

and interview panels. Conversely, Ms. Beghou says, a commitment to providing opportunities for women can encourage them to accept an employment offer. "Companies that invest in women leaders can enjoy the benefits of attracting top talent of both genders. If companies do this right, the message will speak for itself: There are opportunities for women to grow and excel here. If fair treatment of all genders is written in a company's DNA, it will naturally reflect in not only the recruitment processes, but also in companywide recognitions, a collaborative and fair work environment, cohesive team dynamics, valued mentorship programs, and of course, promotion cycles."

As a CEO, Mr. Rhatigan recognizes the importance of hiring talented people who are aligned with the organization's values and have a personal drive to succeed. "Then, we have to be willing to invest and prioritize development as a strategic priority," he says. "Oftentimes, learning and development programs are the first areas that are sacrificed during budget cuts. We can't expect to unlock the potential of our talent if we are not making it a priority."

Mr. Adams adds that when the time comes to promote, don't take no for an answer and think about promoting someone from within the organization. "It is not uncommon for women, in particular, to have second thoughts about taking on more responsibility," he says. "Have the discussion over the course of a couple of conversations."

At many large organizations there are ERGs — employee resource groups — voluntary, employee-led groups that foster a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. These ERGs can help shape organizational culture and provide insights into employee needs and uncover gaps. For smaller organizations such as Immunogen that do not have a women's network in place or an ERG, the key is organically right-sizing female-focused development opportunities. "This focus helps shape our approach as we scale," Ms. Bergan says. "From an individual perspective, executive presence matters. We encourage our leaders to 'show up' for the role they want. This telegraphs a combination of qualities that show that the candidate is in charge — or deserves to be."

Ms. Graham counts herself fortunate to be part of Tesaro, where women are represented across all levels of leadership, including the company's co-founder and president, members of the executive leadership team, as well as mid-level management. "Being part of a company and culture that truly recognizes and rewards talent, regardless of gender, is critical," she says. "Another key element is discovering your leadership voice, and finding the unique edge that sets you apart. All too often women leaders feel the need to emulate what good looks like in order to get ahead. This can have unintended consequences to their long-term trajectory and personal leadership brand. Cultivating an authentic leadership style requires self-reflection, feedback, and tenacity, but this is a critical part of any leader's journey."

Ms. Cooke advises women to create their personal career spotlight map to identify what they are good at (strengths), what they are passionate about (interests), and what skills/competency areas the company is interested in (needs). "Where these three circles overlap is the bullseye — your secret sauce — that can be used to create your brand identity. Seek out people in your company or tap into an external association that can help you create this map, as it takes self-awareness to accurately develop these insights. Then make your targeted interests known along with how you can help the company. People can't read minds, so don't make it hard for other leaders to think about you when opportunities arise. Owning and promoting your brand lets others know what you uniquely bring to the table." <sup>PV</sup>

## Avoid Enrollment Pitfalls by Engaging with Best-Fit Sites

Perhaps the single most important consideration in selecting a site is whether it can make its enrollment. Many don't; in fact, 20-25 percent of all clinical studies close because they fail to meet enrollment targets.<sup>1</sup>

For decades, sponsors have found their "best fit" sites and returned to them for future studies. But in the era of precision medicine, that may not always be the best course of action. It is becoming increasingly necessary to turn to untapped resources to find potential enrollees.

According to Tufts research, sponsors and CROs report that 28 percent of their sites are new relationships with no prior history or familiarity. Those relationships can be tricky. The overall site initiation cycle time is nearly 10 weeks longer for new sites compared to repeat or familiar ones.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, sites with insufficient experience are more likely to violate protocols or have low-quality data, which leads to more on-site visits and more request for clarification — even additional training.<sup>3</sup>

In this environment, how do sponsors determine the best-fit sites for their studies? Much of what constitutes "best fit" is specific to the study and the patient population, but here are five characteristics that apply more broadly:

- **Strong Record of Success:** Past performance does predict future results. But how much do you really know about past performance of the site or the investigator? Without the right partner, it becomes difficult to assess past performance. With the right partner, however, you have access to verified data- as opposed to self-reported data- to help you make an informed decision.
- **Active Community Presence:** No matter how diligently they scour their records and recruit their own patients, no site is going to fully enroll a study from its own patient population. A site that's active in the community and has built community relationships is more likely to be successful at enrollment.
- **Takes an Integrated Approach:** Best-fit sites embrace clinical research as another offering of care to the patient. It's fully integrated into their practice, and they promote clinical research in a proactive manner with strategies that may include: showing a list of available clinical trials on a monitor in the waiting room, talking to patients who may be eligible to participate in trials, and engaging their colleagues in the practice to help spread the word.
- **Dedicated Clinical Research Team:** Given that 68 percent of sites fail to meet their projected enrollment targets,<sup>4</sup> you'll want to ensure the right people are in place to execute against these timelines. Work with your coordinator during the pre-selection visit to determine if they manage too many protocols with too few staff, have a difficult time returning questionnaires in a timely fashion, or have trouble managing responses to ad campaigns. If any of these pop up as red flags, it may be time to bring in a dedicated resource to assist the site team.
- **A Best-fit Site is Open to Innovation:** Adopting technologies such as e-consent and a clinical trial management system is an indication of enrollment success. In our experience, the more open to technology a site is, the better their enrollment.

By working with sites that meet the aforementioned criteria, and by availing yourself of the data and other resources available, you can dramatically improve the likelihood that your next clinical trial will succeed. ●

References: 1. WCG Knowledge Base; Data on file. 2. March/April 2018 Tufts CSDD Impact Report. 3. March/April 2018 Tufts CSDD Impact Report. 4. WCG Knowledge Base; Data on file.



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