

ARTICLE

10 Ways to Set Up Your Sites for Recruitment Success

Top insights from Citeline experts

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Recruitment is arguably a clinical trial site's greatest challenge.

Taking the following steps can better support your sites to be more effective in recruiting the necessary patients needed to make your trial a success.

① Select the right sites

Use all data at your disposal to ensure you choose sites with the **right experience**, patient population, diversity mix, and timelines. Make sure you spend time on your **site qualification/feasibility outreach** to ensure they treat the relevant patient population.

It is also important to find out how to **avoid the rate-limiting processes** that delay site opening (e.g., contracts, EC submissions, etc.). Finally, do not hesitate to **use unknown sites** with less experience. Often these sites have the motivation, patient population, and capacity to really deliver.



② Think about recruitment at the time of protocol creation

From the moment you begin to create your protocol, you will want to make sure you resolve as many potential issues with recruitment as you can before they arise. Ask your team: Are your **eligibility criteria viable**? Are the visit schedule and/or **procedures burdensome**? Is there a **robust feedback process** by which sites can communicate difficulties with recruitment and/or I/E criteria?

③ Involve key opinion leaders (KOLs) and sites early in protocol development

It is important to get KOLs and sites involved in planning early in the process of developing your protocol. This will help you **avoid protocol amendments** down the line.

④ Choose sites with experience in your preferred technology

If a site manages several trials and uses multiple new systems to navigate, **low bandwidth can slow patient recruitment**. Make sure you **discuss the technology** the sites are accustomed to using (e.g., EDC, ePRO, IVRS, etc.) before you reach an agreement. And once you have selected your site partner, try to **offer enough support** in your technology for ease of use.



⑤ Provide sites with the high-quality materials they need for outreach at the start

From the beginning, make sure you discuss what types of patient outreach the sites will be conducting (e.g., print materials, multiple social media/digital options, etc.). That way, you can **tailor materials** to suit each form of outreach. It is also helpful to make **non-English materials** available at the start to help ensure diverse recruitment.

Keep in mind that sites know what works best with their communities and may need to **supplement with additional materials** to ensure the study is a success.

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6 Offer sites enrollment optimization support services for any external recruitment campaigns

These are typically part of **patient recruitment vendors' solutions** when delivering referrals. For example, you will want to provide **a defined process** for sites processing prescreened, qualified referrals received by recruitment campaigns. You will also need to offer **medical records retrieval services** to support additional qualification review for externally sourced, prescreened referrals.

7 Train sites on processes/technologies for receiving prequalified referrals from external patient recruitment campaigns

Collaborate with sites to **identify any referral pathways** that can be supported through technology/sponsor-partner support.

8 Ensure timely patient payments

This is vital, as sites are the ones that must field these complaints, which adds to their burden. Being late with payments can also **affect patient retention**.

9 Consider involving patient advocacy groups with established site relationships

Ask sites if they work with patient advocacy groups you could **jointly contact** to inform their patients of potential clinical trial opportunities.

10 Remunerate sites for external patient recruitment campaigns

Sponsor/CRO-site contracts typically do not cover the costs associated with **additional staff time** required to process externally sourced referrals, which puts further economic stress on sites. So, make sure to **pay sites for time/resources** dedicated to contacting, processing, and evaluating any prequalified referrals received from external patient recruitment campaigns.

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Meet our experts



Claire Riches

As VP, Clinical Solutions, Claire ensures Citeline's data, new products, and services are meeting the needs and solving the challenges of the clinical industry. With over 25 years' experience in the pharma industry within both clinical research and commercial strategy, Claire's broad career encompasses multiple clinical fields, project management to client engagement, business unit head to therapeutic area lead in large pharma and CROs.



Matt Holms

As VP, Sales-Patient Engagement & Recruitment, Matt oversees Patient Engagement & Recruitment Solutions. He holds an MBA and has spent 24 years in the life science industry, holding various commercial and executive leadership roles, dedicated to driving innovative technology solutions that enhance clinical research across a diverse spectrum of eClinical technology, patient recruitment/RWD, and sponsor organizations.



Jessica Washington-Moore

As Citeline's Senior Director of Implementation, Jessica oversees the delivery of patient engagement and recruitment services, with a focus on investigating new services and strategies to support the Citeline product suite. Jessica is an advocate for a data-driven, patient-centric, and cutting-edge approach to patient engagement.



About Citeline

Citeline, a [Norstella](#) company, powers a full suite of complementary business intelligence offerings to meet the evolving needs of life science professionals to accelerate the connection of treatments to patients and patients to treatments. These patient-focused solutions and services deliver and analyze data used to drive clinical, commercial, and regulatory related-decisions and create real-world opportunities for growth.

Our global teams of analysts, journalists, and consultants keep their fingers on the pulse of the pharmaceutical, biomedical, and medtech industries, covering it all with expert insights: key diseases, clinical trials, drug R&D and approvals, market forecasts and more. For more information on one of the world's most trusted life science partners, visit [Citeline.com](#)