

## Keeping the development of new pharmaceutical products on track

TRAC Services is a specialist consultancy helping pharmaceutical companies navigate the complexities of the regulatory framework.



### Overview

In almost eight years, TRAC has grown from a small, homebased consultancy to a business that is working with major pharmaceutical companies across the world. The company was started by Jonathan and Sarah Trethowan, who moved back to Cornwall after 12 years away. Jonathan was already an established regulatory professional and Sarah had a background in marketing and communications. "The regulatory framework for drugs is constantly changing and many pharmaceutical companies, including the multinationals, rely on outside consultants to help them bring new drugs to market, as well as maintaining the licences for existing products" Sarah Trethowan said.

On arrival in Cornwall in 2001 they ran the business from home and then in March 2005 moved into the Knowledge Spa, on the site of the Royal Cornwall Hospital in Truro and took on their first members of staff in September that year. This allowed them to forge links with medical and health care professionals, and with patient groups. "It also gave us a trading address that was very appropriate to our company's activities," Sarah said. Since it was launched, the company has added a range of new services including PIL Testing, where TRAC tests the readability of Patient Information Leaflets supplied with medicines. "Cornwall has proved to be an excellent place to find volunteers for this." Due to the company's further expansion TRAC moved into larger premises at Tolvaddon Energy Park in October 2006.

### Workforce

As well as the company's founders, Jonathan and Sarah Trethowan, there are currently eight other employees, seven of whom were recruited through Unlocking Cornish Potential, one having won the UCP catalyst for growth award and the other winning the UCP award for excellence in project management.

Regulatory affairs is a highly specialized area, and rather than trying to locate experienced staff in the area, TRAC decided to train up their own team. "We feel really proud to be able to offer work in the science industry to graduates who are based in Cornwall. And people are absolutely delighted to be able to use their degrees and stay down here," said Sarah. "We can involve them in projects and our clients are more than happy, because they know we are supervising them very closely."

### Clients

TRAC works with some of the major multinational pharmaceutical companies, including GlaxoSmithKline, Wyeth and Winthrop. There is increasing demand for specialist consultancies like TRAC, as large companies downsize their internal regulatory teams. Not all of the company's clients are multinational giants, however. They also work with smaller businesses that may be developing a single product for the market.

### Technology

Having a robust communications infrastructure in place makes it possible for TRAC to run the business from Cornwall. Regulatory work used to be paper-based, but nowadays documents are transmitted electronically and a fast broadband connection is a necessity. One multinational client has provided laptops that connect directly to their servers. Since clients may be based anywhere in the world, teleconferencing is also an important communications tool.

### Support

A major issue for a specialist company like TRAC that is expanding quickly is the recruitment and training of suitable staff. The Unlocking Cornish Potential scheme, which supports and subsidises the recruitment of recent graduates in Cornwall, has allowed them to bring seven science graduates into the business and provide them with the training they require. Assistance with the training analysis and funding of training came from Cornwall Pure Business, who also helped facilitate the company's move into the Tolvaddon Energy Park. TRAC was also awarded a Cornwall Medipark Ltd business development grant.