn about opportunities informally, or simply find encouragement from others who understand their situation.





Mindset and confidence hurdles: The psychological aspect of career change is significant. Over half of the doctors (53%) acknowledged holding negative narratives that hinder their progress; for example, beliefs like ‘I’m too busy to make this change’, ‘I’ll have to take a huge pay cut’ or ‘I’m not an expert in anything outside medicine’. Such limiting beliefs can create self-doubt or procrastination.

Chart 13: Do you hold any negative narratives holding you back from achieving your goals? e.g. "I'm too busy", "I should take a drop in salary/income", "I'm not an expert in anything"

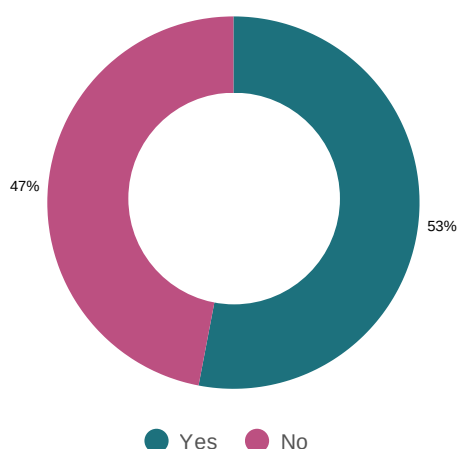
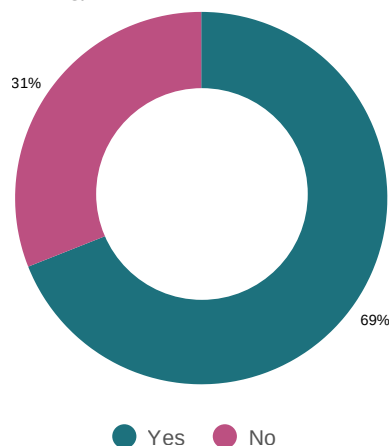


Chart 17: Are you comfortable in selling yourself organically? (e.g. conversations, interviews, online, offline, networking)



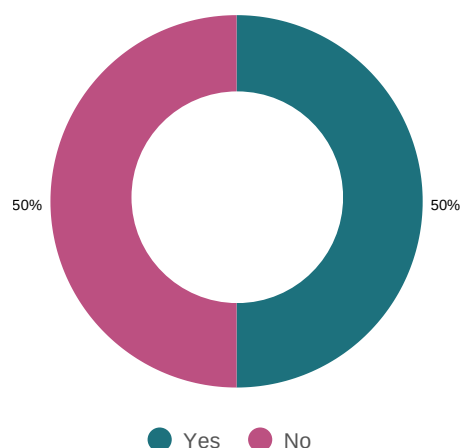
Additionally, about one-third (34%) are not comfortable selling themselves – meaning they feel uneasy with self-promotion in settings like conversations, interviews or networking events. This lack of confidence in personal marketing can impede doctors from effectively pursuing roles or negotiating opportunities.





Burnout and well-being factors: It is important to note that for many doctors, the drive to leave clinical practice is tied to burnout or personal well-being. Exactly 50% of respondents indicated they are changing careers primarily due to burnout, stress or mental health crises related to their current work. Burnout can be a double-edged sword in this transition: on one hand, it provides strong motivation to seek a better work environment (one with more balance or fulfilment), but on the other hand, burned-out individuals may have depleted energy and need recovery time. This creates a challenge in pacing the transition; finding an industry role that alleviates burnout without requiring an unsustainable effort to attain it. Companies should also be mindful of this context, as it underscores the importance of healthy work cultures and support for doctors coming from high-stress clinical jobs.

Chart 20: Are you changing careers mainly due to burnout/stress/mental health crises related to work?



In summary, doctors early in their industry transition face a combination of knowledge gaps, skills gaps, network gaps and mindset obstacles. They are often highly accomplished in medicine but effectively starting over in a new domain where the rules, expectations and measures of success differ. Recognising these challenges is the first step to addressing them; which we explore in later sections on the support doctors need and what companies can do to help.





