JDRF

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An over 80% approval rating for the entirely centralized SmartSimple Cloud solution for JDRF.

At a Glance

JDRF's team was using a combination of two custom-built systems and a shared e-grantmaking website, Proposal Central. While Proposal Central helped manage grant proposals, it didn't offer JDRF enough functionality. There was no ability to drill down into their data, no centralized repository for their granting activities and no in-depth reporting features.

By moving to SmartSimple Cloud, JDRF's data became intuitively organized for their entire user community. Now, all applicants, reviewers, and granting staff can do everything in one system. SmartSimple Cloud has reduced the volume of manual data entry required, practically eliminating administrative errors. The platform has also made it a cinch to track all their scientific data, and added a new level of comprehension to their entire reporting process, both for internal and external stakeholders.

"The team really listened when we talked about what we needed our system to do. They didn't offer a generic, out-of-the-box product; instead, they presented an adaptable, comprehensive solution that answered our specific needs. We saw SmartSimple as not just another vendor but a company that would be a good business partner in bringing JDRF's vision to fruition."

Sydney Yovic
Associate Vice President of Research Operations & Mission

smartsimple CLOUD | Research Grants Management

JRDF is a SmartSimple Cloud user

Request a demo and learn more about SmartSimple Cloud for Research Grants Management at www.smartsimple.com

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SmartSimple client since: 2013

Type of giving: Research Grants

Dollars managed: $80 million annually

Old system: ProposalCentral combined with two custom-built systems

SmartSimple product/services:
- SmartSimple Cloud for Research Grants Management
- Premium Support

Key pain points:
- No central data repository
- Lack of automation during pre and post-award reporting
- Too many errors due to excess manual data entry

New system must-haves
- A complete 360° view of our work
- Automated application and review processes
- Significantly reduce amount of manual work
- One central location for all awarding reports and applicant information

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About JDRF

JDRF is the leading global funder of type 1 diabetes (T1D) research. JDRF collaborates with a wide spectrum of partners to pursue therapies with the potential to prevent, better treat, and eventually cure, T1D. JDRF-funded research has led to many landmark advances in T1D science, and is now in the exciting position of turning that research into real therapies that will make life-changing differences for those living with T1D.

Currently, several clinical trials are in the advanced stages of testing required before Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approvals can be sought. JDRF has a solid track record of funding research efficiently and effectively. Approximately 80 percent of what they spend goes directly to research and research-related education—among the highest percentages for charities nationwide.

A band-aid solution that didn't stretch far enough

JDRF had cobbled together three different systems, which included a web-based proposal management system called Proposal Central, to manage their research grants management processes, but found it never really worked properly. "We needed a makeover," said Sydney Yovic, Associate Vice President of Research Operations & Mission.

"We had a one dimensional system and needed a four dimensional solution. We lacked any ability to drill down and provide comprehensive reports, metrics or meaningful analysis. Plus, we were spending a lot of money trying to get all three systems to talk to each other, eating up valuable time and resources. It was stale, dated, and no one liked working with it."

Among the other problems they were hoping to remedy included reducing the amount of manual data entry, decrease the time spent creating reports, and find a solution that could integrate with their financial system.

"We also had a massive amount of vitally important research data - including recent results from ongoing diabetes research projects - that none of our scientific staff could easily access. We manage upwards of 500 active research grants at any one time; that's a lot of information to be organized and tracked, but we had no accurate way to do that. That made it extremely difficult for our scientists to know what progress was being made on work we were funding."

SmartSimple Software: a vendor who understands scientific research

"Through our Request for Proposal (RFP) process, we found that many solutions providers have experience with not-for-profits, but many lacked biomedical research expertise. What we needed was a partner who had a solid understanding of us and our needs."

"We saw products that were really flashy, but weren't capable of incorporating meaningful management processes common in research. SmartSimple Cloud offered a clean look that also had the right combination of features and functionality we needed to accomplish our goals."

"The people were ultimately what sold us on SmartSimple Cloud. The team really listened when we talked about what we needed our system to do. They didn't offer a generic, out-of-the-box product; instead, they presented an adaptable, comprehensive solution that answered our specific needs. We saw SmartSimple as not just another vendor but a company that would be a good business partner in bringing JDRF's vision to fruition."

"Research management can be quite nuanced based on the funding organization, but our SmartSimple implementation team took the time to learn and understand our processes. Their experience working with other large research funders provided reassurance during the scoping phase of our implementation. They also defined milestones for testing and training on our SmartSimple Cloud platform, delivering without fail on the configurations that we specified."

"Not only did SmartSimple team centralize our processes, they took the time to understand why we wanted to perform tasks a particular way. We now have an incredibly versatile system that will easily grow with us over the years."

A solution that truly simplifies the research granting process

"Ad-hoc reporting is a huge benefit, and the role-based portals have greatly improved our ability to communicate with all our stakeholders. We're working so much more efficiently as an organization."

"Our SmartSimple Cloud platform takes our grants from Letter of Intent to the post-award stage, while effectively addressing the specific needs of each user. Whether internal staff, applicants or reviewers, they can categorize and track what they need. Having everything in one place has saved a ton of time not having to manually enter reams of data"

"SmartSimple Cloud's seamless integration with our financial system has made us virtually paperless. Reporting on our work has decreased, and this has meant a major reduction in the time spent preparing and distributing physical reports. Now, everyone can access them online through their own permissioned access portal."

JDRF happily reports that the overall rate of satisfaction from their users is 83% - a huge jump from where they were a few years ago. "Applicants find SmartSimple Cloud easy to use, and for those who frequently apply for research grants, they only need to enter their information once and, it's stored in their personal profile. Our reviewers have told us they find scoring applications much easier and the entire process is more straightforward and a lot less time-consuming."

"SmartSimple understands us and our needs. They believe in the work we do and how important it is to us and everyone living with diabetes. We're constantly striving to improve our users' experience, and SmartSimple shares that vision, always there to help us advance our mission and achieve success." ●