

## What do Sites and Sponsors/CROs Really Want from Each Other?

By Norman M. Goldfarb

At MAGI's Clinical Research Conference in October, we asked attendees two questions:

- If you are with a site, what is the one thing you wish sponsors and CROs did better?
- If you are with a sponsor or CRO, what is the one thing you wish sites did better?

Tables 1 and 2 present the answers from 107 site and 38 sponsor/CRO attendees:

**Table 1. What Clinical Research Sites Want from Sponsors & CROs?**

<b>Problem Areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Important Issues</b>
Communications	50%	Be more transparent Respond in a timely manner Listen to sites Provide a single point of contact or a better contact directory
Contracts & Budgets	16%	Understand site costs better Streamline negotiation process Make it easier to find billable items in protocols
Study Startup	7%	Provide all necessary materials on a timely basis Provide better training
Understanding	7%	Understand how sites work, especially different types of sites, especially my site Give more (honest) feedback Explain sponsor needs better
Payments	5%	Pay in a timely manner
Site Monitors	4%	Collaborate better with sites on recruitment
Protocol	3%	Provide qualified site monitors
Study Participants	2%	Minimize amendments, Obtain input from sites
Vendors	2%	Help sites work better with vendors
Other	5%	Be consistent Adhere to industry standards

**Table 2. What Sponsors & CROs Want from Clinical Research Sites**

<b>Problem Areas</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Important Issues</b>
Communications	44%	Ask for help Ask questions, Respond more quickly
Quality	18%	Employ quality management systems Invest more in training
Budgets	13%	Provide better pricing justifications
Feasibility	10%	Provide more realistic enrollment expectations
Data	8%	Enter data more quickly Respond to queries more quickly
Contracts & Budgets	5%	Don't make the negotiation process so difficult
Other	3%	Understand sponsor work and challenges better

Fifty percent of site respondents said that the one thing they want most from sponsors and CROs is better communications. Seventeen percent of site respondents would also like higher prices and better processes for contract and budget negotiations. Their other concerns paled in comparison.

Forty-four percent of sponsor and CRO respondents said that the one thing they want most from sites is better communications. Their other concerns paled in comparison.

Better communication is not an end in and of itself — people communicate for reasons. Respondents likely believe it is so important because it would help address the other issues. The good news is that improving communications should be a lot easier than developing new technology or revamping business processes.

The survey samples are small and the results might be biased because the primary goal of MAGI conferences is to facilitate constructive communications among sites, sponsors and CROs. Nevertheless, the message is clear: There is broad support for the idea that improving communications will advance the practice of clinical research.

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