

HUNT Services, LLC Phoenix, Ariz.

An interview with Amanda Drake, founder and director

How and why was HUNT Services founded?

HUNT was formed in order to help create powerful partnerships between clinical research sites and pharmaceutical/device industry leaders. Having a strong marketing background, I was previously manager of the study acquisition and business development department at an independent multi-therapeutic research site. While working there I was fortunate to build relationships with many clinical development specialists throughout the industry as well as to connect with other sites that participated in the same clinical trials as we did. I realize how expensive it is for many sites to employ a full-time person to bring in new study opportunities. Oftentimes, this task falls on site staff, responsible for conducting the studies, which spreads them very thin. Also, although quality sites may be good at getting repeat business, it's very hard for them to expand into other therapeutic areas with the same company or to meet new pharmaceutical companies and CROs. Therefore, building on the reputation of my home site, which is now a HUNT member, I began representing additional sites with the sponsors and CROs that I'd been working with. HUNT's goal is to offer sites a continuous pipeline of new study work so that they're able to focus on high performance and seeing patients. What HUNT can offer sponsors is a coalition of high-performing investigators across therapeutic areas. HUNT also represents the entrepreneurial spirit now found among women in the career force. Yesterday's generation of women speak to our younger generation

with encouragement and conviction—and now I am living the American Dream.

What is HUNT's business model?

HUNT is a coalition of premier sites across the U.S., with HUNT as the sites' central business development specialist. Member sites pay HUNT a monthly membership fee at a cost that is much less than employing someone full-time and is independent of study budgets. For example, sites can start up 10 trials and it's the same monthly fee. HUNT represents only two sites in each therapeutic area as well as multi-specialty sites. I visit each site before I sign them up to see if we're comfortable working with each other and to get to know them. The main work I do for sites is contact appropriate sponsors for them and pursue their specific research interests, basically acting as the sites' business development director. I don't charge sponsors a fee nor do I stand in the way of sponsor/CRO-site relationships. Once I'm contacted about a study opportunity, I direct it immediately to the appropriate investigators. HUNT's members get not only full-time representation to sponsors and CROs and can pick among any study opportunities available, but I also offer other services. For instance, many sponsors and CROs have databases that they use to search for investigators. I can complete those database entries on behalf of investigators by submitting their direct contact information. I can also help develop marketing materials and/or CVs. Site enhancement services are also available. Those services can all be pur-

Year founded: 2007

2008 expected member sites: 9

Telephone: (602) 288-4681

Email: amanda.drake@we-hunt.com

Web site: www.we-hunt.com

chased a la carte, but they're also offered as a bundle to HUNT members.

What challenges do you face?

The number one challenge is the negative stigma associated with study finders. I always steered clear of these groups also. You have to pay unfair fees based on proposed study budgets; however, you can't predict patient enrollment and you can't predict who will complete a study. Study finder groups often get in the way of site operations also by handling regulatory, negotiating budgets, etc. Also, with other study finders, sponsors have no way of determining the experience of the investigators who are being represented and they have to pay a fee.

What are your plans for growth?

My site recruitment strategy involves working with five potential sites across the U.S. at once. We currently represent about 20 different therapeutic areas and they're areas well-represented by trials in the industry but there are several others that I'd like to get into as well. I'd like to fill all the slots available for HUNT—two sites for each specific therapeutic area, and eventually 30 to 40 slots for multispecialty sites. This will be arranged so that no sites are competing geographically. We want HUNT to be the premier opportunity for sites to be involved in clinical research and for CROs and sponsors to know that it's hard to become part of HUNT, therefore representing the best of the best sites.

CWWeekly (ISSN 1528-5731)

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HUNT Services, LLC

3120 E. Union Hills Drive

Phoenix, AZ 85050

602-288-4681 T

866-288-4849 F

info@we-hunt.com