

# Successful Medical Design Outsourcing

As medical device manufacturers embrace the design outsourcing model, Maura Leahy, from Creganna Contract Design offers some insights into what makes a successful design partnership.



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Outsourcing of product manufacture in the medical device industry is a common approach to contain production costs and streamline supply chains. However, in recent years, a new outsourcing trend has emerged within the industry – outsourcing of product design. This practice delivers competitive advantage to medical device manufacturers as accelerated product development timelines and access to specialist design expertise enables them to win the race to market with superior product offerings.

Industry analysts predict that outsourced design engineering for medical devices will exhibit stronger growth over the coming years than any other area of outsourcing such as

component manufacturing, final product assembly or supply chain management.

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viewed simply as suppliers. partnership approach is central to success. So what makes for a successful design outsourcing

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partnership?

### Design Partner Selection

The medical device manufacturer should invest in a rigorous selection process to choose the right design partner. A good starting point is to draw up a checklist of attributes of the design partner imperative to the company commissioning the design project. Areas that may be included in the checklist include quality systems, expertise area, design control systems and support capabilities. This checklist can be used to rank the fit of a range of design companies with the requirements of the project. The commissioning company should always seek references from other

two-way and regular to be successful. Communication forums such as weekly meetings and monthly review meetings involving all stakeholders should be planned and adhered to without fail. Clear documentation should be developed and agreed. Face to face meetings are a powerful method of building the relationship and should be viewed as an investment into the design project.

### Effective Project Management

Every design project should have a dedicated dual project management team from both the customer and design house. This project team must be given the autonomy and



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whether the design engagement has been successful or not. Well defined goals with associated timelines will provide a clear definition of responsibilities for both the design team and the customer. Milestones should be agreed by both parties prior to the commencement of any project.

companies who have worked with the design company as it will provide first-hand insight into a potential design partnership.

### Communication

Communication is the cornerstone to a successful design partnership and this communication must be open,

responsibility for the design project. The project management team are central to controlling the project from cost and timeline perspectives.

### Milestone Definition

Milestones are the lifeblood of a successful design partnership and are the key benchmarks to determine

### Experience

Superior medical device design requires a team that is experienced within the industry. The contract design team should never be learning about medical device design and the industry sector on the customer's dollar. In addition, the contract design service provider must bring multidiscipline expertise to the project across a number of functions for example; quality, manufacturing and materials science.

### Success

The success of medical design outsourcing is determined by the success of the partnership that supports the project. Particular attention must be given by both parties to supporting communication channels, setting shared goals and building project teams. In addition, the medical design outsourcing provider must bring industry experience and a complete range of services to the partnership. More often it is intangible elements such as trust, openness and a 'can-do' attitude that will determine project success.



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