

clinical conductor Site CTMS

Case Study – Pharmaceutical Integrated Research Corporation

Pharmaceutical Integrated Research Corporation (PIRC), a division of AIM Health Group, adopted Bio-Optronics' Clinical Conductor™ Site CTMS in 2009. This case study presents the organization, its previous CTMS methodologies and challenges, and the results achieved using Bio-Optronics' enterprise clinical trial management system.

Organization Description

Pharmaceutical Integrated Research Corporation (PIRC) is the clinical research division of AIM Health Group, a large national Canadian healthcare provider. PIRC is a fast-growing research management organization that works closely with research and service sponsors at both hospital and community-based sites on more than 35 active trial sites where the Corporation conducts frontline research from patient recruitment and retention to providing quality data, all in a timely fashion.

As a Research Management Organization, PIRC is experienced in delivering customized solutions for unique research challenges and supports investigators, pharmaceutical companies, and clinical research organizations in conducting clinical research, mostly on Phase II, III and IV drug trials, investigator-initiated trials, and medical device trials by providing single access points to multiple sites or physicians, access to large patient pools around Canada, and supplies leadership teams to work on diverse clinical research projects for Pharmaceuticals and Clinical Research Organizations. Since it began, PIRC has grown from a single site, single trial group of surgeons to conducting clinical research in partnership with seven hospital sites. Specializing in many therapeutic areas, PIRC has more than 24 community-based sites conducting clinical trials for which it has randomized about 1500 patients.

PIRC works directly with physicians to help them conduct clinical research from start to finish by providing them with the infrastructure they need, including staff, equipment, administration, trial set-up and execution, and more. By managing the entire operation, PIRC allows the physicians to focus on practicing medicine.

The Problem

In the past, PIRC staff members were using up to 1000 spreadsheets to do all of their internal recording. "Any time information was needed, we had to redesign the spreadsheets, regroup the information, re-tabulate everything – and the list went on," said Stephen Garland, Corporate Director Business Operations at PIRC. "It was a cumbersome, costly process and a huge inconvenience for frontline users who could have been using their time to recruit patients, to nurture their relationships with them, and to ensure their safety instead of recollecting data for us."

Once management decided PIRC needed an improvement, internal staff began developing a proprietary system to act as a stepping stone while the company grew to address their basic needs. However, Garland said that the time, effort, and energy they had to put into something that was now a core competency for them was full of struggles and it just was not cost efficient.

Since PIRC has been expanding over the past few years and sees more growth in its well-established network of sites in the future, it was apparent that moving forward with the current "home-grown" software used to manage the trials was going to be too time-consuming and not high enough in standards.

"Clinical Conductor™ had a sophisticated solution with ease of operation for the frontline user," Garland said. "The software provided a solid and easy to use base with the ability and sophistication to grow into a comprehensive IT solution for frontline operational and financial site management."

Clinical Conductor™ Implementation

Implementing Clinical Conductor™ is straightforward since it is a web-based product. Customer support specialists and IT staff from Bio-Optronics work to set up the site itself as well as the database, both from templates that are customized for the customer, in this case PIRC, and standard set-up parameters. The site is then deployed and customers are granted access. They receive training and ongoing follow-up from the customer support team.

“The software was easy to implement from a frontline standpoint – it was very intuitive,” Garland said. Once the site was deployed, Garland and his team participated in ongoing training sessions, part of Bio-Optronics’ implementation process, where several standard training sessions are available throughout the month covering different functionalities such as study setup, the patient database, scheduling and recruitment and finances.

With no limit to the training sessions and a support representative available for any questions, Garland said the implementation was great. “Bio-Optronics’ customer support is a HUGE, I mean HUGE, differentiator,” he said. “The support team is exceptional – they nicely walk you through either “silly” issues or serious issues. They take all the time needed; they answer you honestly and provide alternative solutions for your problem.”

Results Achieved

Implementing Clinical Conductor™ as the new clinical trial management system really helped PIRC save time, money and manpower, and more importantly, PIRC is now able to reduce the administrative responsibilities of the doctors involved in the studies and leave them more time to treat patients, and the accuracy of the information that PIRC collects is now improved. “We’ve realized at least a threefold cost saving, not to mention the improvements on productivity from the frontline standpoint and getting additional information and accuracy enhanced,” Garland said. “That’s 40 hours of time saved per week.”

Clinical Conductor™ has changed the way in which staff at PIRC manages their clinical trials business which now has real-time, accurate and comprehensive management metrics to support its sites in both recruitment and the day -to-day business operations. “Prior to Clinical Conductor™, we took about two weeks to obtain all required management information from our sites, only to re-start the exercise again,” Garland explained. “It was like painting a bridge and we had *no* time to manage or improve the structure of the bridge”

The improved management, metrics and visibility has allowed the senior team at PIRC to spend more time on business development, operational execution and site development rather than on collecting, updating, and collating data. “Now, with Clinical Conductor™, we have improved cost control, improved management tools and all of these have resulted in improved, profitable productivity.”

The overall management has been enhanced since Clinical Conductor™ was implemented in 2009. Costly administrative overheads have been reduced, while collections, billings, reconciliations, management visibility of activity, management metrics (over various sites, trials, personnel), financial administration and profitability analysis of PIRC’s trial business, have been improved.

Conclusion

By implementing Clinical Conductor™ into its operations, PIRC saw a positive change within months. The increased productivity of the staff, reduction in costs for maintaining both the data from different sites and studies as well as for maintaining and developing an internal solution to a CTMS, is enough return on investment for PIRC to be completely satisfied.

“The most appealing thing about Clinical Conductor™ was that it seemed simple enough, intuitive enough and expandable enough so that we could use it as a core product with the option to expand in complexity and size,” Garland summarized. “But it’s not just that -- the knowledge the Clinical Conductor™ team has in understanding the business -- not just the software, but the *business* -- means that when you want an enhancement, have a problem or a suggestion, they understand and have a solution, not just a response.”

PIRC can now expand and grow its network of sites and studies without spending valuable resources inefficiently and without the worry and hassle of starting all over again with spreadsheets, reworking presentation formats, and recollecting all the data.