

Clinical Tech: The Good, the Bad, and the In-between of the Site Experience

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COLLABORATE FORWARD



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The March meeting for the SCRS Sites NOW program talked about Clinical Tech: The Good, the Bad, and the In-between of the Site Experience.

A panel composed of Greenphire's Wayne Baker, Dr. Bill Dirkes of DocuTrial, and Taryn Collett, followed by interactive breakouts on trends in improving clinical technology adoption for sites. Interspersed in the discussion were various interactive polls.

When asked as to the number of systems used by site staff, 35% said more than 15 – while not surprising, that is a staggering number. The learning curve, plus maintenance of so many clinical trial technology platforms can be more than some clinical research sites can support, leading to the dreaded “one and done syndrome.”

In 2020, COVID-19 accelerated the adoption of hybrid solutions to keep some studies running. This included enhanced utilization of solutions such as telemedicine, eConsent, remote monitoring, and more.

Technology can certainly provide solutions to many site challenges, but at the same time, can add complexity and be a drain on resources if not implemented well. The panel tackled these issues head-on, with the following taking center stage:

- **Purpose-built technology:** In order for technology to truly solve the workflow challenges often experienced by sites, it's essential for systems to be specific to clinical research and understand the day-to-day experiences of researchers. Rather than just any telemedicine program, it is crucial to have platforms that embed clinical visit data in one integrated view. Furthermore, instead of using traditional accounts payable methods or basic gift cards for patient payments, it is much more efficient for site staff to use an integrated payment platform for patient reimbursements with patient visit schedules and other control mechanisms built into the system.
- **Platform Integration:** Simply put, sites don't want to use disparate systems. They're looking for an integrated experience. Creating synergies through systems such as the Shared Investigator Platform (SIP), which can bring together many solutions into one interface to simplify site staff user experience.

- **Feedback loop:** When creating technology tools or enhancing existing software solutions, it is essential that this isn't done in a vacuum. Involving sites in roadmap planning can help ensure that the tools developed will work as needed and thereby adopted. Examples can include regular satisfaction surveys, user forums, and more. Another quick tip on how to ensure that new innovations will be embraced by sites is to inquire about other applications currently a part of their environment. What CTMS is being used and why? What patient survey tools are becoming preferred? Etc. Look for leading solutions that have gained market traction and endorsement by sites and participants. Sponsors are wise to assess and consider software solutions that can be used on a broad scale and become a standard part of their toolkit.
- **Technology Training:** In addition to developing software solutions with the site experience in mind, it is crucial that site users are properly trained on how to use the tool effectively and also what's in it for them. Once implemented, there is a greater chance for success when staff are properly trained but are also motivated to use the tool because they recognize the value it provides to them and their organization.

The Future of Technology

Technology is leading the transformation of daily activities in both our personal and professional lives. For clinical research sites, technology can automate labor-intensive processes, mitigate errors thereby improving the overall quality of their work and ultimately help sites achieve desired outcomes more quickly and with less cost.

Yet any change can often bring fear or even resistance. The session further explored ways to overcome these hurdles, specifically by channeling the emotions that employees have and reminding them about the value that an effective technology solution can provide. So, we should listen intently and tackle trepidation and resistance head-on. Oftentimes, early resistors can be converted into your best champions of technology and innovation.

One sponsor in the breakout talked about the importance of communication when driving adoption of technology. Specifically, she conveyed that ROI must always be communicated to sites upfront and throughout – why the technology will make processes easier and replace the pain points of the past. Again validating what is in it for me!

It is vital that sponsors, CROs, and clinical research sites fuel the innovation path with solution providers. It is of equal importance that those solution providers actively listen to the needs of their customers and use it to prioritize their innovation roadmap. And with the Society for Clinical Research Sites doing the great work that they do and creating forums such as the SitesNow program, we will be firmly on a path to ensure the site experience is properly represented in the advancement of all clinical technology solutions.

About the Author:

As Greenphire's Chief Commercial Officer, Wayne is responsible for the global commercial strategy of the rapidly growing organization, including the execution of sales and marketing programs. Wayne is a proven strategic sales executive with more than 25 years of commercial experience in technology and life science industries.

Prior to joining Greenphire in 2016, Wayne served in numerous senior leadership roles at Advanced Health Media (AHM), a leading global provider of SaaS-based solutions designed to manage compliant interactions with healthcare professionals and organizations for the highly regulated life sciences industry. During his tenure, Wayne helped establish AHM as the market leader, playing an integral role in the organization's 1500 percent revenue growth during a four-year period, with continued global expansion thereafter. Earlier in his career, Wayne gained sales leadership and industry experience at Parametric Technology Corporation (PTC) and Brent International. He earned his bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from Drexel University.

Wayne resides in the Philadelphia area with his wife and four children. When not tending to business matters, Wayne is a dedicated coach and active spectator of his children's sporting events, and also enjoys playing golf and entertaining friends.

SCRS Sites NOW is a virtual discussion and content project created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and focused on the changing landscape clinical research sites and industry partners now face. Each session is centered around a singular topic; in January, the topic was the Evolution of Patient Engagement. Attendees benefit from an opening presentation hosted by an industry leader who provides a unique perspective and meaningful metrics on the topic at hand, then break out into groups for a dynamic discussion guided by relevant queries designed to identify areas of opportunity for participants in the clinical research pipeline.

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