Why Companies Should Value Doctors

From a company's perspective, hiring a doctor might seem non-traditional for roles outside patient care. However, doctors bring unique strengths and perspectives that can be incredibly valuable in industry settings. The survey results and common observations highlight several reasons why companies should actively consider doctors for roles in sectors such as healthcare technology, consulting, pharmaceuticals, policy and beyond:

Leadership and growth mindset: 77% identify as leaders, with experience guiding teams and making critical decisions. 93% have a growth mindset, making them adaptable, eager learners who quickly acquire new skills.

Chart 11: Do you identify as a leader?

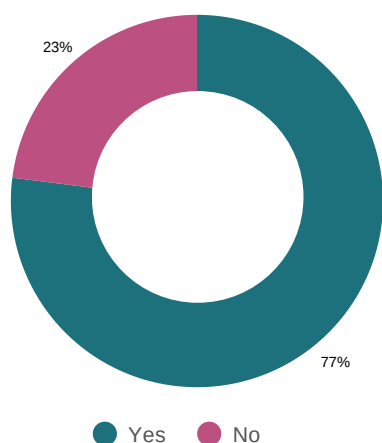
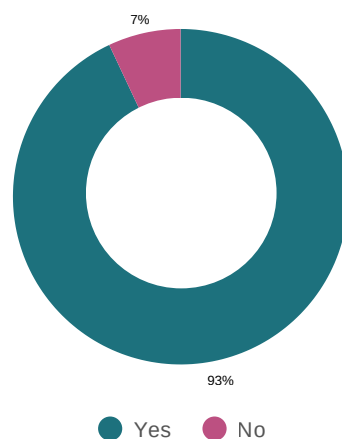


Chart 12: Do you have a growth mindset when it comes to exploring new career opportunities in the industry?



Problem-solving and work ethic: Trained to diagnose complex problems under pressure, doctors excel in critical thinking and systematic analysis. Their resilience and endurance from years of demanding training make them well-suited for high-pressure corporate environments.

Communication and teamwork: Skilled at explaining complex concepts clearly, showing empathy, and working in multidisciplinary teams, doctors thrive in roles requiring stakeholder engagement, client interaction, and collaborative leadership.

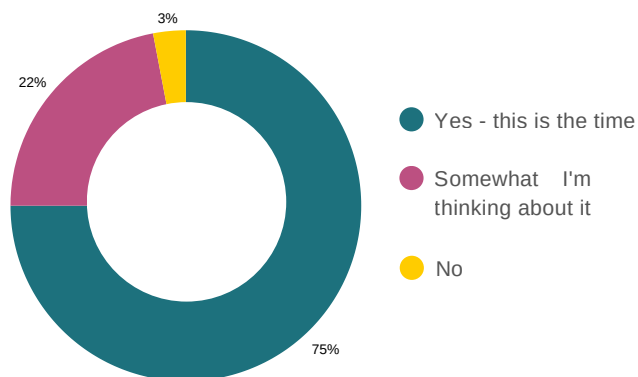




Motivation and adaptability: 75% are ready to act on a career change, and 64% are willing to invest in their development. Many are already upskilling, networking, and adapting to new professional demands.

