The right technology and team help CRO MMS focus on client success

“With Zelta, we’re able to stay competitive and offer [study sponsors] what they need — and sometimes more.”

As a contracted research organization, MMS Holdings searched extensively for alternatives to complicated, expensive clinical data management systems (CDMSs). It needed a trusted partner, economical pricing and a flexible solution. The company selected the Zelta™ clinical trials platform by Merative™.

From their first week of training with Zelta, the MMS team quickly gained confidence applying their experience to the user-friendly technology. Today, the contract organization (CRO) is winning more work.

To win projects in support of important clinical trials and strengthen its position in a highly competitive market, the CRO needed two things: the right CDMS and the right price. By connecting with the team behind the Zelta solution, MMS got both, and more. The MMS team's support of their customers earned them new and repeat business — so that children and adults get the important treatments they need.

In 2020, MMS relied on Zelta for

2X

more studies than the prior 3 years combined

Of MMS customers who incorporate the solution into their studies

95%

give the CRO repeat business

Among all study sponsors that MMS supports

70%

use the solution's advanced modules

“We started using Zelta ‘out of the box’ and then added the additional functionalities. Over time, that has really helped us strengthen our value to our sponsors.”

Doreen Van Huyssteen
Senior Manager, Data Management, MMS Holdings (South Africa)

Safety and efficacy. Accuracy and cost savings.

For any sponsor of a clinical trial, efficiently gathering, exchanging and categorizing patient data are all critical to the goal: reaching patients with safe treatments that meet US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other regulatory requirements, and that can improve or even save lives. The challenges of both the study data and technology are the focus of MMS. Its work with small- to midsized sponsors of clinical trials is important to bringing treatments to market for people with pressing healthcare conditions, including those with orphan indications for adults and children with rare diseases.

Five years ago, one of the major challenges MMS leaders embraced was the complexities involved in automating nuanced data sets, tasks which daily impacted the work of their global team of 800. “Very cumbersome and time consuming” is how the leadership described workflow around data collection, validation and data review for their past electronic data capture (EDC) systems. It can also be very costly.

Unknown then, obviously, was that a pandemic would dramatically add to the complexity for the patients, researchers and clinicians doing this important work. MMS would need specific technologies to keep its teams and studies running.

Trust and confidence in the data

The team of specialists at MMS understood their customers' challenges related to CDMSs, including EDC systems, data entry, data validation and data quality, and regulatory compliance. For more than 15 years, they've lived it. With its knowledge of the industry and with its customers' goals in mind, MMS engaged Merative to implement its Zelta clinical trials platform.

The MMS team dove into extensive training to quickly maximize the out-of-the-box features of Zelta. And as they began adopting its functionalities, Merative and MMS teams aligned closely to ensure that the solution accounted for the nuances of study designs, including EDC systems, for each clinical trial.

"The Merative team was very responsive, very willing to hear our feedback," says Doreen Van Huyssteen, Senior Manager, Data Management at MMS in South Africa. "Partnering with Merative, we were able to continuously improve both the technology and the services [we offered our customers]. We worked together to meet our customers' needs."

Further, since Zelta uses cloud-based technology, teams following tight timelines could access clinical trial data worldwide — in near real-time and within their current workflows. In brief, they could organize and analyze report data from almost anywhere in the world.

With these benefits, MMS reports it was able to reduce build time by three weeks, compared to requirements of larger EDC platforms.

"This means we were able to address issues and speed decision-making to avoid problems proactively, to keep clinical studies on the timeline," Van Huyssteen says.

> "Some sponsors need a very basic database. Others need a lot of functionality. With Zelta, we're able to stay competitive and offer what they need, and sometimes more."
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> Doreen Van Huyssteen
> Senior Manager, Data Management,
> MMS Holdings (South Africa)

Gains for the CRO, patients and clinicians

Independence in using Zelta led to important gains, the MMS team reports. They saved time and expenses because they were able to start up support for their sponsors' clinical trials independently. And responsive to evolving needs, they explored new ways to use Zelta for many clinical trials. For one sponsor-customer, for example, they offered specific modules for randomization and drug shipment.

"That was entirely new territory for us with this sponsor," Van Huyssteen says. "Zelta helped the customer do everything they wanted to do, and a little bit more. Together, we were able to save them a lot of money."

The performance and value MMS offered led quickly to repeat business, to two more studies using the new modules. Over time, seven out of 10 MMS customers used advanced modules. Specifically, they tended to add on data management services, data migrator tools and the randomization schedule after going live, they say.

Because MMS offered such a full range of services, its customers discovered efficiencies across their entire projects, especially when also using MMS expertise in medical writing, programming, biostatistics and other services.

"It's rewarding to be able to serve our customers with new functionalities, to give them what they need and want," says Michelle Gayari, Executive Vice President, Global Operational Excellence and Innovation at MMS. Even with their new customers, they report that when they do one study with them very successfully, the next year, they might get five more, "because they like what they see," she says.

Since 2018, MMS reports, its number of new customers has increased by 60%. And 95% of existing customers that use Zelta give the CRO repeat business. With this success, MMS staff has grown 150% in the last five years.

"We've already seen in working with Zelta Development how we can work together to make small tweaks that make a big impact," Gayari says. "Looking ahead, we're excited to see where this goes."

MMS leaders say they are already positioned well for growing trends. One is the increase in decentralized clinical trials (DCTs), which they support using Zelta technology.

"With Zelta, we're a solution for customers as they move to doing more DCTs," Gayari says. "We have the track record now, and we have the tools to help them."

About MMS Holdings

MMS External Link is an award-winning, data-focused CRO that supports the pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device industries with a proven, scientific approach to complex trial data and regulatory submission challenges. Strong industry experience and a data-driven approach make MMS a valuable CRO partner. Industry experts across four continents support programs 24×7 with a 97% sponsor satisfaction rating.

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Visit: www.merative.com/clinical-development

About Merative

Merative is a data, analytics and technology partner for the health industry, including providers, health plans, employers, life sciences companies and governments. With trusted technology and human expertise, Merative works with clients to drive real progress. Merative helps clients orient information and insights around the people they serve to improve decision-making and performance. Merative, formerly IBM Watson Health, became a new standalone company as part of Francisco Partners in 2022. Learn more at www.merative.com

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