



Outsourcing Medical Information Services: When to Consider a Dedicated Resource

Lizi Scott and Emily Patel



Objectives

Outsourcing Medical Information (MI) services can be an effective solution for ensuring the provision of MI services to HCPs and consumers globally. For many service providers, the most cost-effective model for the provision of MI services is through a shared service model, where the service provider's teams are responsible for answering inquiries for multiple clients. However, business requirements evolve, and service models must evolve with them. The purpose of this study is to highlight the trigger points that may indicate when an alternative service model should be considered.

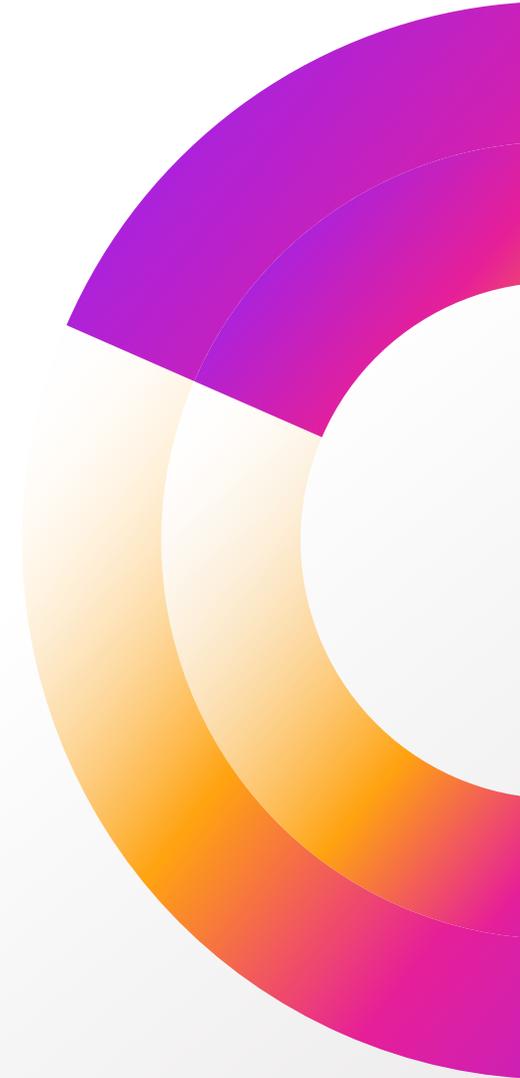


Methods

A random sample of MI clients was selected for the study. A survey was conducted with the Client Account Manager from ProPharma Client Services Department to identify the relevant outsourcing model chosen and key details about the service.

Model Types

- **Fully Dedicated** – agents work solely on one specific client service
- **Fully Shared** – agents work across multiple clients' services
- **Hybrid** – some dedicated agents and some shared agents

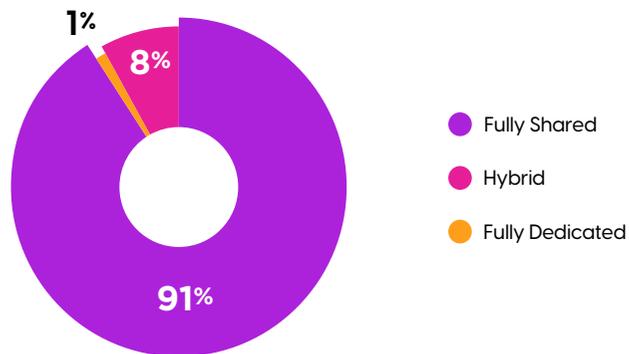


Additional Key Information Collected

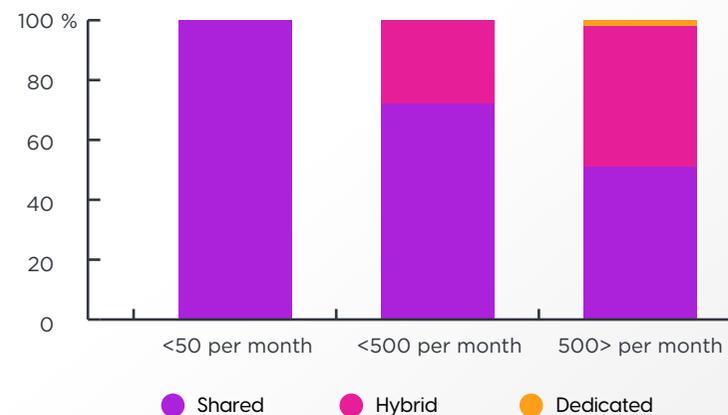
- Inquiry volumes
- MI database use: Client system or ProPharma system
- Complexity and/or quantity of product portfolio
- Language requirements
- Depth of training knowledge programs
- KPI requirements

The data was reviewed for common trends between each service model to identify trigger points indicating the need to consider resource and model adjustments.

