

The Pulse On Recruitment By Cara Danchak

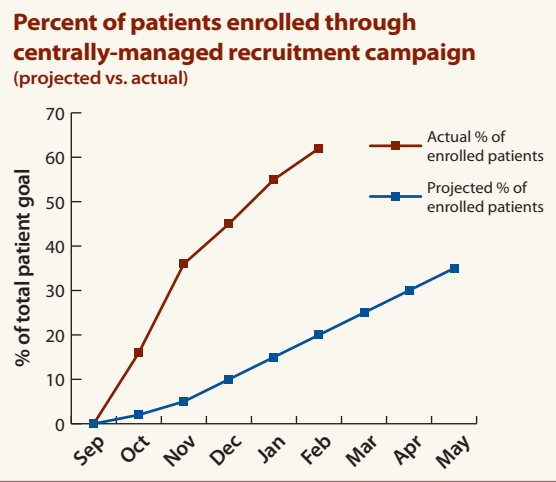
Many sponsors out there still believe **patient recruitment** advertising is unnecessary for most studies and sites can handle recruitment all on their own. This goes back to the fundamental belief that by choosing sites with seemingly robust patient databases and trial experience, your study will easily enroll without additional recruitment assistance. Unfortunately, as most companies realize, a site's database is finite and, with multiple studies per year, it's often impossible to enroll an entire study without some form of recruitment outreach.

It's not uncommon for sponsors to be reluctant to initiate a **patient recruitment** advertising campaign for the first time. Often they do not believe an ad campaign can change the pace of an entire study. Or a sponsor might believe sites will enroll the vast majority of patients, with advertising used merely as a supplemental tactic. Often, it takes actual results to ultimately convince companies to account for recruitment campaigns during the planning phase.

Recently, I worked on a Psoriasis study with **TKL Research**, an international **CRO**. TKL was working with a sponsor that viewed the centralized recruitment advertising campaign as simply a supplemental tactic and thought most sites would enroll the majority of patients through their own databases. The sponsor requested TKL take responsibility for enrolling 35% of the total patient

goal, while sites would be responsible for the remaining 65%.


CTM worked closely with TKL to develop all ad materials and advertising plans for each site. Given the experience we both had with dermatology recruitment, we were confident in our strategies. The sponsor had a recruitment timeline of approximately nine months and



initially had asked TKL to stretch the ad dollars over this time period. However, TKL knew from experience that the entire campaign would be far more successful if budgets were condensed over the first three months. After all, there is always the chance your study will enroll early.

After advertising for only six weeks, TKL had already reached its 35% patient contribution, without approaching budget depletion. Given the rapid success of the recruitment campaign, the sponsor asked TKL to keep going, recruiting

as many patients as possible without going over the original budget. After four months, the sponsor met its enrollment goals... months earlier than anticipated. TKL had contributed a total of 62% of all subjects, while sites enrolled approximately 38%. Not only did TKL contribute significantly more patients than originally projected, it also did it in half the time.

This sponsor, like many, simply didn't recognize the value of utilizing specialists to assist sites with patient recruitment. These successes are the direct result of the synergy between TKL and CTM. TKL focused on analysis of enrollment metrics, forecasting and developing strategic plans for future media implementation, and close site management to ensure highest conversion rates from advertising response to enrolled patient, while CTM concentrated on media planning, placement and negotiation. By trusting its CRO, the sponsor learned that some studies really can enroll ahead of schedule. Sometimes you need to see it to believe it. 

Cara Danchak is a vice president at Clinical Trial Media, a global patient recruitment and retention company. She has spent nearly a decade working with various companies in the patient recruitment space. Email comments and suggestions to cara@clinicaltrialmedia.com.

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