

CASE STUDY:

Osteoarthritis of the Knee

Client: U.S.-based clinical research sponsor

Campaign Managed By: ImageBloom, Inc.

Overview

ImageBloom, Inc., a marketing firm specializing in patient recruitment, successfully executed a U.S. central recruitment campaign for a clinical trial investigating an injectable medication for osteoarthritis of the knee. Within just 5 months, the campaign delivered 62 qualified patients, helping the sponsor reach key milestones ahead of schedule.

Marketing Strategy

Centralized Patient Recruitment Approach

A centralized recruitment strategy was chosen to streamline outreach, maintain consistent messaging, and maximize reach across diverse geographies. This approach allowed ImageBloom to monitor performance metrics in real time and adjust tactics quickly to optimize enrollment.

Target Audience Definition

Using detailed patient profiles, the team identified adults over 45 with osteoarthritis of the knee who were motivated to find new treatment options. Messaging was designed to resonate with common patient concerns such as mobility, quality of life, and long-term symptom management.

Multi-Channel Outreach

The campaign utilized a multi-channel marketing mix to ensure broad visibility and patient engagement:

- **Digital Advertising:** Paid social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram targeting adults 45+ with osteoarthritis-related interests and behaviors.
- **Google Search & Display Ads:** Intent-driven ads reaching patients actively seeking osteoarthritis treatment options.
- **Study Landing Page:** A custom-designed, mobile-friendly landing page that educated patients about the study, prescreened for eligibility, and directed qualified leads to participating sites.
- **Email Marketing:** Outreach through patient health databases to reach previously engaged individuals.
- **Call Center Support:** ImageBloom's dedicated call center followed up with interested patients, answered questions, and completed prescreening by phone. This personal touch built trust, reduced dropout, and ensured qualified referrals were promptly connected with sites.
- **Site Support:** Providing participating research sites with digital and print materials to support local outreach.



Challenges and How They Were Overcome

1. Complex Protocol Criteria

The trial required patients to meet detailed eligibility requirements related to osteoarthritis severity, medical history, and previous treatments. Many interested individuals did not qualify, creating a high screen-failure rate.

- Solution: ImageBloom designed prescreening tools within the landing page and leveraged call center prescreening to efficiently filter out ineligible patients before referral. This ensured that sites received higher-quality leads and reduced the burden on site staff. Messaging in ads and landing pages was also adjusted to set clear expectations up front.

2. Competition from Approved Treatment Options

Patients considering clinical research often compared the investigational injectable medication with widely available and FDA-approved therapies for knee osteoarthritis (e.g., corticosteroid injections, hyaluronic acid injections, oral medications, or surgery). Many were initially hesitant to explore a clinical trial when standard options were readily accessible.

- Solution: The marketing team crafted educational content emphasizing the potential benefits of research participation, including access to cutting-edge therapies and the opportunity to contribute to medical advancements. Campaigns highlighted the fact that participation did not preclude standard care in the future, helping patients feel more comfortable evaluating the trial.

3. General Skepticism Toward Clinical Trials

As with many research studies, patient hesitation around safety and the unknown posed an obstacle.

- Solution: Ad creatives, call center scripts, and site support materials were developed to build trust by clearly explaining study oversight, participant protections, and the potential for personal and community benefit.

Results

- 62 patients successfully recruited in just 5 months
- High engagement rates on Facebook and Google campaigns, surpassing industry averages for clinical trial ads
- Call center support that improved patient conversion and reduced dropout
- Efficient cost per randomized patient, ensuring that sponsor investment generated strong value

Conclusion

Through a data-driven strategy, patient-centric messaging, call center support, and agile campaign management, ImageBloom, Inc. successfully delivered 62 patients for the osteoarthritis of the knee clinical trial within 5 months. Despite challenges with complex eligibility criteria, competition from approved treatment options, and platform restrictions, the campaign demonstrated the power of a centralized recruitment model combined with creative problem-solving.

ImageBloom continues to leverage these insights in future recruitment efforts, helping sponsors and CROs meet their enrollment goals while supporting patients in accessing innovative new treatments.