

## Alternative Careers, Like Basketball, Need Assertiveness and Flexibility

Doctors immigrating to Canada face challenges, yet Jerome Cañete, a physician from the Philippines, has found an alternative career with a modern, Internet dimension.

Getting that position took some pivoting. He had to be flexible. Luckily, Cañete has been on a basketball court a few times and now is a volunteer coach for his daughter's team. He has been comfortable moving around and taking more than one shot.

### Welcome to British Columbia!

If you see Jerome Cañete and his family in a restaurant on May 13, it's because they are marking the day in 2010 when they arrived in British Columbia. Every year, they do something special, usually dinner out.

Cañete's success story displays healthy assertiveness. He and his partner, also a doctor, both started job searching soon after arriving. Their plan was seeing who could get a job that would best sustain the family first. Once that was done, the other would study for medical exams and re-qualify as a physician.



*The Cañete family enjoys a sunny day in the Metro Vancouver area.*

With his experience in management for the second-largest health benefits provider in the Philippines, Cañete applied for similar positions with local health organizations. But he had no success. "I got zero responses from them," he reflected, "I was very disappointed."

*Cañete: 0*

### Job Search Strategy

He bounced back, widening his search and began to apply for writing and editing work in health. Soon, he found the data steward position that was his first break in September of 2010. He rewrote his resume, highlighting his experience posting clinical content to a similar site and got an interview.

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Hiring a doctor as a data steward must have seemed like a risk. Would he be happy in the position? Would the work interest him long term? Cañete convinced the interviewers the position would benefit him as much as he would benefit the organization.

“This is a good opportunity for me to understand the health care system,” he recalled saying. Whatever arguments he made, he was one of four people hired and the only one trained as a doctor. He began his work, five months after arriving, in the job that had been advertised on the Internet. His first tasks included cold calling clinics to confirm their information for an online directory.

Almost two years passed. During this time, Cañete’s partner left the office assistance job she’d found five months after arrival and began studying for medical exams. Meanwhile, the doctor-turned-website writer heard of a new position: Professional Specialist, Clinical Innovation. He applied, got it and began slightly different work. He was still writing, but now engaging more with stakeholders and health care partners as far away as Ontario and Quebec.

That position led to another opportunity a year later when he was transferred to leading a new clinical team, the position where he currently works. Here, he gained supervisory duties: three nurses on his team review content to ensure it meets B.C. standards.

“I’m quite happy with my position,” he says, “There are a lot of projects where I’m involved.”

*Cañete: 3*

### **Considering Certification**

In 2013, another educational goal called to Cañete: a Master’s degree in Health Information Science. Getting acceptance into this program also required assertiveness. His high grades from his previous education had been misinterpreted as significantly lower. He had to explain why the grades were wrong and why he should be allowed to enter. The professional communicator succeeded and studied until 2015, when he decided to take a break and re-consider his future career direction. The basketball coach needed a little time on the bench.

*Cañete: Time out*

### **The Future**

In medical school, Cañete would not have imagined leaving his highly-respected profession. Yet, he surrendered that status when he moved to Canada. It has taken some time, but he is at peace. “I am thankful and happy,” he says.

What will be Cañete’s next career move? He’s not sure. He enjoys the leadership courses at his workplace. His wife is close to becoming licenced as a doctor, so that could free him up to study for his own medical exams. At the time of his interview, Cañete was still considering his options.

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Meanwhile, he has parenting work: driving his two children to their dance, music and taekwondo lessons. Of course, he also coaches his daughter's basketball team. It's an important opportunity to show assertiveness in action, to shoot, to score, to achieve success. To see the goal and keep moving forward. To pivot into an alternative direction if necessary.

*Cañete: leading in the first quarter*

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