

## Viewpoint

# Cracking the Talent Shortfall: Strategies for Delivering the Right Talent With an FSP Model

*Jason Tate, talent strategy lead for PPD Functional Service Provider (FSP) Solutions, lays out multiple approaches to weathering clinical research workforce constraints through the use of FSPs.*



The demand for clinical development professionals continues to outpace supply. To meet this challenge, organizations are increasingly turning to FSP models to outsource specific functions of clinical trials (e.g., clinical operations, pharmacovigilance, etc.). In a recent survey by the PPD clinical research business of Thermo Fisher Scientific, 41 percent of respondents reported increased use of FSP models compared to the full-service outsourcing (FSO) model's 29 percent growth. This demand surge for FSP professionals calls for bespoke recruitment strategies that combine the agility of an FSP with the deep internal talent pool that is the hallmark of an FSO arrangement.

When evaluating an FSP partner, look for these five characteristics.

**1. Take an internal-first approach, staffing client projects using existing staff.** Because staff sourced from an FSP partner's internal talent pool is already vetted and trained, they can be mobilized quickly to fill gaps. FSP partners with a large internal talent

pool spanning functional areas and the globe — including emerging markets — are especially well-positioned to rapidly deploy swaths of qualified employees to new FSP engagements when and where you need them.

**2. Deploy ahead-of-the-curve recruitment strategies.** At times, your needs for expertise may be extremely specialized. Or they may be broad, involving different roles in multiple regions that could involve hundreds, perhaps thousands, of professionals. An FSP needs a mature global recruitment engine to continually identify and engage top-tier candidates.

Finding top talent, including passive candidates not actively job searching, often takes a combination of recruitment methods centered around active recruiter-to-candidate outreach, from searching traditional platforms like LinkedIn and Indeed to leveraging data-driven programmatic solutions to streamline candidate targeting, ad distribution and screening.

The effort also might involve, for example, the creation of proprietary searchable databases using a range of sources, combing job board historical data to identify experienced professionals who entered their profession years ago, and using employee referral programs to reveal high-caliber candidates who aren't on the open job market.

- 3. Ensure skilled and experienced recruiters** are at the core of the FSP's recruitment strategy. Armed with the latest recruitment methodologies, technologies, databases and tools, they have clear messaging, bespoke approaches that fit unique requirements and a deep network. They know how to find those professionals with the expertise and insights that will move the needle for clients.
- 4. Secure the right fit.** Success is about more than the quality of the person; it's about the quality of the match. The ideal FSP partner will collaborate with you to understand your needs and culture and the talent profile that will succeed within your team.

**5. Confirm rebadging expertise.** Some companies decide to transition groups of existing employees to an FSP partner to reduce headcount while retaining the same experienced, valued colleagues on their projects. Your FSP partner should have the rebadging knowledge and processes to ensure business continuity without negatively impacting programs. It takes a

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skilled, empathetic, crossfunctional team to assist with onboarding and role changes.

The ongoing talent shortage demands innovative approaches to attract and retain skilled professionals. By prioritizing internal staff allocations, leveraging dedicated recruiters, applying sophisticated recruitment strategies and focusing on identifying the right fit for the client, FSP partners can help their clients achieve success.

### Key Questions to Ask a Potential FSP Partner

1. Will you primarily staff my engagement with internal staff or rely on external hires?
2. Can you meet my timelines?
3. Can you provide examples of innovative recruitment methods you use to attract top talent?
4. What percentage of your hires comes from referrals?
5. Does your staff have the expertise/experience to apply the latest insights, approaches, and best practices to optimize my study?

6. Do you have the operational structure and footprint to scale resources when and where we need them?
7. How do you ensure FSP candidates will be a good cultural fit with my team?
8. When rebadging, what is your average transfer and retention success rate?

Access PPD's white paper on FSPs here.  
Access the PPD survey here.

*The opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The CenterWatch Monthly.*

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