

Using a Resourcing Engine in a Functional Service Provider (FSP) Model to Meet Clinical Research Workforce Demands: A Strategic Solution for Talent Delivery

Morgan Seaman

Associate Director, Functional Service Solutions, Advanced Clinical

Audrey Oyer

Program Manager, Functional Service Solutions, Advanced Clinical





Introduction

Economic uncertainty is shaping supply and demand for Sponsors and the talent pool within the clinical research industry.¹ Within the clinical research industry, staffing shortages remain. The shrinking pool of qualified clinical research professionals has resulted in a fierce “war for talent,” with intense competition for staff and unsustainable levels of turnover.² Demand is forecasted to continue rising, with the U.S. job market for clinical research coordinators projected to grow by 9.9% between 2016 and 2026.³ The clinical research workforce crisis is global and increasing steadily.⁴ For example, the clinical trial management professions in the UK and Italy are experiencing this crisis in both recruitment and retention.^{5 6}

In the pharmaceutical industry, however, job cuts are rising sharply, adding to uncertainty. For example, from January to April 2022, there were some 797 industry job cuts, compared with 4,368 job cuts in the same period in 2023 – a 448% year-on-year increase.⁷

In this context, Sponsors can minimize resourcing disruption through expert strategic resourcing supported by data-driven decision-making. By partnering with an organization that has proven expertise in clinical research and deep access to a talent pool, sponsors optimize return on investment while retaining the best available talent.⁸

An FSP Recruitment Engine for Talent Delivery

Resource delivery is central to providing fit-for-purpose FSP models. Sponsors should consider seeking partners that offer a truly modern recruitment and retention engine supported by **people, technology and processes**. This engine is proactive, strategic, and completely customized to the needs of the Sponsor.

“By partnering with an organization that has proven expertise in clinical research and deep access to a talent pool, sponsors optimize return on investment while retaining the best available talent.”



People and Technology

The FSP recruitment engine should offer the Sponsor access to an extensive database of global clinical research professionals. This talent pool should consist of a diverse blend of existing employees, known for their excellent job performance, and potential candidates vetted for technical and behavioral job requirements. Equally important is the experience and focus of the recruitment team.

High-performing recruiters will have at least 5-10 years of global sourcing and recruiting experience *specifically in the clinical research industry*. They will have established candidate relationships and robust referral networks. This recruiting specialization allows them to have a continuous talent pipeline because they fully understand the unique skill sets required for clinical research positions.



In addition, FSP recruiters will be supported by modern recruiting technology like AI algorithms to match candidates to jobs, machine learning to predict candidate success, and the integration of other HR tools, social media platforms, and job boards that provide a comprehensive approach to FSP talent acquisition.



High-performing recruiters will have at least 5-10 years of global sourcing and recruiting experience specifically in the clinical research industry

Processes

A strategic approach to FSP recruiting enables the FSP provider to ensure short time-to-fill durations for the Sponsor. For example, close collaboration with the Sponsor maximizes the talent delivery process. By having a clear understanding of the Sponsor's business objectives and work culture, the recruitment team can align their recruitment approach to match the Sponsor's standards. A dedicated recruitment team leader should be assigned to the sponsor to spearhead the delivery of quality candidates which drives focus and accountability to each job opening. Lastly, the interview process should be highly efficient. By utilizing technical and behavioral screening questions developed by dedicated FSP program managers, top applicants can be identified with speed and accuracy. All of these processes should be supported with data-driven decisions. The FSP provider should track key recruitment metrics such as time-to-fill, retention and employee performance KPIs to uncover trends that can help optimize or modify existing processes. In particular, FSP providers should track and analyze a quality of hire (QoH) metric for Sponsors. This metric provides insights on how well FSP resources are meeting quality expectations by taking into account various factors related to the success and impact of FSP employees after they have been hired. Measuring

Key Recruitment Metrics



Time-to-fill



Quality of Hire



Retention



Employee Performance KPIs

QoH helps Sponsors validate the benefits of the FSP model investment and has a direct impact on business outcomes, cost savings, employee retention and overall organizational success.

Once recruited, careful attention should be paid to retaining the talent. This means offering a great employee journey that includes strong performance management practices, work-load management/ quality of life balance and employee recognition. Best in industry benefits packages are needed but also plans for career development, working on meaningful projects and working for inspirational leaders bring significant impact. The opportunity for FSP employees to grow and develop in their careers is vital. By providing FSP employees ways to learn new skills, whether through virtual learning, industry webinars, or career advancement, FSP providers can ensure strong retention and employee satisfaction for the Sponsor.



Conclusion

Amid today's economic uncertainties and workforce challenges, selecting an FSP partner with expert and long-tenured recruitment experts can drive Sponsors' success in recruiting and retaining an exceptional FSP workforce. A partner with a true FSP recruitment engine with support from highly experienced people, streamlined processes and the latest technology can enable sponsors to reach and engage with a wide talent pool. Sponsors can benefit from an FSP recruitment engine to help mitigate existing and future staffing challenges, with a proactive and systematic approach that builds on access to talent, established relationships, data-driven decisions, and rapid identification, deployment and retention of high-quality staff. This in turn will help drive the clinical research programs that are essential to bring new therapies to the patients who need them most.



References

- ¹ <https://info.advancedclinical.com/current-and-future-clinical-research-hiring-trends-whats-ahead-for-2024#:~:text=Clinical%20Research%20Staffing%20Solutions%20in,Less%20employee%20mobility>
- ² <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17407745231177885#bibr7-17407745231177885>
- ³ <https://www.careerexplorer.com/careers/clinical-research-coordinator/job-market/>
- ⁴ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/17407745231177885#bibr5-17407745231177885>
- ⁵ <https://trialsjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13063-022-06315-8>
- ⁶ <https://journals.aboutscience.eu/index.php/aboutopen/article/view/2508>
- ⁷ <https://info.advancedclinical.com/current-and-future-clinical-research-hiring-trends-whats-ahead-for-2024#:~:text=Clinical%20Research%20Staffing%20Solutions%20in,Less%20employee%20mobility>
- ⁸ <https://info.advancedclinical.com/current-and-future-clinical-research-hiring-trends-whats-ahead-for-2024#:~:text=Clinical%20Research%20Staffing%20Solutions%20in,Less%20employee%20mobility>

ABOUT ADVANCED CLINICAL

Advanced Clinical is a clinical development and strategic resourcing organization committed to providing a better clinical experience across the drug development journey. Our goal is to improve the lives of all those touched by clinical research—approaching each opportunity with foresight, character, resilience and innovation. Based on decades of experience, we help our clients achieve better outcomes by conducting candid conversations and anticipating potential issues through our customized solutions.

Visit our website to learn more: www.advancedclinical.com