Simplify, Support, Scale

GSK's Blueprint for a Better Clinical Study Start-Up

In clinical research, simplification isn't a luxury. It's a necessity. At GSK, that guiding principle is redefining their approach to study start-up, site engagement, and operational systems. Through bold investments in technology, including automation, and a clear focus on reducing site burden, GSK is working to turn administrative obstacles into opportunities for connection and progress.

As part of our Collaborate Forward series, SCRS sat down with members of GSK's clinical operations and engagement teams to learn how they're moving beyond static systems and into a future of smart, streamlined collaboration powered by technology.

The takeaway? With the right mindset and infrastructure, friction can be replaced with flow.

Project Culture: Listening, Learning, and Leading Change

GSK's site engagement model centers around a key belief: ***sites are an extension of patients.*** That human-first perspective is reflected in their dedicated **Site Engagement Leads**, specialists who act as strategic liaisons between internal GSK teams and the investigative sites conducting clinical trials.

These Engagement Leads are so much more than simple points of contact. They gather insights through annual **Voice of the Customer** surveys and bring forward actionable feedback that influences how systems are built, how contracts are negotiated, and how training is delivered.

By elevating site engagement to a strategic priority, GSK is creating the conditions for deeper trust and faster action.

Process & Systems: From Passwords to Progress

GSK's transformation starts at the source: site-facing systems. Historically, sites cited multiple logins, password resets, and inconsistent access as major pain points. GSK responded with a series of bold moves:

- Adopted Microsoft authentication to reduce login friction
- Introduced single sign-on across sponsors for Clinical Data Management System (CDMS) access
- Enabled automated account provisioning using Clinical Trial Master File (CTMF) data

The impact of integrating technology to accelerate this process is astounding. The new automation of accounts through CTMF data dropped timelines from **four months to fewer than three days**. And, by targeting users about upcoming CMDS changes, combined with white glove service, **40% of total users had transitioned before the new systems were launched** and support call volume was well below expectations.

By anticipating the site experience and offering proactive support, GSK is proving that streamlined systems lead to accelerated studies.

People & Connection: Training That Works for Sites, Not Just Systems

Training is also evolving at GSK. Gone are the days of static eLearning that doesn't match real-world workflows. Today, **training is assigned based on roles and system needs**, and the company is piloting just-in-time, risk-based, and AI-supported training models.

The vision is a responsive learning experience where site staff receive context-sensitive guidance in the moment they need it, whether through AI-guided walkthroughs or bite-sized modules aligned to task complexity.

This approach echoes SCRS's call to reduce training burden and create systems that support, not slow down, clinical progress.

Progress: Building Bridges to New Sites and Faster Start-Up

GSK is also intentional about how it identifies and nurtures new or emerging research sites. Rather than defaulting to institutional prestige, **site selection is driven by patient population fit**.

Even when a site isn't immediately activated, GSK invests early in relationships and supports new, or, "green shoot" sites through:

- CRO partners who assist with SOP integration and staff onboarding

The vision is a responsive learning experience where site staff receive context-sensitive guidance in the moment they need it, whether through AI-guided walkthroughs or bite-sized modules aligned to task complexity.

- Resources and guidance from SCRS and TransCelerate

It's a deliberate way to grow the research ecosystem while maintaining high-quality standards.

Payments, Budgets, and Contracts: Automating the Administrative Backbone

Administrative burden doesn't stop at logins. It extends into contracts, budgets, and payment tracking. GSK is tackling these head-on through the following actions:

- Rolled out automated payment systems in 50 percent of countries in which they operate
- Provided tools to sites to track invoices and payments independently
- Launched a contract automation platform, now live in 30+ countries, that:
  - Pulls data from CTMS to populate contracts
  - Enables reuse of previously negotiated terms
  - Provides real-time visibility at global, country, and site levels

Next up, GSK is exploring AI-enabled contract review and budgeting tools that connect protocol design with downstream financial operations. **This ensures transparency, speed, and stronger fiscal planning from study start to finish.**

Collaboration: A Willing Partner in Cross-Sponsor Alignment

GSK understands that site burden is often multiplied by inconsistency across sponsors. That's why GSK is open to sharing training curricula and aligning on automation standards across the industry.

By contributing to broader consistency and transparency, GSK is reinforcing the idea that collaboration isn't a competition. It's a shared responsibility.

Collaborate Forward Takeaways

GSK's experience offers key lessons for how sponsors can drive faster, smarter, and more site-friendly research:

- **Automate with intention.** Reduce friction in access, contracting, and payments by designing systems around user needs.
- **Elevate engagement.** Make site-facing roles strategic, not just supportive, by listening and acting on feedback.
- **Modernize training.** Move beyond static modules and toward responsive, risk-based learning models.
- **Support new voices.** Engage new, or, "green shoot" sites early and provide pathways for success.
- **Collaborate across the aisle.** Standardize where possible to reduce duplication and build trust with sites.

From real-time activation to real-world insights, GSK is showing that clinical trial readiness starts with empathy and scales with smart infrastructure.

Because when systems work better, people can too. And that's how we **Collaborate Forward.**

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GSK

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Let's keep moving forward. Together.

Learn more about Collaborate Forward
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