



# 11 Reasons Why Clinical Study Teams Should Use SharePoint for Collaboration



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The drug pipeline of a pharmaceutical company is the driver of the future bottom line. The decisions, efficiencies, and the method by which the drug pipeline moves through the development process, determine how big or small the future bottom line is going to be. Consequently, R&D teams and committees play a major role in determining the size of revenue streams for years to come. Further complicating this puzzle are the dynamics of the “new normal” in the life sciences industry:

- 1) Partnerships are increasing
- 2) Alliances are increasing
- 3) CRO outsourcing is increasing
- 4) Virtual teams are in place and often working remotely

Unfortunately, the way teams work together has not progressed in step with industry changes over the last five years. With the blockbuster era clearly behind us, and the continued struggle during our tough economic times, the need for teams to evolve has never been more pressing. But have we tried to make teams work more efficiently? Not really, especially when you consider the widespread adoption of collaboration tools, such as Microsoft SharePoint, in the life sciences industry. SharePoint is being utilized in many life science companies, but not in the area where they can receive the greatest value, the drug pipeline. For R&D teams and committees to truly collaborate more efficiently, they need to change their thinking and behaviors. It is important for more people to be allowed to have access to additional information, but at the same time not pummel them with spurious information.

There are many benefits in using collaboration tools, but sometimes they are difficult to grasp. While some are easy to visualize and understand, others are better characterized as micro productivity gains that in summation add up to significant efficiencies. Some benefits are:

- 1) Standard project management tools for tracking risks, issues, decisions, etc., and the ability to easily aggregate the data into a portfolio view.
- 2) Enhanced meeting management capabilities using SharePoint Meeting Workspaces. There are tremendous benefits that can be gained from using Meeting Workspaces for planning effective meetings.
- 3) Partners, CROs and virtual team members accessing content without the use of VPN.
- 4) Ideation-collaboration sites allowing team members to obtain input from many more people. Team members can determine the best way to design a protocol and the best recruitment strategies given a therapeutic area’s specific needs, or cultural differences.
- 5) Finding experts. Need an opinion on tumor regression for a rare cancer? Typically, companies pay a consultant a lot of money to acquire an opinion, but the expertise may already exist in your company.
- 6) Structured and consistent content governance across all drug teams.
- 7) Team members knowing where to find the authoritative source of content.
- 8) Securely managed content in one location for a given compound from early discovery phase to market launch.
- 9) Less email overall, and fewer emails with attachments, which frequently go out of date.
- 10) Automatic version control of documents.
- 11) Alerts notifying team members when key documents and lists have been modified.

The use of SharePoint collaboration software for content management has become a critical part of today's drug discovery process. SharePoint offers several benefits that can be directly used in pipeline management. It has laid a foundation which enables researchers to collaborate and search on various content. The amount of data generated during a transition of a single compound from preclinical discovery to commercialization can easily produce too much information, thus there is a greater demand of a chemically aware search algorithm that supplements SharePoint. This enables researchers to query for information in a more intuitive and effective way.

Furthermore, users can also tag documents by drawing a structure and associating it with the related content. Utilizing SharePoint will also ensure that researchers and scientists from organizations of all sizes can share, analyze, and report vast amounts of scientific data in an easy to use web interface. This will greatly increase collaboration and productivity among extended teams and across any life science organization. People across the organization can quickly monitor and analyze up-to-date information, gain key insights needed to support effective decision making, and give their business a competitive edge. In general, better collaboration will improve research decision making.

Given these numerous benefits, why are more pharmaceutical companies not utilizing collaboration sites to manage their drug pipeline? The short answer to this question is that change isn't easy, specifically:

- 1) It's difficult to obtain agreements to get research teams, early development teams, late stage teams, and operating committees to understand and utilize SharePoint sites.
- 2) Companies do not want to move to a more open access model for content, even though it is the right model for maximizing benefits from collaboration.
- 3) Companies do not want team content on the extranet, even though the content is secure and more team members are remote.
- 4) Changing behavior is difficult.

In summary, almost all pharmaceutical companies should seek to improve drug pipeline collaboration internally and externally. The change in workforce requires it. Partnerships and outsourcing require it. The end of the blockbuster era and the poor economy require it. Better drug pipeline collaboration is a necessity these days. Start now before it's too late. Keep in mind, almost every pharmaceutical company has already purchased SharePoint!

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