

# Bridging the Gap

## How Cognizant is Reframing Collaboration Between Clinical Sites and Technology

As clinical research continues to grow in complexity, the gap between technology providers and clinical sites has often widened. Too frequently, solutions are built for sites without truly being built with them—leading to frustration, poor adoption, and slower progress.

Through the **Collaborate Forward** initiative, we've been exploring how collaboration—across people, process, communication, and culture—can transform these dynamics. Our conversations with sponsors like Biogen and Sanofi highlighted how re-centering on the site experience creates real momentum.

Our discussion with **Cognizant** added a valuable new perspective: **Bridging the clinical and technical worlds requires building dedicated, site-centered teams who can listen, translate, and act.**

Through internal changes, feedback loops, and a shift in

language and structure, Cognizant is learning that true collaboration begins with understanding—and sustaining—that connection.

### **Project Culture: Acknowledging Gaps and Building a New Foundation**

Cognizant's journey began with a hard look inward. Early feedback on their Shared Investigator Platform (SIP) revealed growing dissatisfaction among users. Rather than defend the status quo, Cognizant leadership recognized the need for a **cultural shift**: away from purely technical thinking and toward true site partnership.

They built a **dedicated site-focused team** tasked with engaging sites in their language, not technical jargon. The goal was clear: understand site needs firsthand, adapt internal thinking to match, and become a true collaborator in the clinical research ecosystem.

This required a mindset shift—not just viewing sites as “users,” but as **partners in continuous improvement.**

In a similar way to what we previously reported in our conversation with Biogen, acknowledging early missteps and moving forward with transparency has been a key part of building trust.

## Process & Systems: From Listening to Action

Cognizant knew that real collaboration required more than just one-time conversations. They needed **systematic processes** to collect, analyze, and act on site feedback.

Some key changes included:

- **Focus Groups and Active User Feedback:** Cognizant launched structured focus groups to gather direct feedback from active users, moving beyond anonymous surveys. They measure quality, performance, usability, and feature requests—and importantly, report back to users what was implemented and why (or why not).
- **Raising the Bar on Satisfaction:** Their efforts led to a dramatic improvement in Net Promoter Score (NPS) in just two years - from -60 to +10 - demonstrating that consistent listening and action build real user loyalty.
- **Targeted, Role-Based Training:** Rather than offering generic, one-size-fits-all training, Cognizant introduced role-based onboarding and education. Monthly sessions help newly registered users globally get up to speed with content tailored to their specific roles and needs.
- **Clear Communication on Changes:** Updates and new releases are paired with transparent reporting to sites, clearly stating what feedback was incorporated.

Much like Sanofi's commitment to simplifying site experiences, Cognizant's focus is not on adding more noise—but making engagement **smarter, more personalized, and more responsive**.

## People & Connection: Building Clinical-First Relationships

Cognizant's biggest learning may be that technology doesn't collaborate—people do.

Recognizing the unique language, priorities, and pressures that sites face, Cognizant built a new Medical Affairs team within their technology structure. This ACMA board-certified group helps bridge the gap between clinical operations and technical development.

Their structure now includes:

- **Site Success Managers:** Strategic partners who help sites think beyond the immediate task at hand—guiding integrations and future planning.
- **Site Engagement Teams:** Dedicated onboarding and training specialists located in different global regions to provide localized, day-to-day support.
- **Language Focus:** Internally, Cognizant shifted from thinking of themselves as a tech company to a **medical services company**—reshaping how teams speak about their work, how they structure support, and how they communicate with sites.

Sites now have confidence that their input doesn't disappear into a void.

By changing both their staffing model and their internal language, Cognizant created **better conversations**—reducing confusion, building trust, and making it easier for sites to engage meaningfully.

As we've seen across Collaborate Forward interviews, **People & Connection** remain the essential glue of effective collaboration.

## Progress: More Tailored, Responsive Partnerships

These changes have translated into tangible, measurable progress:

- **No One-Size-Fits-All Approach:** Cognizant acknowledges that sites have different needs based on size, experience, and geography. Their global teams can escalate site feedback quickly and adapt solutions accordingly.
- **Clear Measurement Pillars:** Progress is tracked against four key pillars:
  - Evidence and insight generation
  - Evidence and insight communication
  - Strategy and leadership
  - Engagement and partnership
- **Stronger Feedback Loops:** Sites now have confidence that their input doesn't disappear into a void. Whether through improved workflows or clear explanations of technical limitations, Cognizant ensures sites know their voices matter.

Through these efforts, Cognizant isn't just building better products—they're building **better partnerships**.

## Collaborate Forward Takeaways

Cognizant's experience offers key lessons for any organization working to better align technology and clinical research:

- **Own and acknowledge gaps.** Transparency builds trust faster than defensiveness.
- **Build site-focused teams.** Equip them with the skills and language to connect meaningfully with clinical stakeholders.



- **Measure feedback meaningfully.** Focus on active users, specific usability issues, and actionable improvements.
- **Train with purpose.** Role-specific training empowers sites to use tools confidently and efficiently.
- **Treat sites as strategic partners.** Invest in two-way conversations, not just feature requests.

## Bridging Two Worlds

In clinical research, the future belongs to those who can bridge complexity—with clarity, empathy, and action.

Cognizant's efforts show that closing the gap between clinical sites and technology providers isn't about building smarter tools alone. It's about **building smarter, more human systems of collaboration.**

Because when we collaborate forward—with open ears and open minds—everyone moves faster. And patients benefit most of all.

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Learn more about the [Shared Investigator Platform](#).



# The Collaborate Forward Team

A Multidisciplinary Team Dedicated to Industry Collaboration



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Let's keep moving  
forward. **Together.**

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