

“BELIEF IS EVERYTHING”

An interview with our new CEO, Gareth Phillips

Following the company's acquisition by Inizio last year, Research Partnership has appointed healthcare market research veteran Gareth Phillips as CEO. We ask him why he took on the role and what his thoughts are on the future of the market research industry within the life sciences sector.

Congratulations on your appointment. Tell us a bit about your background and some of your career highlights.

Thank you! I'm proud to have been a market researcher for my whole career and consider myself to be fortunate to have found the right path early in life. I have always enjoyed statistics, data, understanding people and bringing clarity to situations where it is lacking. It has been a privilege to work at the cutting edge of medical innovation and support clients who are making a tangible difference to patients' lives.

I am proud of being able to help others find focus and achieve success in their careers and am a firm believer that successful teams deliver more than the sum of their individual parts. In other words I focus on developing teams that trust each other, work together and play to their collective strengths.

I also believe in seizing opportunities which take me out of my comfort zone. For example, the experiences I gained living and working in the US and Asia were significant in terms of developing my global perspective, cultural awareness, and providing me with rapid leadership development opportunities. I would not be the person I am today had I not been bold and taken the challenging route at several stages through my career.

What do you think makes a successful leader?

Leaders are successful in different ways, and I have taken inspiration from many different styles of leadership over the years, however the underlying basis of strong leadership for me is authenticity – understanding yourself and being yourself at all times.

I also believe that mutual trust is an important leadership foundation which helps to foster an environment of healthy challenge, debate and diversity of thinking among teams, leading to new ideas and growth. One of the most important roles leaders should fulfil is to signpost the way forward, the vision, bring clarity on what is most important to do, and bring belief and confidence to the whole team.

What are your goals for Research Partnership?

Research Partnership is a business I have long admired and, through delivering excellent work to clients over the past 25 years, has been able to consistently grow and mature into the very strong business that it is today. This provides an excellent foundation for the next stage of our journey within Inizio.

We are now embarking on a new growth strategy within the Inizio ecosystem, where we have the opportunity to build on our heritage and grow new business together with colleagues focused on areas such as strategy consulting, medical affairs, communications development, real-world evidence, and data analytics.

We are still at the early stages of understanding how we might integrate our skillsets across Inizio, to bring additional value to our clients, however I believe what we have at our fingertips across the group has the potential to be incredibly powerful.



Where do you see the company fitting as part of Inizio?

We are the market research consultancy within the Inizio Advisory group. We help our clients to identify and understand strategic insights relevant to their business context, and represent the voice of the healthcare professional, patient and payer in their decision making.

Now that we are part of the Inizio group we have an opportunity to further expand and develop how we can support our clients bringing together expertise and skillsets from across the wider Inizio team to add even deeper value for our clients. It is a very exciting time for the whole Research Partnership team and I feel privileged to have the opportunity to work with such a talented team as we continue on our journey within Inizio.

Currently, what do you think are the major opportunities for healthcare market research?

Market research continues to provide a key benefit to our clients in terms of understanding markets, people and the wider business context, so that we can support fact-driven business decision-making. Our opportunity as an industry is to ensure that we evolve our research tools, our agility, our access to data, our industry knowledge and business skillsets so that we can improve the understanding and advice we are able to bring to our clients – we have to remain relevant and connect the dots as much as possible.

What do you think are the biggest challenges?

For providers, being prepared to stop doing certain activities or types of work and being brave about our changing business models and ways of working.

Is recruitment still a challenge in the industry? How do you think we can best resolve this?

Yes, the talent challenge continues and is not just unique to healthcare market research but applies across many industry sectors. At RP we continue to invest heavily in bringing entry level staff into the profession and training them to become highly experienced market research consultants of the future. We are also increasing our focus on training programmes targeted to our mid and senior team members in order to support faster development of their skills and experiences. Like many organisations, we are also embracing flexible working options in order to widen the available talent pool as much as possible. This includes full remote working and investing in our off-shore hubs as well as our other offices around the world.

Ok, quick fire round. What is your favourite business quote?

I think there is a lot of truth in “culture eats strategy for breakfast... and then has structure for lunch”.

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

These days its invariably my chocolate Labrador, Poppy, looking for her breakfast.

And finally, what is your life motto?

I live by the mantra that “belief is everything”. A very wise man once shared with me how powerful taking control over your mindset can be... I have never looked back.