

In-Pharma-Technologist

Group offers "pharma leadership on demand"

By Phil Taylor

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A UK company has been launched with the aim of providing high level management expertise to pharmaceutical companies on an "on-demand" basis.

The new company, called TranScrip, is effectively a network of senior and medium-level pharmaceutical specialists that can fill gaps in pharma companies – for example providing expertise in a non-core therapeutic category – as and when they arise.

Paul Branthwaite, Senior Partner of TranScrip, said in an interview: *"We're not a CRO, and we're not an interim agency,"* he stressed. *"We sit somewhere between the two, in the sense that we are delivering really critical core competencies in a way that can allow clients to access them at will."*

Interims are usually one individual, he added. Their competencies may be spot on for a particular function, but are inevitably narrow. TranScrip's approach is to provide one source for a whole range of functions using a layered approach: senior partners serve as project leaders, and can access a raft of middle-range experts as required.

It's also a dissimilar model to contract research organisations (CROs), he said, which rely on volume and have low margins. Outsourcing tends to be limited to fairly junior roles, and CROs are essentially marketing a commodity of clinical research associates, junior regulatory affairs staff, medical writers etc, he said. Senior figures tend to be tasked with bringing in business and are *"sliced extremely thinly"* across projects.

Branthwaite believes the time is right for a new model.

"Now we're seeing companies start to cut entire swathes of competency at a relatively senior level," he said. *"We believe that shift will accelerate – why have a very heavy headcount if your pipeline is contracting?"*

TranScrip can provide senior, medium level and operational staff, and says that could be an attractive option when a company does not have the relevant expertise in a particular function or therapeutic category in house.

"We build the team to reflect the need, then when the team isn't needed, we leave."

Citing one example, Branthwaite described a scenario in which a small biopharmaceutical company, faced with bringing three products into the clinic, put together a plan involving a significant hike in headcount.

TranScrip offered an alternative solution which meant that the firm had to employ fewer staff – by an order of magnitude – but could still maintain best practice. The approach also provides complete transparency on cost, he noted.

TranScrip officially came into being earlier this month, although the partners have been actively working in this kind of capacity for some time, and it already works with three of the top 10 pharmaceutical companies and a range of smaller clients.

Work often relates to a specific therapeutic area. For example, one client had need of expertise in ophthalmology, but really only needed senior-level input once a week. *"In a situation like that it makes no sense at all to hire an ophthalmologist full time."*

TranScrip already has high-level capacity in infectious disease, cardio-renal, cardiometabolic, oncology and central nervous system, and is adding to its network with leading specialists all the time, said Branthwaite.

"We've taken a long time to bring these people together. The whole object is that we can cross reference each other's competency so the client gets the best of all possible worlds."