

Buying Guide Considerations for the Functional Service Provider Solution

Bill Donovan, CEO/Founder

Pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms face ever-greater pressures for early success. A crowded field of clinical trials begins each year; most do not survive the proof-of-concept rigors of the early phases. Uncertain results and unpredictable costs create a volatile environment. Every pharmaceutical or biotechnology executive values a partner who can limit the overall risk of failure and improve the chance of commercial success.

Finding the right partner capable of creating a strong team to deliver results remains challenging. Given the cost of trials and the relatively low return-on-investment from early results, it's essential that new projects launch under optimum conditions. Experienced life sciences leaders know that a carefully constructed clinical operations team can contribute mightily to a successful outcome. Within the modern competitive landscape, a customized scalable resource solution – designed correctly and deployed in a collaborative partnership – can be critical to success.

The Functional Service Provider (FSP) model remains one of the most popular resourcing solutions. It's a relatively common option. Unfortunately, its key attributes are not well defined. - Bill Donovan, CEO/Founder, Wright Avenue Partners

Wright Avenue Partners has a profound experience on crafting customized resourcing solutions. As experts in providing human capital in challenging clinical settings, we have a valuable perspective on the rapidly changing talent sourcing landscape. The FSP solution requires a strategic approach. Wright Avenue Partners has developed a checklist of essential considerations that we believe foster quality standards likely to promote increased return on the FSP investment.

Your FSP provider must work in a collaborative partnership to assess client needs and identify solutions. To navigate these complexities, Wright Avenue Partners recommends specific buying considerations to deploy a successful FSP. Every client should demand these guaranteed characteristics from its FSP delivery partner:

- Confidence and trust: A willingness to identify complex needs quickly and find solutions; a partnership that anticipates future requirements.
- Consistent collaboration: Daily interactions to identify, understand and resolve your project challenges.
- Discipline: Rigorous, repeatable processes always directed toward solutions.
- Transparency: Every action must be clear and visible to stakeholders.
- Flexibility: The commitment and work ethic to anticipate and adapt to your evolving needs.

Defining essential characteristics is just one element of a strategic partnership. Certain clients only need intensive resourcing to manage a specific challenge. Many others prefer a full service CRO solution. What does not vary, however, is the need for proven and repeatable processes to meet client needs.

Serving clients goes beyond the essential characteristics of a sound strategic partnership. We have identified additional factors we believe should be part of your buying considerations before agreeing to a FSP partnership. Each point should be considered within the context of your specific needs.

- **Level of involvement:** To what extent will the pharmaceutical/biotechnology client be involved in identifying talent? Will the client want to review CVs and resumes in detail? Or is the preference to allow the FSP provider to match job roles with professional resources? Make this decision early.
- **Your place or theirs:** What are the preferences regarding work location, technology infrastructure and standard operating procedures? In most cases, due to co-employment issues, the team is usually housed at a provider location or in a work-from-home set-up. Critical points to consider.
- **Measurement:** How will performance be reported and measured? Who will be the keeper of key metrics? Who will report this data? How often? How will it be communicated?
- **Task management:** Who manages the day-to-day tasks? Who monitors and interprets results? How is the work plan developed and communicated? You will need a good plan to implement this.
- **Contract details:** How will milestones be established and deliverables defined? Who will monitor and evaluate quality of the results? What special considerations are required concerning billable hours or deliverables? How will the billing be organized?

At Wright Avenue Partners, our pioneering work has helped us understand and integrate these insights into FSP partnerships. Our insights help provide the essential counsel. Before signing your next contract, talk to Wright Avenue Partners. We will help maximize your chances for commercial success.

Your comments and questions are valued and encouraged. Contact author Bill Donovan at Wright Avenue Partners, PO BOX 5784, Cary, North Carolina, 27512, 919 414 2692, bill.donovan@wrightave.com. To learn more about Wright Avenue Partners, visit www.wrightave.com or contact us at info@wrightave.com. SAS® and all other SAS Institute Inc. product or service names are registered trademarks or trademarks of SAS Institute Inc. in the USA and other countries. ® indicates USA registration. Other brand and product names are trademarks of their respective companies.