

Digital Recruiting of Trial Participants: Using Apps, Social Media and Search-Websites

Bringing to one's attention the strict, **Good Clinical Practice (GCP)- compliant and fast-pacing nature of clinical trials and the sponsors' attempts to recruit as many suitable subjects as possible**, in most of the cases the latter are seen to implement what traditionally works best for and in the Pharmaceutical industry. However, "what traditionally works best" may not be sufficient enough especially when there is a noticeable decrease in successful recruitment rates. What should be the next step then? Taking into consideration the advancement in terms of **how individuals learn about trials and other clinical as well as medical procedures**, there is an urgent need of adopting new recruiting tactics that match the E-world. Precisely such new tactic is the digital recruiting.



It comes as no surprise that about 90% of the people interested in the Pharma sector go online to **look for relative and up-to-date health information, [e-courses](#)** etc., and 10% of them rely on media-sources like TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. Respectively, **such vast online population turns into the best target-group for potential participants** in clinical researchers. Why? Because they are simply there – behind the screens of their laptops, computers and mobile devices. That makes them easy to find and quickly introduces them to what sponsors and CEOs want. And while **the media-driven enrollment and direct-to-individuals efforts often fail to project** and deliver satisfying number of participants in a cost-efficient and timely way, the digital recruiting is proving to be much more beneficial. Its potential is huge and Pharmaceutical, Clinical and Medical companies are slowly but gradually “digesting” it.

Playing a pivotal role in the everyday practices of various Pharma organizations, **online recruiting of trial subjects is perceived as a tool which gains more and more significance** which will help it replace many of the current methodologies. With the myriad of opportunities offered by modern-day technologies, the problematical hole that hinders the quick selection and enlisting of adequate trial candidates becomes smaller and is soon envisioned to shrink completely. The result will be undoubtedly ostensible as **clinical study recruiters will be enabled to do their work infinitely times**

better while saving on time and resources. The use, then, of different smartphone applications, official trial search websites, and even social media like Facebook and Twitter, is hoped to bridge the gap between sponsors and hard – to – reach volunteers. In other words, because the Internet carries unlimited possibilities, the Pharma industry can also **take advantage of it and connect patients and studies** in a manner that matches the dynamic and result-demanding research environment.



“Emancipating” from the established recruiting manners and **embracing the web-based, or digital recruiting of patients**, the previously mentioned notion of “what traditionally works best” transforms into “what modernly works best.” And here we refer to the large internet medium which when used for enrolling trial subjects offers several fundamental aspects:

- Immediacy
- Cost-effectiveness
- Time-efficiency
- Bigger range of potential patients

There is no question that **recruiting subjects for clinical trials is a lengthy, costly and challenging task** to do. With the current means of recruiting though, the whole process becomes a competition that maneuvers between achieving time- and cost-efficacy and selecting the most appropriate candidates. And when traditional advertising is not ultimately effective in finding candidates, there comes the web-based recruitment method in hand. Bearing in mind that **approximately 30 percent of the time dedicated to clinical trials is spent on patient recruitment and enrollment** due to the traditionally adopted techniques, with the web-enrollment the game changes drastically. With the access to a variety of online platforms and websites such as Twitter and Facebook, sponsors and CEOs can reach to a much wider demographic spectrum. In this regard, trying to prove the point that the Internet influences even the Pharmaceutical industry, there has been initiated a study of [Facebook](#). **The outcome of the study confirmed that social networks can have an impact on how**

recruiters search for, narrowcast and obtain qualified trial participants. Having said all of this, it becomes evident that digital recruitment of study participants paves the path of future clinical practices and directs them towards productiveness.