



A conversation with
Solomon Babani,
Celtic Pharma Development Services



Solomon joined Celtic Pharma Development Services (CPDS) in 2006 as Director of Outsourcing and Vendor Management. In this capacity, Solomon is responsible for implementing and overseeing the entire outsourcing process and strategy for all functions (pre-clinical, clinical, regulatory, manufacturing, etc.) within CPDS. In addition, Solomon is responsible for continuing to cultivate and build relationships with all of the vendors working with CPDS. He will be participating in the panel discussion "New Pharma Business models from virtual Pharma Companies to Functional Service Providers".

Your current role has you blazing the way at a virtual pharmaceutical company; tell us about that pharmaceutical model and why it works.

Solomon: It's very exciting to be a part of Celtic Pharma, the development group. We're actually a private equity fund with the development company attached on to the private equity fund. The private equity fund goes out and buys pharmaceutical products that are mid way through their development life cycle. We buy the product, we take ownership of the IP, and the development company is responsible for overseeing the strategy and managing all of the CROs, the labs, other service providers, consultants, excreta, in conducting the studies and developing the products. It's a really incredible model because it allows us to leverage very well off of the expertise and experience off of all of our service providers, CROs, Labs, excreta. And because of that, it allows an interesting dynamic to develop in how we work those teams together. Really, it allows us to eliminate some of the duplication of resources that is often found within the industry.

You are a speaker for Central Labs West is in Feb and Partnerships in Clinical trials is in April, how are these two conference different?

Solomon: I think the fundamental difference is pretty simple. The Partnerships in Clinical Trails Conference in April is of a much broader scope. The really unique thing about the Central Labs West conference this coming February is that it is very focused event around outsourcing and partnerships issues related to and working with Central and specialty Labs, ECD core labs, imaging labs, logistical suppliers and other vendors that work in this space. Because of the focus, it brings together a really nice group of both outsourcing professionals, project managers within Pharma and biotech that are responsible for managing those relationships after the contract is in place, as well as obviously all of the service providers and all of the relevant individuals there.

With the economic downturn, what new trends are you seeing in outsourcing?

Solomon: I think what's really fascinating is that while Celtic, which was founded a little over four years ago, was sort of blazing the way, as you said, in terms of the virtual model. What we're hearing about and seeing is a lot of larger companies that are exploring how to leverage off of what virtual model is doing. A lot of companies are thinking about taking parts of their portfolio, some companies with even their entire portfolio, and managing in a virtual manner. I think that's what exciting, while we were the leader in this area, we're seeing other companies exploring and doing this. The person I'm co-presenting with on the panel at Central Labs West, Terri Robertson, works for Eli Lilly's course group, which is also functioning in a virtual manner.

Do you have advice for smaller pharmaceutical companies to streamline their operational processes?

Solomon: I think it really goes back to the first question of why the virtual pharmaceutical model is so successful. It really leverages or looks to leverage off the experience or expertise found within the service provider, the consultant, the lab, whatever it may be. If that's done well, as I mentioned before, it should allow for really reducing the duplication of resources. Everything can be done properly through the service provider. One of the things that we do is manage many of our 3rd party providers, including labs, through the primary CRO. This also reduces the number of touch points and the amount of duplications of resources going on. The other final point that I would give, it applies to small and all companies when you're working with CROs and labs and other providers, is really to watch and check yourself and your teams on the level of micromanagement that you're doing. It really is a hindrance to team productivity and efficiency and if you can set up some sort of ages and checkpoints on whether or not you are falling into a micromanagement scenario, I think that will be very beneficial.