THE PRICE IS RIGHT....OR IS IT?

BUDGETING FOR DRUG DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK OR YOUR MOLECULE

By: Sitav Elturan
Singota Solutions

Singota® Solutions is a CDMO located in Bloomington, Indiana, USA that specializes in Parenteral, Early Phase Drug Development and Aseptic Filling projects.

Budgets are challenging anytime a team undertakes development of a new injectable therapy. The injectable development journey requires serious science, serious timelines, and, yes, serious funding. For early-stage biotechs, startups, and small-batch innovators, the strength of the budget can determine what makes it to clinic and what gets left behind on the bench.

So early-stage biopharma is left with a tough question: what matters more when selecting a CDMO partner: rock-bottom pricing, or premium quality? Is there a way to have both, or are biopharma companies doomed to pick one and hope for the best? Can leaner teams with big ideas still make it to IND without mortgaging their future? In this article, we'll dive into the murky, nuanced world of injectable drug development pricing: unpacking the risks of under-spending, the limitations of over-spending, and why a middle path might just be the wisest strategic choice of all. Buckle up, wallet-watchers and quality crusaders alike.

Cheap Now, Costly Later? The Perils of Cut-Rate Development

On the surface, a low-cost development quote might seem like a win. Especially for startups with limited funding runway, it's tempting to jump on the lowest bid to stretch funds and stay lean. But here's the catch: lower prices often signal corner-cutting, overextended teams, genericized processes, and inflexible timelines.

Here's what often comes bundled with those bargain-bin rates:

- Rigid project plans that don't account for inevitable formulation pivots or development hiccups.
- Minimal transparency or collaboration, leaving sponsors in the dark and missing critical, timely communication.
- Generic approaches to formulation, risking downstream solubility or stability issues, meaning later regulatory rework.
- Delayed timelines due to overbooked labs or staff turnover.
- Hidden fees that unexpectedly pop up when changes are needed or troubleshooting is required mid-project.

That low upfront invoice? It may (and usually will) balloon once the project sees any type of change, speedbump, or roadblock. If you lose critical months in an already competitive development race, the real cost becomes immeasurable.

For small-batch and early-phase drug sponsors, a failed formulation or a timeline derailment can mean loss of investor confidence, a missed IND window, or even the shuttering of the program altogether.

Gold-Plated Service, Gutted Budgets: The Luxury Trap

On the opposite end of the spectrum, some CDMOs pitch themselves as ultra-premium, offering everything from concierge-level client service to high-gloss dashboards and delivery timelines full of attractive promises. While there's something to be said for polish, there's a limit to how much of your program budget should be going toward "frictionless project management software," designer lunchrooms, and plans that assume everything in development will be smooth from start to finish.

Many small biotechs quickly realize that luxury-tier pricing comes with:

- Sky-high minimum project sizes that don't align with early-phase batch needs or funds.

- Administrative bloat that inflates every statement of work and milestone.
- Less flexibility for changing priorities, since some CDMOs often favor blockbuster clients and have a strategic incentive to prioritize the larger client demands over the smaller client needs.
- A mismatch in values, where your preclinical program and its smaller budget may be deprioritized or pushed aside in favor of commercial giants.

In other words, if you choose the ultra-premium CDMO, you risk taking a backseat to someone else's phase III portfolio.

When your Series A funding only covers 18 months, spending a third of it on formulation development alone isn't just a tough pill to swallow - it can be fatal to your development timeline.

It's also worth noting that true flexibility, like the kind Singota offers, is almost unheard of in the CDMO space. Did something go wrong with your API supplier? It happens. Maybe it means you miss your original manufacturing date. Singota understands and will work with you. When a client's original manufacturing date slips, we have always delivered a back-up manufacturing date within 30 days of the original manufacturing date. That record is an incredible testament to the way Singota acts with nimble, flexible scheduling that anticipates a need for contingencies. Our agile ethos permeates all of our work, across the wide variety of development and fill/finish efforts we deliver for our clients. Finding a CDMO that truly collaborates with you and your small batch, early-stage development needs shouldn't necessarily come with an inflated price tag.

Why the "Sweet Spot" Matters More Than Ever

Here's the good news: it's no longer an either/or. The most forward-thinking CDMOs, especially those designed with small-batch, early-phase programs in mind, are rewriting the rules. They are combining top-tier formulation science with accessibly priced service models, creating space for meaningful partnership without draining the budget or compromising quality.

This "just right" middle ground offers:

- Tailored, phase-appropriate pricing that reflects your program's true scope - not bloated commercial assumptions.
- Meticulous quality and documentation, without nickel-and-dime project creep.
- GMP-ready labs with experience handling tricky injectables and fragile formulations.
- Transparent communication, flexible timelines, and real-time collaboration.

For biopharma startups racing against time and budget, this balance of right price, right quality, and right timing isn't a luxury - it's a necessity.
In the injectable space, where formulation complexity, sterility requirements, and clinical readiness all converge, you can't afford to compromise on quality. This doesn't mean you need to overpay, either. You just need the right partner: someone like Singota who understands both molecules and money.

You Don't Have to Choose Between Budget and Brilliance

Singota Solutions is your solution. We've built our services specifically around the needs of early-phase, small-batch injectable innovators. That means development packages that are accessible for startups, without sacrificing the industry-leading expertise and care that your molecule deserves.
With more than 212 years of combined Product & Process Development experience and over 800 years of total industry wisdom across our team, we bring unmatched insight to every project. We pair that legacy knowledge with pricing that reflects our values: no fluff, no excess, just streamlined, science-first partnership. We will work with you and your budget, to get the work done right the first time.

Given the global availability of CDMO services, we're not the cheapest out there, though our prices are competitive particularly for US-based CDMOS. Unfortunately, that "cheap" pricing you might get somewhere else often leads to risk, rework, poor communication, and/or rushed science. And that's just not what your breakthrough therapy deserves.

Singota's pricing is appropriate and accessible, smartly structured, and designed to deliver the long-term success of your molecule. With Singota, you can stay on budget and stay confident in the quality of the work, because our drug development services are designed to fit your vision, not force you to fit ours.
If you're ready for strategic, high-impact formulation work without the sticker shock or the shortcuts - drop us a line. Let's build something extraordinary, within reach.

Singota's price is right.

Singota Solutions is a US based CDMO in Bloomington, Indiana. Singota specializes in formulation development and aseptic fill finish for injectable projects. Once a formulation is established, Singota utilizes state of the art robotic filling technology and focuses on smaller batch size requirements. For more information, visit Singota.com to explore how Singota has established itself as a one-stop solution for all your developmental needs.

Contact **solutions@singota.com** to schedule a meeting with our business development team to further discuss your current or future projects.