% Service models breakdown

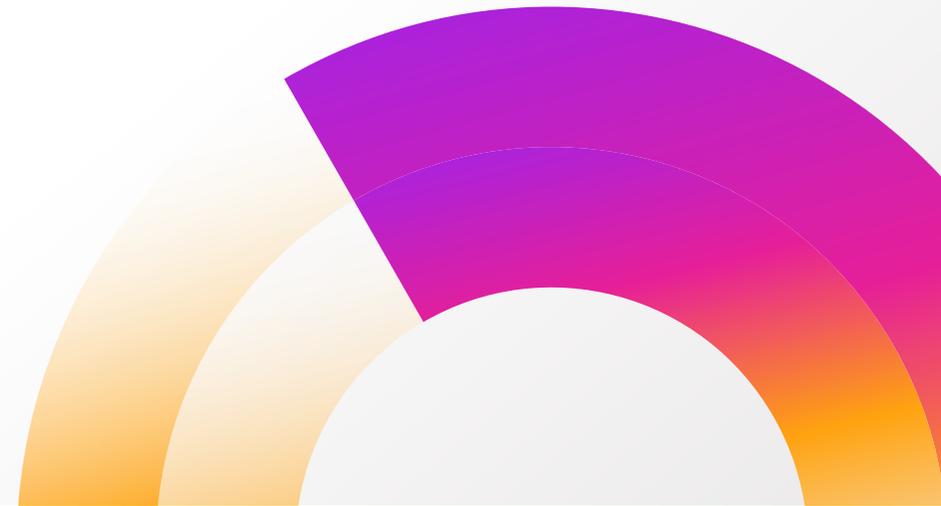


Comparison of service models against inquiry volume



Observations

- The majority of clients sampled utilize a shared service model. These included a wide range of clients from complex to broad product portfolios.
- A hybrid solution was more common than a fully dedicated service model for services with high inquiry volumes.
- Inquiry volumes for clients with a dedicated resource vary, but the majority would have more than 400 inquiries per month.
- Market volume must be high enough to justify a dedicated resource, as the agent will be solely handling the workload for this market.
- Language requirements are a limiting factor for dedicated resourcing, to ensure the model is cost effective.
- Where use of a client MI database is required, a dedicated resource could: allow greater understanding and expertise in the utilization of the system; allow for greater training requirements; and reduce the number of licenses needed by ProPharma to provide the service.
- A dedicated resource allows for complete focus on the client's inquiries, resulting in greater compliance with agreed KPI/SLAs and client processes.



Services: Deep Dive

Shared service models were used by most of the sample size. These included a wide range of clients from complex to broad product portfolios.

The next most common model was a hybrid model where there are dedicated resources supported by the shared workforce to handle either the overflow of inquiries or languages not covered by the dedicated resource. A hybrid model can be preferable where broad language coverage is required as part of the MI services, but where market volume does not justify the need for a dedicated resource. A hybrid model can bring many benefits, including bandwidth in the service model for a spike of inquiries as the shared workforce are also trained.

In the sample, one client with inquiry volumes >500 per month utilized a fully dedicated model.



Services: Deep Dive (continued)

Commonalities between service models with dedicated resources from the sample assessed:

- MI database – for all client services assessed, call handlers were required to access and utilize the client’s own database system.
- Complex/broad product portfolio – all the clients had either a complex product portfolio consisting of orphan drugs and rare disease therapy areas or a broad product range.
- Significant training requirements – consistent with the product portfolio, a significant training program was required to be undertaken by call handlers, requiring agents to become more specialized in the client’s products or processes.
- KPI/SLA focused – services with dedicated headcount required specific or unusually stringent KPI/SLA compliance as part of the services. In order to meet these needs in high-volume markets a dedicated resource was needed.

Dedicated resources bring a wealth of benefits to a service model:

- Increased familiarity with processes and products, introducing the SME (Subject Matter Expert) model to the service
- Ability to support shared service agents as they are SMEs (see above)
- Capacity for additional training, including client system training
- More efficient process implementation
- Fewer agents required to be trained on the services



Conclusions

Numerous factors drive the need to consider a dedicated resource for an outsourced model. Client business drivers should be considered when selecting a model type. Dedicated resources should be considered where: client systems are utilized; there are significant training requirements; there is a complex TA or product portfolio; there are high inquiry volumes; or the client has specific processes or unusually stringent KPI/SLA compliance requirements.