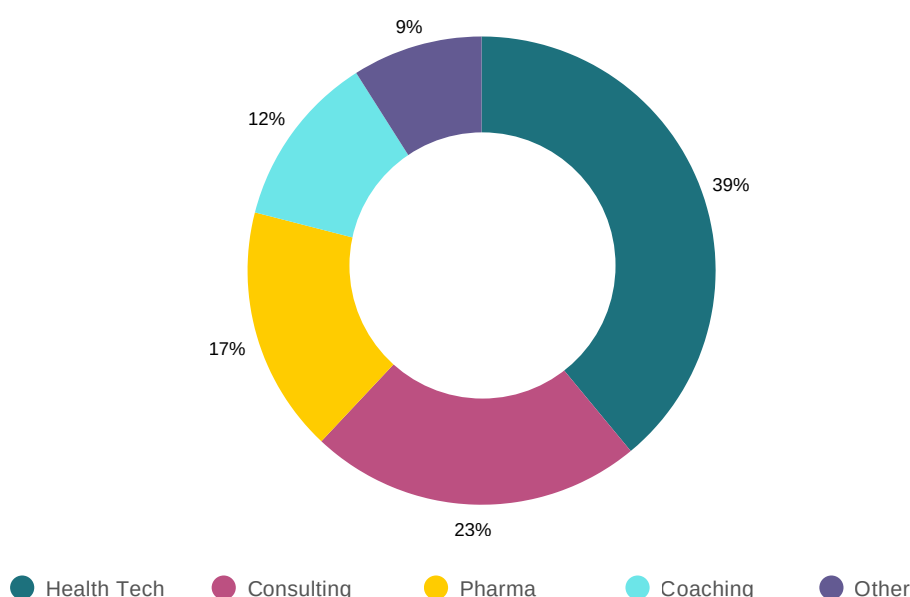
Ethics and mission-driven mindset: Guided by strong ethical principles, doctors prioritise end-user well-being. This patient-centric approach aligns business goals with positive societal outcomes and strengthens organisational integrity.

Chart 5: Are you ready to take action towards your career move?



Industry alignment: Top sectors of interest—health tech (39%), consulting (23%), and pharma (17%)—closely match where their skills add most value. This alignment ensures high engagement and genuine commitment to their chosen industry.

Chart 23: Which industries are you most interested in diving into?

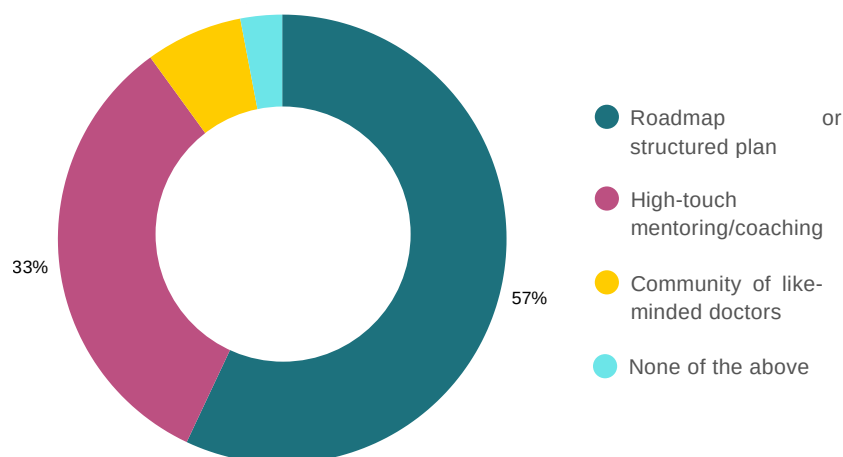




Support Doctors Need to Succeed

Survey data shows that while doctors bring valuable strengths, they also face transition hurdles. The most impactful support includes:

Chart 4: What kind of support would you value most right now?



- ▶ **Clear Career Roadmaps:** 57% want a structured plan for transition, including role exploration, timelines, networking, and skills development.
- ▶ **Mentorship & Coaching:** 33% value one-to-one or small group guidance from mentors who understand both clinical and corporate worlds.
- ▶ **Peer Community & Networking:** Despite only 6% listing it as a top need, 83% lack a likeminded community. Peer groups, events, and networking hubs can combat isolation and open opportunities.
- ▶ **Real-World Experience:** With 65% lacking non-clinical experience, internships, project work, or fellowships can build credibility and test-fit industry roles.
- ▶ **Business & Skill Training:** Gaps in finance, strategy, tech, and self-promotion are common—74% aren't familiar with financial statements, 85% lack a strong online profile. Tailored courses and onboarding support can bridge these.
- ▶ **Mindset Coaching:** 53% face negative narratives like impostor syndrome. Coaching can build confidence, reframe limiting beliefs, and address burnout.
- ▶ **Flexible Pathways:** 94% want lifestyle-friendly flexibility. Part-time roles, hybrid careers, or project-based work can ease transitions and improve retention.





