



CASE STUDY

Future-Ready Solutions: Tackling Product Quality and Safety Issues through Global Collaboration

A tiered, global support system, leveraging offshore teams pays off when addressing surging product quality complaints, safety issues and financial pressures.

In today's globalized business environment, unforeseen challenges often emerge, requiring companies to adapt swiftly to maintain their standards of service. Such was the situation with a globally prominent corporation boasting a considerable footprint in the U.S. and a vital regional hub for the JAPAC (Japan, Asia-Pacific) region in Sydney, Australia.

From late 2022 to 2023, this client faced a marked increase in product quality complaints and device safety issues – a trend that escalated into a twofold challenge. On one side, ProPharma grappled with a capacity crunch as the volume of time-sensitive cases skyrocketed. On the other side, the client found their budget strained by escalating variable costs.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, ProPharma set forth a clear tri-fold strategy: bolstering operational capacity, refining efficiency without quality compromise, and ensuring cost savings for the client.

The chosen path was an innovative collaboration, bridging the expertise of the Australia-based team with the capabilities of offshore teams in India and the Philippines. This strategic move wasn't just about resource allocation; it was about leveraging global strengths to ensure unparalleled client service.

This case study discusses the intricacies of ProPharma's response to these challenges. We explore the inception and implementation of the tiered support system, its outcomes, and the profound impact of this globally collaborative approach on capacity enhancement, operational efficiency, and cost management. Join us as we unfold a tale of business agility, global teamwork, and sustained excellence amidst challenges.



Challenge

Amid the dynamically shifting landscape of global business operations, two interconnected challenges have emerged, critically affecting both service providers and their clients:

Operational Challenge

An unprecedented surge in case volumes, predominantly time-sensitive, posed a significant challenge to the existing capacity and operational efficiency. The current infrastructure and processes were strained, potentially threatening the quality and timeliness of service delivery.

Financial Challenge

Parallel to the operational hurdles, there was an escalating financial pressure on the client. The substantial increase in variable costs associated with the surge in case volumes posed serious budgetary concerns, necessitating immediate interventions to control and possibly mitigate these rising expenses.

As global markets evolve, businesses often encounter periods of unexpected demand spikes or operational hiccups. Such periods test the resilience and adaptability of both service providers and their clients. The recent upsurge in case volumes wasn't merely a numerical increase; the predominant nature of these cases being time-sensitive added layers of complexity to the challenge. Every delayed case had potential ramifications, from customer dissatisfaction to potential regulatory concerns, depending on the industry.

Meanwhile, the financial implications of these challenges were equally daunting. Variable costs, by their very nature, fluctuate with the volume of business operations. While they can offer scalability during lean periods, in situations of unexpected demand surge, they can skyrocket, causing budget overruns and placing clients in a precarious financial position.

Together, these challenges created a scenario where swift, innovative, and comprehensive solutions were required not just to navigate the situation, but to set a precedent for handling similar challenges in the future.

Solution

Given the dual challenges of soaring case volumes and the consequent rise in variable costs, an approach rooted in both strategic and practical thinking was paramount. ProPharma's pre-existing Medical Information resources in India and the Philippines served as a springboard for action. Rather than starting from scratch, ProPharma and the client leveraged these established resources, aiming to craft a solution that could quickly and efficiently address the immediate concerns.

After recognizing the escalating case volumes and the costs they bore, a strategic decision was made. Both the client and ProPharma, in a display of proactive collaboration, agreed to trial a tiered system, wherein each team would focus on its area of expertise. This was not just about cost containment; it was about ensuring that the quality of service remained uncompromised, and the client's budget was effectively managed.

The solution was a segmented, yet integrated approach, making the most of the strengths and capabilities of each offshore team.

India Team's Role

Written Tasks: This team was placed at the forefront of managing written communication. Their responsibilities spanned a range of tasks:

- Handling inquiries from the medical information website, notably via ChatBots.
- Logging activities, especially web search-related.
- Addressing routine written inquiries, covering areas such as product access and stability.
- Catering to requests for publications and slide decks.
- Taking charge of reporting written adverse events.

Philippines Team's Role

Verbal Interactions: Recognizing their strength in verbal communications, this team was earmarked for:

- Addressing phone inquiries, which largely revolved around topics like product stability, availability, materials, and requests related to sales visits.
- Playing a crucial role in triaging for PSP (Patient Support Programs).
- Serving as the primary touchpoint for the initial intake of product quality complaints and verbal adverse events.

Results

The results of this structured tiered system exceeded expectations. With each team working in its forte, efficiencies were gained, quality remained high, and costs were contained. The ultimate testament to its success was the client's decision to expand the scope of their engagement with ProPharma beyond the original agreement, signifying the tangible value and effectiveness of the program.

Operational Enhancement

The initiation of the program enabled a smooth and efficient transition of specific tasks and responsibilities to the offshore teams. This strategic move bolstered the capacity of the medical information team, permitting them to adeptly handle an increased volume of inquiries. Among these were complex inquiries that demanded a specialized approach and nuanced understanding. The program's design and execution weren't just a response to the immediate challenges; they were a forward-looking approach, positioning the APAC team to seize potential business opportunities that the client might offer in the future.

Strengthened Onshore Capabilities

The reallocation of routine and process-driven tasks from the Australia-based team to the offshore hubs meant more than just task division. It empowered the Australia-based team with augmented flexibility. Freed from the constraints of routine tasks, the team could pivot to tackle emerging challenges and delve into specialized roles that necessitated their expertise. This restructuring fortified the team's capabilities, enhancing their overall value proposition and readiness for more intricate assignments.

Quality Assurance and Client Satisfaction

While the absence of formal written feedback might typically be a limitation, the operational metrics provided ample evidence of the program's effectiveness:

1. During the second quarter of 2023, when the tiered system was in full swing, ProPharma, along with the client, undertook a comprehensive quality assurance (QA) assessment. The outcomes were stellar. There were zero critical findings or deviations identified through our rigorous QA processes.
2. Consistency in operational quality was further evidenced by the lack of any increase in deviations in our monthly reports during this period. Such consistent high-quality performance speaks volumes about the robustness and reliability of our revised operational model.

Client's Future Engagement

A tangible testament to the success of the initiative is the client's current stance. They are actively engaging in discussions about potentially broadening the scope of offshore operations. This inclination not only indicates their satisfaction with the current outcomes but also reflects their trust in ProPharma's capabilities to deliver on an even larger scale.

About ProPharma:

For the past 20 years, ProPharma has improved the health and wellness of patients by providing advice and expertise that empowers biotech, med device, and pharmaceutical organizations of all sizes to confidently advance scientific breakthroughs and introduce new therapies. As the world's largest RCO (Research Consulting Organization), ProPharma partners with its clients through an advise-build-operate model across the complete product lifecycle.

With deep domain expertise in regulatory sciences, clinical research solutions, quality & compliance, pharmacovigilance, medical information, and R&D technology, ProPharma offers an end-to-end suite of fully customizable consulting solutions that de-risk and accelerate our partners' most high-profile drug and device programs.

