

# Consider the ‘Five Fs’ When Choosing a CRO

We all know experience, teamwork, and industry know-how are key qualities to consider when choosing a CRO. But when you want the best CRO for your clinical trial, it might be easier to think of the five Fs: familiar, fit, fast, flexible, and forward thinking.

## Familiar

Make sure you choose a team that’s been around the pharmaceutical block — that they have quite a few years of experience in developing and managing clinical trials. You want to ensure the team can complete your study with impeccable monitoring, data collection, and analysis. So the team you choose should be familiar with all phases of clinical development, from strategic consulting to post-marketing studies and patient registries. Has your chosen team worked across all therapeutic areas? Experience in multiple countries is also a plus.

## Fit

Bigger isn’t always better. Sometimes it’s more effective to choose a CRO that fits your unique needs. You want a team with whom you can build lasting, collaborative relationships and who has a strong understanding of the challenges you face. A good fit means your chosen CRO can quickly assemble team members with just the right experience to fit the requirements of your study. You should choose a team that can scale their services up or down to meet the needs of your specific project — a thought partner, if you will, to really listen to your company’s vision and help turn it into a reality.

## Fast

Getting your product to market is top of mind with your company and should be with the CRO you choose to handle your business. Make sure your CRO can quickly respond to questions that may arise in between scheduled discussions. Sometimes a smaller, niche CRO can assemble the expertise of all employees, including founders, to more quickly meet your deliverables. And pulling from the cache of all team members can help your CRO anticipate issues and stay ahead of deadlines.

## Flexible

We’ve all heard the terms *study data tabulation model (SDTM)* and *clinical data interchange standards consortium (CDISC)* when talking about standardized data for clinical trials. Yes, familiarity with standard data formats is still important when selecting a CRO. But these tools are not the only ones in the shed. You want a CRO that considers CDISC and SDTM for every database but that’s flexible enough to work with any format you provide. Find a CRO who has an effective data warehouse or repository to convert and import your data, regardless of file type.

## Forward Thinking

CROs with strong leaders who empower decision-makers at every level can help bring inventive ideas to fruition, allowing them the authority to push creative strategies forward, even when they aren’t the most popular. Thinking outside the box takes courage, but when you hire a CRO with forward-thinking members, you can trust that team is working in your best interest, not just following the crowd.