What the Data Says About Readiness

Survey data shows doctors are highly motivated but often underprepared for industry roles.

- ▶ **Strong Motivation & Urgency:** 75% say “this is the time” to act, with 76% aiming to move within 3 months (34% wish it happened “yesterday”).
- ▶ **Willingness to Invest:** 64% are ready to invest time, money, or effort, and over 60% rate career acceleration programmes as highly important.
- ▶ **Leadership & Mindset Strength:** 93% have a growth mindset; 77% see themselves as leaders, indicating confidence and adaptability.
- ▶ **Early-Stage Progress:** 51% haven’t started concrete steps, and 38% of those who have need help; only ~10% feel on track.
- ▶ **Clarity Gaps:** Just 25% know exactly what role they want, and only 39% can articulate their value beyond being a doctor.
- ▶ **Experience & Skills Deficit:** Only 35% have non-clinical experience; 26% are financially literate, indicating a need for upskilling.
- ▶ **Networking Willingness but Weak Base:** 81% prefer networking over job boards, yet 83% lack a professional community.
- ▶ **New to the Process:** 56% have been exploring industry careers for a month or less; most are still in early exploration.

Future Outlook

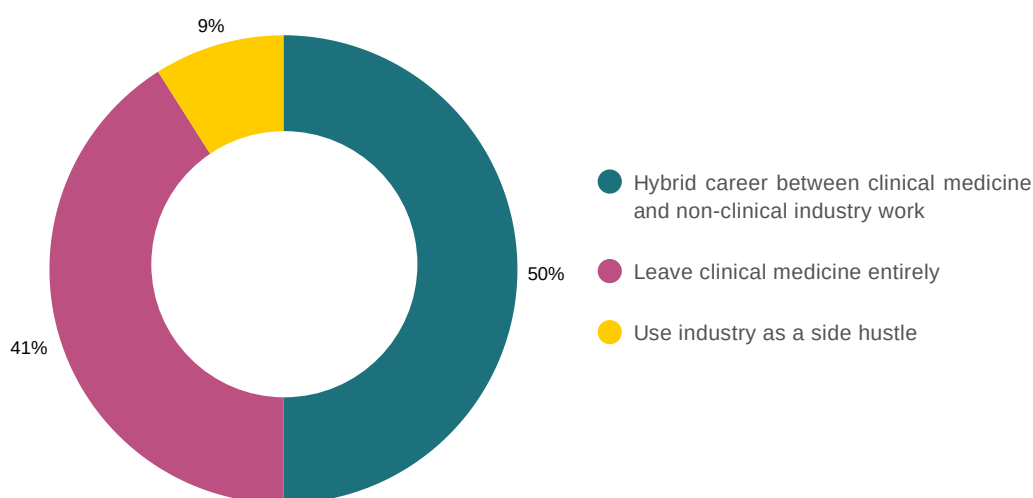
Looking ahead, what do these trends and insights suggest about the future of doctors in industry and the implications for healthcare and business? The survey data provides clues not only about the present state but also where things are headed. Here are several forward-looking observations and predictions based on the data:





Hybrid careers as the new normal: The traditional notion that a doctor must choose either a full-time clinical career or leave medicine entirely is fading. Half of the surveyed doctors envisage a hybrid career, mixing clinical practice with a non-clinical industry role. Another 41% plan to leave clinical medicine entirely to pursue industry work, while a small minority (9%) see industry as a side project or ‘side hustle’. This means in the coming years we will likely see more physicians splitting time between patient care and roles in technology companies, start-ups, consulting firms, or other businesses. For the healthcare system, this hybrid model could retain some of doctors’ clinical contributions (perhaps in a part-time capacity) while also allowing them to innovate outside the system. For companies, it means many hires may wish to keep one foot in medicine; savvy employers might accommodate or even encourage this, as it keeps the doctor’s clinical insights fresh.

Chart 25: What are your future plans for your career in industry?



