

THE DATING GAME - TRUST & COMPATIBILITY IN OUTSOURCING PARTNERSHIPS

Source: Singota Solutions

Singota® Solutions is a CDMO located in Bloomington, Indiana, USA that specializes in Parenteral, Early Phase Drug Development and Aseptic Filling projects.

Why trust and compatibility should be evaluated when selecting a manufacturing outsourcing partner.

The journey through the clinical trial pipeline is hardly ever direct. Obstacles will present themselves that may or may not have been anticipated. By doing your due diligence in selecting an appropriate outsourcing partner, some of the challenges can be turned into planned objectives as you move closer to (hopefully) positive results in the clinic. Pre-selecting a contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO) based on not only capabilities but compatibility and trust will help throughout the journey.

Discovering the capabilities of a CDMO can be as simple as performing a specific Google search. Singota receives "web inquiries" through our site requesting more information about our robotic aseptic filling or supply chain services. Seemingly, many of those people were led to our site by the magic of search engine optimization (SEO). That is the easy part. In general, most pharmaceutical companies, regardless of their size, understand what service capabilities they will need from their future contract manufacturing partner. What cannot be as easily queried is if the appropriate compatibility and trust are part of the package.

A Vast Field of Candidates

It has been reported that the global CDMO market is projected to increase from a \$90.0 billion market as of 2019 to \$126.6 billion by 2024. That's good if you're a CDMO like us but perhaps a little more daunting if you're one of the many virtual to mid-sized pharma companies looking for an outsourcing partner. It appears new CDMOs are being added to the landscape daily. It's not enough to make sure they simply have the capabilities you need, but are they a good match for you and your company? For instance, we are a small CDMO with just over 70 employees. We often find ourselves partnering with virtual to mid-sized pharmaceutical companies because we typically have more like-minded business philosophies and much less red tape, which keeps projects moving forward quickly. Being agile and technically competent are vital attributes that both parties must have when projects are on a fast track. It's best to know upfront if your CDMO can effectively manage those ever-changing situations.

Selecting a compatible CDMO when your project is in high gear is not ideal.

The compatibility will undoubtedly take a backseat to capabilities. For instance, maybe you've received the latest results from the clinic and need to move up the date for your next trial. You have narrowed down your selection to a few CDMOs but have yet to pick your partner, and now you're under pressure. At this hurried stage in your project, it is critical to have a compatible and trustworthy CDMO to get you through to your next milestone. But trust can erode if compatibility is mismatched. Have you ever had to break up with a CDMO mid-way through a project? It is painful, expensive, and can be exceedingly time-consuming (according to clients who have come to us in those situations). Often the fit was not right, or the trust was not there as promised.

To address similar issues, researchers Jerry Ledlow Ph.D. and Karl Manrodt Ph.D. set out to uncover gaps in relationships between suppliers and buyers that can undermine progress and even derail an entire project. Ledlow and Manrodt developed the Compatibility and Trust Assessment (CaT) to evaluate the supplier-buyer relationship compatibility.

Picking the Right Partner

Manrodt, professor of logistics and supply chain management at Georgia College, provides an analogy of two people dating. "Some companies – like couples – just aren't meant to be together. Take, for example, a far-left Democrat and a far-right Republican. They probably wouldn't have a good chance to create a long-term sustainable relationship as they both see the world through a different lens. Likewise, companies that have philosophical differences in how they make decisions and operate are not going to be a good fit either."

Consider the following five dimensions of compatibility and trust Ledlow and Manrodt outlined when making your selection for an outsourcing partner:

- Trust: Performance to promise and meeting commitments is the foundation of trust. Without performance, trust cannot exist.
- Innovation: Strong and trusting relationships allow the parties to share risks and rewards, investing in each other's capabilities and collaborating to achieve common goals.
- Communication: The open and timely sharing of all information that is relevant to a partner's decision-making ability.

- Team Orientation: Both sides of a relationship believe in the relationship. Efforts are made to view decisions from the partner's perspective to mitigate opportunism and promote collaboration.
- Focus: There is common purpose and direction.

Along with assessments in technical capability, quality, personnel experience, and overall capability alignment to your project, it is prudent to invest energy into your compatibility fit. Begin at the beginning – are they responsive to your request for information? Are they forthright and expeditious to decide whether the opportunity to develop your formulation or fill your product is a good fit for both parties? Whatever it is you need from your CDMO from a project perspective, early signs of their performance in communicating can be an intuitive glance into the trust and compatibility you seek.

As the reliance on contract partners increases, it will become even more important to consider the dating game. Make a tailored assessment based on the project requirements or reach out to a trusted source for recommendations on a fitting partner, beyond capability. Spending time upfront selecting a trusted supplier could make the difference in the long run and keep your partnership going for the long haul.



Singota Solutions is a US based CDMO in Bloomington, Indiana. Singota specializes in formulation development and aseptic fill finish for injectable projects. Once a formulation is established, Singota utilizes state of the art robotic filling technology and focuses on smaller batch size requirements. For more information, visit Singota.com to explore how Singota has established itself as a one-stop solution for all your developmental needs.

Contact solutions@singota.com to schedule a meeting with our business development team to further discuss your current or future projects.