Dan Dumrauf, director at Medix Scientific, understands the unique challenges of identifying leading resource talent for the clinical research industry, and is not afraid to confront obstacles head on.

Q: You majored in business communications and chemistry while in college, and you used your talents to work your way up through a career sector that is mainly comprised of individuals with scientific backgrounds. Can you tell us how you first became interested in clinical research, and describe a little bit about the path you took to get involved with your clinical research career?

A: After graduating college, I started with a recruiting firm that specialized in placing scientific professionals in the pharmaceutical/biotech and medical device industries. Mostly, we were placing talent in the lab, but as our business expanded we began focusing on clinical research; it was at that point that I fell in love with clinical research.

I came across so many fantastic people working for a greater cause than a paycheck. These people were passionate about finding therapies that could help our community.

As I grew in my career, it took me in and out of the clinical research sector of recruiting, and it felt like my purpose had been diminished. Not that I didn’t have passion for helping people find the right opportunity, but it wasn’t the same. When I came to Medix, I knew I had found the perfect combination of purpose and passion. When I started, we didn’t offer recruiting for sites, contract research organizations (CROs), and sponsors, so I knew the chance to grow those areas would make the position a perfect match for me. Five years later, I lead a national team that is passionate about advancing research and positively impacting lives. We offer a variety of national workforce solutions to the research community, along with consulting services to sites.

Q: What do you consider to be the biggest challenge in your business?

A: Hiring the right talent is one of the toughest things to do, especially when the organization’s leaders or the talented prospects don’t know exactly what they are looking for.
Q: What advice do you have for professionals who are interested in entering the industry or advancing their careers in clinical research?

A: I get this question a lot, and I am happy to share:

a. Ask yourself what motivates you. It has been my experience that the people who have a stronger motivation for purpose (advancing research) over money tend to be the happiest in our industry.

b. Do your strengths overlap with what is required of clinical research professionals? For example, attention to detail and the process of management are two strong competencies in top performers in our community.

c. Evaluate clinical research at a site vs. clinical research with a sponsor. Those are two very different career paths.

Q: What do you see as currently being the biggest challenge for clinical research professionals? Any advice on how to approach or overcome barriers?

A: The landscape of healthcare is changing at an epic rate, and it is impacting the guidelines and regulations for our community of practice. This is rippling through our community at lightning speed. It doesn’t matter if you work at a CRO, sponsor, or site—we are all impacted. Continuing education is one way to combat that. Also, participating with associations like ACRP is a tremendous way to collaborate and hit these challenges head on.

Q: How about your involvement in ACRP? When did you first get involved, and how has your affiliation affected you professionally?

A: I first started attending local chapter meetings in Chicago in 2005 as a guest. It made a significant impact on me right away: It was a great networking arena for meeting some great people, and it was a huge educational platform for me to learn about the industry. Today, my team is active in multiple communities across the United States, and we attend the annual ACRP Meeting & Expo when we can.

Q: What about your personal goals? Where do you see your career path heading?

A: When I was first introduced to clinical research, my purpose became clear. How can I find the very best talent so that we can advance research, so that we can drive innovative therapies to our families and friends? I am lucky; I have found a platform at Medix that gives me a huge opportunity to positively impact lives all over the United States and the world. I will continue down this path professionally and personally.

Q: Do you have any closing thoughts you would like to share?

A: There is no shortage of challenges or drama in our industry, and it is easy to get wrapped up in them. I believe we should anticipate our challenges and hit them head on. Our community, families, and friends are counting on us to get closer to cures.