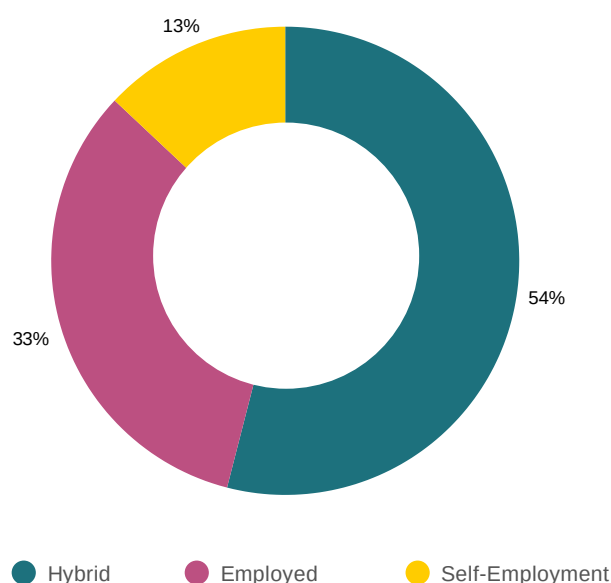
Growing interest in health tech, consulting, and pharma: When asked which industries interest them most, doctors’ top choices were health technology (39%), consulting (23%), and pharmaceuticals (17%). These sectors are poised to receive an influx of physician talent. Health tech (including digital health, medical devices, AI in healthcare, etc.) is particularly attractive to doctors, likely because it aligns with their desire to solve healthcare problems at scale and use innovation to improve care. We can expect to see more doctors founding or joining health tech start-ups, leading clinical innovation teams, or taking roles such as chief medical officer in technology companies. Consulting is also a popular path – doctors joining consulting firms (or starting independent consultancies) to advise on healthcare business strategy, policy, or operations. Pharma and biotech interest indicates a pipeline of future medical advisers, medical science liaisons, clinical trial designers, or drug development experts coming from the clinical realm.





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Chart 22: What type of work arrangement would you prefer?



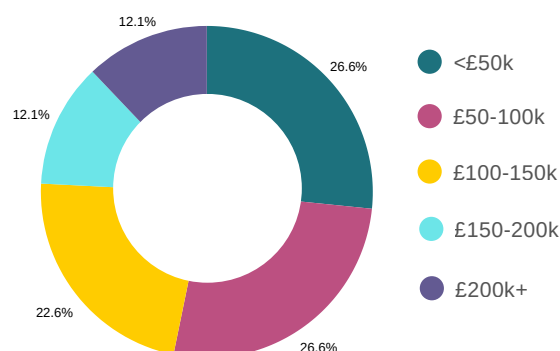
Flexibility will be a defining feature: The desire for flexible work arrangements (94% seeking lifestyle-friendly flexibility) is likely not a temporary whim but a lasting 12 expectation. Doctors entering industry will gravitate towards companies that offer remote work options, adjustable schedules, project-based roles, or outcomes-based performance (rather than strict 9-to-5, office-based jobs). Additionally, since 54% expressed a preference for a hybrid work arrangement (combining employment and selfemployment) and only one-third want a standard employed position, businesses may need to rethink traditional employment structures. We might see more doctors working as consultants or contractors rather than employees, negotiating four-day work weeks, or splitting roles between two organisations. Companies that accommodate these models could have a competitive edge in recruiting physician talent. From a future-of-work perspective, doctors could be at the forefront of a broader shift towards flexible careers, as their case exemplifies highly skilled professionals opting out of conventional full-time employment for more control over their time.





Higher compensation expectations: The survey data on expected income suggests that doctors moving to industry anticipate (and likely require) substantial compensation, often in the six-figure range. Only 9% would be satisfied with an industry income below £50,000 per year. The majority are looking at £50–100k (33%) or £100–150k (28%) as a suitable annual income within 12 months of moving, if that were their only income. Notably, another 30% are aiming for above £150k, with 15% of those even expecting £200k or more.

