



Rapid Growth Led To Organizational Complexity for a Pharmaceutical Research Company

ResearchCo is a Clinical Research Organization (CRO) that manages clinical trials for the pharmaceutical industry. After doubling in size in a few short years, ResearchCo was not realizing the economies of scale it had anticipated. Instead, during this period of rapid growth, “firefighting” became the norm to keep up with increasing demands and titles, roles, job descriptions, and responsibilities were put aside to ensure client and regulatory needs were met. Organizational and process complexity grew and operating inefficiencies came to the surface; employees were becoming less productive, costs were growing quickly, and service levels were suffering.

Analyzing data to see where time was spent

To remedy this situation, WP&C started by conducting observations and interviews while analyzing project data to understand how and where employees were spending their time. We quickly determined ResearchCo’s research employees were inefficient because they were completing more support tasks than their peers at other CROs instead of focusing efforts on being on-site at research locations to support the clinical trials. In addition to having more tasks on their plates, these employees were also spending more time completing those tasks than was typical in the industry. This meant a two-prong approach was required to resolve the issue—ResearchCo needed to reassess cross-functional roles and responsibilities to ensure the right team members were doing the right work and also become more efficient on project tasks.

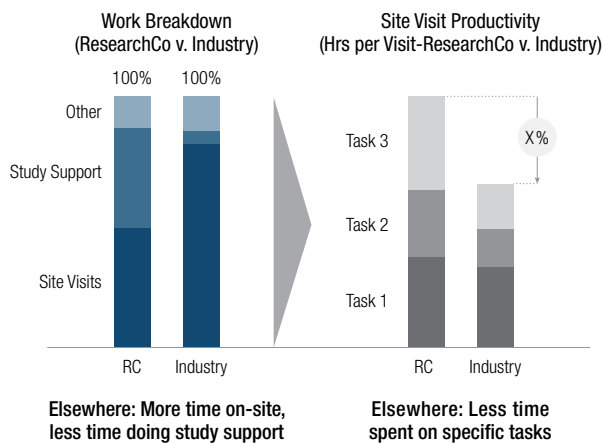


Figure 1: WP&C analysis showed ResearchCO employees spent more time on support tasks and took longer to complete tasks than peers

Looking through the client lens

The first step in tackling this organizational complexity was to take a step back and consider the situation from the perspective of ResearchCo's clients. The first step in doing this was to lay out the deliverables clients expected of ResearchCo—this was the work to be prioritized. From this initial view, cross-functional alignment was gained on deliverable ownership and accountability so that each department knew what they were responsible for and roles within departments could be clarified.

Reassigning interdepartmental roles and responsibilities

With cross-functional alignment for deliverables, each department was then able to reorganize its tasks and activities to support the deliverables it had ownership of. WP&C helped lay out tasks and map these tasks to titles and roles for research employees. This highlighted what duplicate tasks, and ultimately roles, existed and could be eliminated. This also allowed ResearchCo to reassign roles and responsibilities to enable greater efficiencies and productivity for higher-paid research employees.

Overhead management

Separately, WP&C also reviewed ResearchCo’s overhead and management structure. ResearchCo was split up by global region, and each region varied greatly in size and had different processes in place. WP&C helped ResearchCo consolidate regions to remove unnecessary organizational complexity and streamline processes globally.

A plan forward

WP&C developed an implementation plan with ResearchCo to achieve the future state. This implementation plan considered change management and communication plans to get buy-in from stakeholders and increase transparency.

Results

ResearchCo reduced overhead by 30% and worked on a path towards doubling employee productivity.