

## Success Story

# Multinational not-for-profit drives workforce agility with Sage People

Global clinical research organization TRIO drives workforce agility amidst growth with help from Sage People

Translational Research in Oncology (TRIO) is an academic clinical research organization (CRO) that's been growing rapidly over the last few years. With a mission of helping cancer patients live longer, its global oncology network of 2,000 academic leaders, scientists, and investigators operate clinical trials at 700 cancer centers all over the world. TRIO was recently selected as one of Canada's top small and medium employers for its focus on employee wellbeing.



### Key outcomes

- Gained global workforce visibility, helping better support staff during pandemic
- Maintained turnover 10% below the industry standard
- Increased HR productivity by 30% amid rapid scale
- Freed 20% more time for people-focused work

The Sage logo, consisting of the word "Sage" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**Company**  
Translational Research  
in Oncology (TRIO)

**Location**  
Alberta, Canada

**Industry**  
Alberta, Canada

**Sage Products**  
Sage People

**TRIO** Translational  
Research In Oncology

**About Translation Research in Oncology**  
Translational Research in Oncology (TRIO) is an academic clinical research organization (CRO) that's been growing rapidly over the last few years.



### **Looking for a comprehensive solution**

Previously, TRIO’s HR and People team relied on rudimentary manual processes that made it difficult to keep up with the organization’s needs. For instance, distributed workers across Canada, the United States, France, and Uruguay have to manage their time for 20 concurrent, long-term clinical trials. At the same time, TRIO needs to comply with multinational employment laws and other rigorous requirements of the highly regulated life sciences industry.

The team evaluated Workday, PeopleSoft, ADP Workforce, and Ceridian, but found that Sage People best hit the spot with exactly what they needed in an HR system. “Not only did Sage People offer key timesheet capabilities and a reasonable price tag for a medium-sized company like ours, we knew it could handle the complexity of our multi-national, multi-currency requirements,” noted Christine Pangilinan, Director of HR at TRIO.

By establishing a global HR source of truth, TRIO achieved comprehensive workforce visibility, maintained turnover at 10% below industry peers, increased HR productivity 30%, and better supported employees through COVID-19—all while rapidly scaling the workforce by 40%.

### **30% productivity gain drives workforce agility despite COVID pressures**

Sage People helped the organization establish a one-stop-shop for timesheets, performance reviews, and much more, creating better employee experiences for its multinational workforce. In particular, electronic workflows and added transparency proved highly valuable during the disruption of COVID-19. TRIO faced the challenges of working from home, all while managing clinical trial regulations that were changing quickly during the complexity pandemic.

“Sage People helped us provide much better support to our employees, especially when the pandemic hit. Not only did our staff face childcare concerns, we had to support sites in carefully managing cancer patients’ safety and following constantly changing regulations. And on top of all that, we were growing,” Christine shared. “Thanks to Sage People’s automation, we didn’t skip a beat when we literally had to go 100% virtual in a day. We didn’t lose time trying to take processes online because they were already there and things just kept running smoothly.”



TRIO leverages Sage People to build stronger connections.

### **Leveraging Sage People to build a better connected multinational workforce**

Over the years, TRIO was able to easily adapt Sage People to other evolving needs as well. “Three years ago, we took on one of our largest trials, and started to grow rapidly. Without Sage People in place, we would not have had the capacity to scale as quickly as we have,” mentioned Christine. She added, “The system’s time tracking is very flexible and robust. We can add as many fields as we need for local or global requirements, and that’s been truly instrumental to our agility as an organization.”

TRIO also leverages Sage People to build stronger connections with consultants working on trials around the world. With access to Sage People, these consultants are fully integrated into the organization, since they can enter or approve timesheets, manage direct reports, and more— helping to unify the entire workforce with consistent employee experiences and HR processes globally.

In addition, Sage People transformed TRIO’s performance management from rigid annual reviews to a more continuous, light-touch, conversational approach. Now, all documentation is kept in the system, and the HR and People team has more time to coach supervisors on developing a supportive and constructive communications style. Recently, Christine also deployed Sage People’s compensation planning solution to help ensure consistent, compliant salary increases and bonus amounts. Directors worldwide can view team members’ salary history and current salary bands in their local currencies, and have more effective discussions with their team leads about promotions and other changes.

All of these improvements allowed TRIO’s HR and People team to work efficiently as overall headcount jumped by 40%. They’ve been able to scale effortlessly and absorb substantially higher recruiting volumes because the team is around 30% more productive—with at least 20% more of their time freed up for people-focused work. With accurate, comprehensive, and reliable data captured in Sage People, TRIO’s leadership has the confidence and insight they need to make timely growth decisions and mitigate turnover. Deep visibility into employee retention—a moving target in the sector’s competitive talent market—allows them to monitor turnover rates by department, individual position, and new hire cohort. Using Sage People, the HR and People team can follow patterns closely, identify the attributes of quality hires who stay on past their first year, and help supervisors rally behind team members. As a result, TRIO has successfully maintained turnover rates that are 10% below industry benchmarks.



“Sage People helps us factor in life events that happen, so we can budget realistic time-off percentages and ensure we have enough capacity to manage everything.”

**Christine Pangilinan**  
Director of HR, TRIO

#### **Organizational insights inform great workforce experiences**

Juggling budgets for several trials at any given time, work allocations at TRIO is crucial for organizational adaptability and success. By tracking staff hours across departments, trials, and activity types, and feeding that data into TRIO’s financial system, Sage People helps the organization manage complicated project budgets. “For our multi-year trials, we watch absence trends closely,” said Christine. “Sage People helps us factor in inevitable life events that happen, so we can budget realistic time-off percentages and ensure we have enough capacity to manage everything.”

In particular, as COVID-19 added a whole new layer of complexity to clinical trials with immunocompromised cancer patients, employee wellness became a major concern. “Some of our staff are definitely working more hours,” Christine mentioned. “But Sage People helps us keep an eye on who’s been working too much so we can encourage them to take care of themselves and take a step back before they burn out.”

Finally, having a single source of truth in Sage People has also helped TRIO maintain global and local compliance with flexibility for evolving variations in local policies, legislation, and regulation. And TRIO was able to show its sponsors that it can bring international investigators, experienced clinical research professionals, and expert laboratory scientists to a project to ensure the quickest path to market.



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