Chart 26: What's your ideal annual income from your industry work in 12 months, if it were your ONLY income? (Trust your instinct)



These expectations likely reflect their current earnings (experienced physicians, especially in certain countries and specialties, may already earn in the high five or six figures) and the investment they have made in their training. The future outlook is that industry roles will need to be financially competitive to attract doctors, particularly if those doctors are giving up clinical practice entirely. Companies may respond by creating roles that justify these salaries, or by highlighting total compensation including bonuses, equity, and benefits to meet expectations. Alternatively, some physicians may pursue multiple income streams (hence the interest in hybrid work) to reach their target earnings. In any case, the era of doctors taking a huge pay cut to leave medicine might be waning; future doctors in industry will seek both intellectual fulfilment and financial reward.

Rise of formal transition programmes and partnerships: Given that so many doctors value roadmaps and are willing to invest in career acceleration programmes, we can expect a rise in the availability and enrolment of formal programmes to facilitate physician transitions. This could include mini



Impact on healthcare and industry innovation: In the long term, a greater interchange of talent between medicine and industry can have profound positive effects. As more physicians enter fields such as technology, policy, and business, we can expect healthcare innovations to better address real clinical needs. Products and services might be more user-centric, more evidence-based, and more aligned with patient outcomes, because insiders with clinical knowledge are part of the design and decision-making process. Conversely, some of these doctors might return to clinical roles later with enhanced skills (in management, technology, etc.), potentially driving change within healthcare systems. We might see a new generation of physician-executives and leaders who comfortably straddle both worlds, catalysing collaborations between healthcare delivery and industry innovation. This cross-pollination could accelerate advances in areas such as digital health, AI in medicine, personalised medicine, and healthcare policy reform. For society at large, the benefit is a healthcare industry that is more integrated with the people it serves (patients and providers), thanks to the fluid career movement of doctors.

In conclusion, the future looks bright for doctors forging industry careers. They are entrepreneurial in spirit, value-driven, and bring a wealth of expertise that can transform industries. Companies and health systems that recognise these trends early will be best positioned to attract and retain this unique talent pool. The transition of doctors to industry is not just a passing trend; it appears to be part of a larger evolution in both medical careers and how industries leverage specialist knowledge. By embracing flexibility, providing support, and fostering environments where physician professionals can thrive, we can look forward to a future where doctors in industry are commonplace; driving innovation at the intersection of health and business.





About Us

Medic Footprints is a doctor-led careers platform dedicated to empowering physicians to explore and excel in diverse careers beyond traditional clinical practice. We are on a mission to connect 1 million doctors with the best alternative and industry career opportunities by 2030, dramatically elevating healthcare outcomes through the infusion of clinical insight into other sectors. Founded by doctors, for doctors, our organisation understands the unique strengths and challenges that medical professionals bring when branching into new fields.

Through our community of over 120,000 doctors worldwide, we offer resources and programmes that guide and support career transitions. This includes specialised training (such as the Doctors in Industry career accelerator programme), one-to-one career coaching and mentorship, networking events, and an online hub of job opportunities and peer support. We provide doctors with the roadmaps, mentorship, and community they need to succeed in roles ranging from health tech and consulting to pharmaceuticals, policy, and entrepreneurship – many of the areas highlighted in this white paper.

For companies, Medic Footprints serves as a bridge to exceptional talent. We partner with forward-thinking businesses and start-ups to help them engage and recruit doctors for nonclinical roles where their expertise can make a difference. Whether you're looking for a medical adviser, a clinician consultant, a health tech innovator, or a physician leader, our platform connects you to physicians who are not only qualified but also passionate about contributing to industry.

We believe that integrating physician talent into multidisciplinary teams leads to more innovative, effective solutions and ultimately benefits both business outcomes and societal health. Contact us or visit our website to learn more about how we can support you. If you are a doctor considering an industry move, we invite you to join our community, tap into our resources, and take the next step in your career with confidence. If you are an organisation, discover how partnering with us and our network of doctors can give you a competitive edge and a wealth of insight in tackling healthcare's biggest challenges.

