



## **Virtual outsourcing training from PCMG**

### **Report on the October presentation of a new Outsourcing Essentials training event delivered via Zoom**

It is vital that Clinical Outsourcing professionals have the competences to perform well in their roles and this is particularly the case for relatively inexperienced people who are new to the role and in some cases new to the pharmaceutical industry. PCMG is ideally placed to provide excellent, informed training on outsourcing or procurement of clinical and non-clinical R&D services. The PCMG Essentials and Advanced Outsourcing courses have been highly successful and over-subscribed for every presentation since their inception. The quality of the learning experience is very much at the forefront of everything the trainers are looking to achieve and their endeavours have been reflected in very good delegate feedback.

The Covid-related restrictions have presented huge challenges for the delivery of high quality, interactive and responsive training. Faced with these challenges, the PCMG training team spent the summer developing a top-quality virtual Essentials Outsourcing program, delivered via the zoom platform which is now so familiar to us all and which allows presentations, video clips, polls, break out groups, white board demonstrations in real time and the opportunity for questions and comments via the “chat” function. All such features are utilised in the course presentation.

The PCMG virtual Essential Outsourcing training course comprises four afternoon sessions of three hours duration per session, plus a pre-event survey for the delegates to provide background information on themselves and some of their outsourcing challenges. This allows the trainers to be better prepared and better able to tailor the delivery of the training materials to the specific needs of the audience. In my experience this is unique amongst training courses and a valuable feature of this not-for-profit training. The trainee goals were as follows:

- ⊗ Getting the basics, learn about best practices and getting a better understanding of the outsourcing process
- ⊗ Do's and don'ts, tools and tricks
- ⊗ New ideas and an awareness of other companies' outsourcing practices
- ⊗ Getting inspiration and increasing the outsourcing network



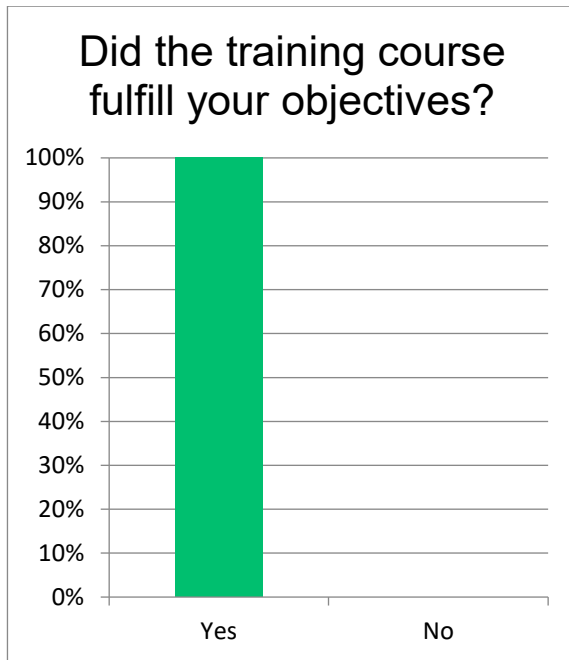
The new, virtual, Essential Outsourcing course was presented for the first time in October to a group of 11 outsourcing professionals. The delivery dates were clustered to allow for continuity, but also broken into bite-sized pieces to avoid delegate fatigue and to allow the training to fit around work commitments. The delegates had a mixture of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, but were united in having relatively little experience specifically within the outsourcing function. One of the key benefits of the course is the highly experienced team of trainers who are able to deliver meaningful outcomes to each individual delegate based on a competency skills framework. This means the learnings are relevant to their unique challenges and provides tips and tools which the delegates can apply in their professional roles.

Pre-course, the work-related topics on which the delegates were seeking specific guidance included:

- ⊗ Keeping track of all request for proposals and contracts
- ⊗ Agreeing on key performance indicators and how to effectively measure them
- ⊗ To be able to align internal and external requests, and to be able to find a meeting point in order to satisfy demand and offer
- ⊗ Stakeholder management
- ⊗ Managing globally agreed processes with the vendor vs. local needs (country specific additional activities and different requirements)
- ⊗ Price negotiations & managing the negotiation with strategic suppliers and decide the best approach depending on the type of activities/type of supplier
- ⊗ Legal negotiations & knowledge; complexity of contracts and amendments in making sure the correct verbiage and legal wording is used.
- ⊗ Understanding the outsourcing landscape and decide on a strategy depending on the different activities and suppliers

The delegates were almost all from mid-sized, international pharma companies and with one delegate from large, global pharma. Surprisingly there were no delegates from smaller, biotech and/or start-up companies, which is consistent with previous courses. Employees from these sectors could be the most likely to benefit from such a course. And secondly there were no delegates from CROs / the service sector, which is again very surprising. CROs are increasingly becoming involved in their own outsourcing as part of building a complex team for a full-service trial, for example, and for sub-contracting activities such as laboratory analyses, specialised imaging, as well as technology offerings to incorporate big data analytics into their service offerings. CRO staff engaged in these activities will benefit from attendance at the PCMG courses, both the Essentials and Advanced Outsourcing courses and are welcomed as equal parties.

Anonymous delegate feedback is a key performance indicator (as we say!) and this event received extremely high appreciation, as have all the training events to date, including:



- ⊗ 100% were satisfied with the course
- ⊗ 100% felt the course fulfilled their objectives
- ⊗ 88% felt there was enough time for discussion with one commenting that the virtual format made open discussion more challenging
- ⊗ 100% felt there were practical tips offered that they could apply in the workplace
- ⊗ 86% felt they were better prepared for their outsourcing role
- ⊗ 25% of delegates commented they would like the same principles applied to outsourcing of non-clinical services and this is an opportunity for future events

Antje Hindahl, PCMG Director and leader of the training function, praised the team for their hard work in designing and delivering an inspiring course that allowed continued learning for delegates from the comfort of their home office and without the additional expenses for travel and accommodation. In particular, Antje praised the new members, Jean Edwards and Pauline van Heiningen, both highly experienced outsourcing professionals and past winners of the PCMG Outstanding Achievement Award.

2021 will hopefully see a return to more normal times. However, the PCMG training team is working hard to prepare a virtual Advanced Outsourcing course, for more experienced outsourcing professionals, and which will complement the Essentials Outsourcing course described here. Indeed, we are delighted to announce the following training program for H1, 2021, which will be delivered virtually:

- **Essentials Outsourcing course for people with up to two years' experience: To be presented on 2, 3, 9, 10 February 2021**
- **Advanced Outsourcing course for people with at least one to two years' experience: To be presented on 25 March and 14, 20, 21 April**

Look out on the website and the PCMG Linked In group for further announcements and to reserve your places.

David Davies