

Helping Biotechnology Firm Acorda Double Its Sales Force in Two Months

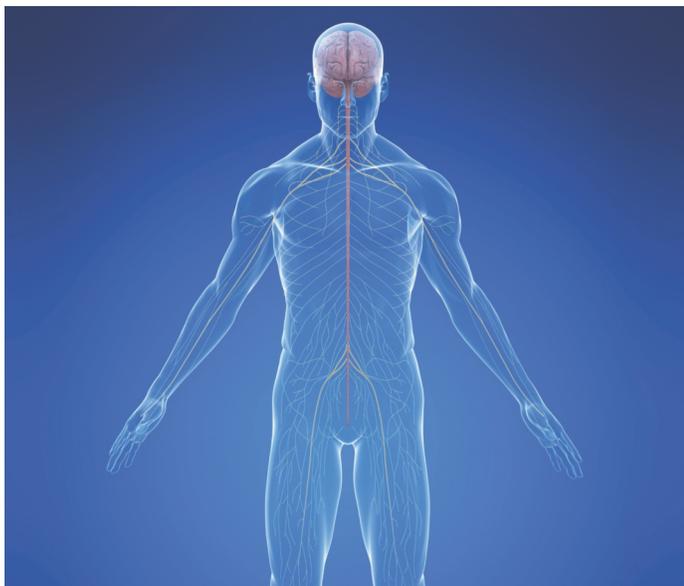
A Barada Associates Case Study

In anticipation of receiving approval from the FDA to market a new neurological therapy, biotech company Acorda needed to roughly double its sales force, and quickly. When Acorda asked Barada Associates to help on-ramp approximately 50 new field-based employees in a period of two months, Barada proved more than up to the challenge. "Barada worked with us as a partner to get this done," says Acorda Senior VP of HR Denise Duca. "They have been really helpful."

Acorda had been using Barada Associates for several years at the time, helping the company expand its workforce safely, moving from a few reference checks a year to a more hiring-intensive environment with multiple screening profiles.

Duca initially invited Barada Associates aboard having been hired at a previous employer after a Barada Associates reference check. "We initially used Barada Associates for reference checks. Their interviewers are really skilled in the way they ask questions and get the data, and it is amazing how patterns and issues result from their reports."

Over time, Acorda's relationship with Barada evolved as the firm became a larger organization. "Around 2006 we acquired a drug and went from a private company to a commercial organization that needed a sales force and a marketing group," says Duca. "Barada helped us bundle services so when we hit



Client: Acorda

Acorda Therapeutics is a biotechnology company focused on developing therapies that restore function and improve the lives of people with MS, spinal cord injury and other neurological conditions. The 350-person firm is committed to creating an industry-leading pipeline of novel neurological therapies. Acorda markets AMPYRA® (dalfampridine) Extended Release Tablets, 10mg in the United States and ZANAFLEX CAPSULES® (tizanidine hydrochloride) and tablets. For more information, visit www.acorda.com.

one button we knew we were getting all of the information we needed for that candidate."

"They also recommended we take our criminal check from statewide to multi-state, because people in our industry move around a lot," she continues. "In particular it is really important because we need to confirm the medical staff we are hiring have accurately represented their credentials during the interview process."

A New Era Dawns

Despite the many screening improvements Barada Associates had helped Acorda achieve, the biotech firm faced a new challenge for the hiring scenario it required after approval of a new drug in January 2010. "We didn't want to fully expand the sales force until the drug was approved," says Duca. "We gained approval on January 20 and needed to on-ramp about 50 people by March. Barada helped us on-ramp our full contingency by our start date of March 1, 2010."

For the intensive process, in which background checks and driving record checks were paramount, Barada Associates assigned Director of Client Services Mardella Huskins to be the dedicated, front-line team member for the project.

“Mardella worked with my team to ensure everything moved along quickly, and when we had a bottleneck, we could call Mardella and find out why it was occurring. We had a full contingency by our start date of March 1, 2010,” Says Duca.

A Real Partner

Today, Barada Associates continues to “be a real partner” to Acorda, Duca says, helping ensure meticulous, impartial hiring. “They always go the extra mile, and if we see something in a report that isn’t clear, we go back and ask them to elaborate. They are always very helpful.”

“We have found reference checks very valuable,” Duca continues. “Our candidates meet a lot of different people internally. My hiring managers really appreciate the level of detail they get from Barada, and my CEO loves the reports.”

Duca says Barada’s reports have even helped some hiring managers gain new perspective on the importance of thorough reference checking. “The managers find it especially helpful that the reports highlight development opportunities. This gives them a sense of a new employee’s strengths, as well as areas where additional coaching might be needed.”

