

# Case Study: Enhancing Clinical Pharmacology Recruitment at Vertex Pharmaceuticals

## Client Overview

Vertex Pharmaceuticals, a leading biotech firm known for its innovative approaches to drug discovery, encountered significant challenges in recruiting Clinical Pharmacologists for their expanding clinical trials. With urgent projects demanding expertise in pharmacokinetics and drug metabolism, they sought the expertise of our team.

## The Challenges

**Specialized Talent:** The need for candidates with exacting skills in clinical pharmacology and pharmacometrics was substantial. Vertex needed to reduce its discovery workforce to invest in the development of its key therapies, making it difficult to attract the perfect match.

**Competitive Market:** Large pharmaceutical companies and research institutions were also aggressively competing for this scarce talent.

**Urgency:** The pressing need to start new trials on time necessitated swift and effective recruitment.

## Strategic Approach

### 1. In-Depth Market Analysis

**Targeted Research:** Our team performed a detailed analysis of the clinical pharmacology job market, pinpointing where top talent was located, including universities, conferences, and industry hubs.

### 2. Customized Candidate Sourcing

**Niche Platforms:** We leveraged specialized publications and utilized our vast network (before LinkedIn) to engage passive candidates.

**Academic and Professional Partnerships:** We forged connections with leading pharmacology departments and participated in key conferences such as the American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (ASCPT).

### 3. Innovative Candidate Assessment

**Case Study Simulations:** Recruitment included case studies that reflected Vertex's research scenarios to evaluate candidates' problem-solving skills, technical knowledge, and cultural fit.

**Behavioral Interview Techniques:** Interviews concentrated on candidates' previous experiences in similar research settings to ensure alignment with Vertex's culture.

### 4. Streamlined Recruitment Process

**ATS Implementation:** Utilized an Applicant Tracking System tailored for life sciences, which enhanced the efficiency of application processing and candidate tracking.

**Feedback Loops:** Maintained regular communication with Vertex's hiring managers to refine candidate profiles and hasten decision-making.

### 5. Diversity and Inclusion

**Broad Outreach:** Worked with diversity-focused organizations and academic programs to expand the talent pool, aiming to enrich Vertex's team with diverse perspectives vital for innovative drug development.

## Metrics and Results

- **Time to Hire:** Reduced from 120 to 60 days, achieving a 50% improvement, thus enabling Vertex to initiate trials without delays.
- **Quality of Hire:** 90% of new hires were well-aligned with project requirements, contributing to publications and patents within their first year.
- **Cost Per Hire:** Decreased by 30% due to efficient candidate sourcing and quicker filling of positions.
- **Retention:** All Clinical Pharmacologists hired remained with Vertex beyond the first year, demonstrating a successful match in both skill and company culture.
- **Diversity Impact:** Enhanced the diversity of the clinical team by 25%, promoting a broader range of insights in drug development.
- **Overall impact:** The candidates hired developed Vertex's key asset allowing the program to go to registration. We were tasked to recruit a Director of Clinical Pharmacology with NDA filing experience who filed and approved their #1 asset for Cystic Fibrosis. This drug was overwhelming success for Vertex. It is also a great achievement for the populations who critically need the therapeutic to live.

## Testimonial

*"Hughes and Associates revolutionized our approach to recruiting clinical pharmacologists. Their deep understanding of our technical needs and innovative recruitment strategies ensured we met our project timelines with a team that was both skilled and culturally aligned with our mission."*

- Dr. Ene Ette, Sr. Director of Clinical Pharmacology at Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

## Conclusion

This case study illustrates how a specialized, proactive recruitment strategy can navigate the complexities of hiring in the competitive field of clinical pharmacology. By emphasizing quality, speed, and cultural fit, Hughes and Associates enabled Vertex Pharmaceuticals to build a formidable team ready to advance their research initiatives.

## References

This case study takes inspiration from recruitment strategies employed by firms like Klein Hersh for executive search in life sciences, and insights from Proclinical and TestGorilla on skills-based hiring in clinical research contexts.