

IT HELP FOR SITES

TechTeam Gears Up

Say you spent a lot of money on the latest and greatest electronic data capture (EDC) solution, and the software purveyors came out and set it up and put your staff through training for a day or two, and then ... shook your hand and disappeared.

Now what? What to do about help-desk services? What if several sites suddenly need laptops? And training? Or help getting on the Internet? Or someone to manage their server?

Site Shipments

That's the hole in the market that **TechTeam Global** (Nasdaq: TEAM) is trying to fill. The Southfield, Mich.-based company provides technical support for many industries. And it has a dedicated clinical trial division that is poised to expand. TechTeam does understand the ins and outs of regulatory compliance. About 70 of its 3,000 employees are focused on clinical-trials clients exclusively.

Joanna Gutkowski, manager of TechTeam's eight-year-old global eclinical services team, explains that the company does site assessments (calling the sites or hospitals to verify that they have the equipment needed to participate in the study). If needed, TechTeam ships out laptops, scanners, or whatever is lacking. The firm also works on Internet connectivity, conducts onsite training and remotely manages networks. They also help with prelaunch for application validation.

Supported Products

Gutkowski says the company supports both EDC applications and e-diaries. In alphabetical order, the supported systems are from: Arrowhead, Bioluming, CRF, Lincoln, Medidata, Oracle and Phase Forward. TechTeam can also support home-grown client-developed or proprietary applications.

The company is particularly proud of its investigator-site assessment capabilities. "TechTeam has developed a web-based clinical site assessment tool that can be used to collect any data typically needed by a client," says Gutkowski. "The tool's scanning component runs using Ajax code, which allows for data to be extracted without any additional plug-ins or cookies needing to be installed on the client PC. In the event that a client or site does not have the capability of using the web-based tool, TechTeam has manual processes in place to gather the data with the same level of quality."

The company currently supports about 400 clinical trials, in 25 languages, across 14,000 sites worldwide. TechTeam's trials personnel are spread across offices in Brussels, Belgium; Bucharest, Romania; Stockholm, Sweden; and Detroit, Michigan.

Currently, TechTeam is working with six big pharma clients, one biotech, and two software vendors (they subcontract with solutions providers to provide a more complete service).

Dell Transplant

"The pharma industry is very structured and also very controlled," Gutkowski says. "Confidentiality and data protection process adherence is critical—much more than in most other industries. In this industry, there is no room for personal interpretation when providing support services." TechTeam's main competitors in the space, says Gutkowski, are the large IT consultancies such as Accenture, Cognizant, C3i and IBM.

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TechTeam's big clients in other industries include the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. What's the company's biggest challenge? Says Chris Donohue, TechTeam's VP of global strategy and marketing, "Getting the name out. No one's ever heard of us. We just don't have a marketing and sales orientation."

But that's soon to change. TechTeam just got a new president and CEO, Gary Cotshott, formerly VP and general manager of the Dell Services business unit. During his tenure, Dell's business unit grew its revenue from \$250 million to \$5.5 billion. At TechTeam, Cotshott has embarked on a reorganization in order to prepare for the future.

Layoffs & Hiring

TechTeam let go of approximately 60 people in the process. But it is simultaneously in hiring mode to fill different, newly created jobs. As part of the restructuring, the company is picking certain industries where it believes it can win a disproportionate share of the market, says Donohue. TechTeam will focus on those. "We can't go in all directions and still be manageable," says Donohue. "We have to go in calculated directions." Pharma is one of those.

The company plans to seek more work in the research space. In their sights: pharma and biotech companies, EDC and e-diary software vendors, as well as contract research organizations (CROs). Pretty much everybody. Gutkowski says she hopes to have snagged two or three new clients by the end of the year. —by **Suz Redfearn**