



A career in medical communications

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Medical communications and the pharmaceutical industry
- The role of the medical writer
- Application process and career progression
- Discussion



A route in: Chris



Medical communications



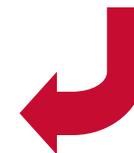
*BA and DPhil in
Biochemistry*



Overland expedition



Management consultant



A route in: Jonathan



Medical communications



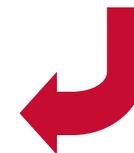
*BSc in Pharmacology
and PhD in Medical
Biochemistry*



Test and interview



Answering job adverts

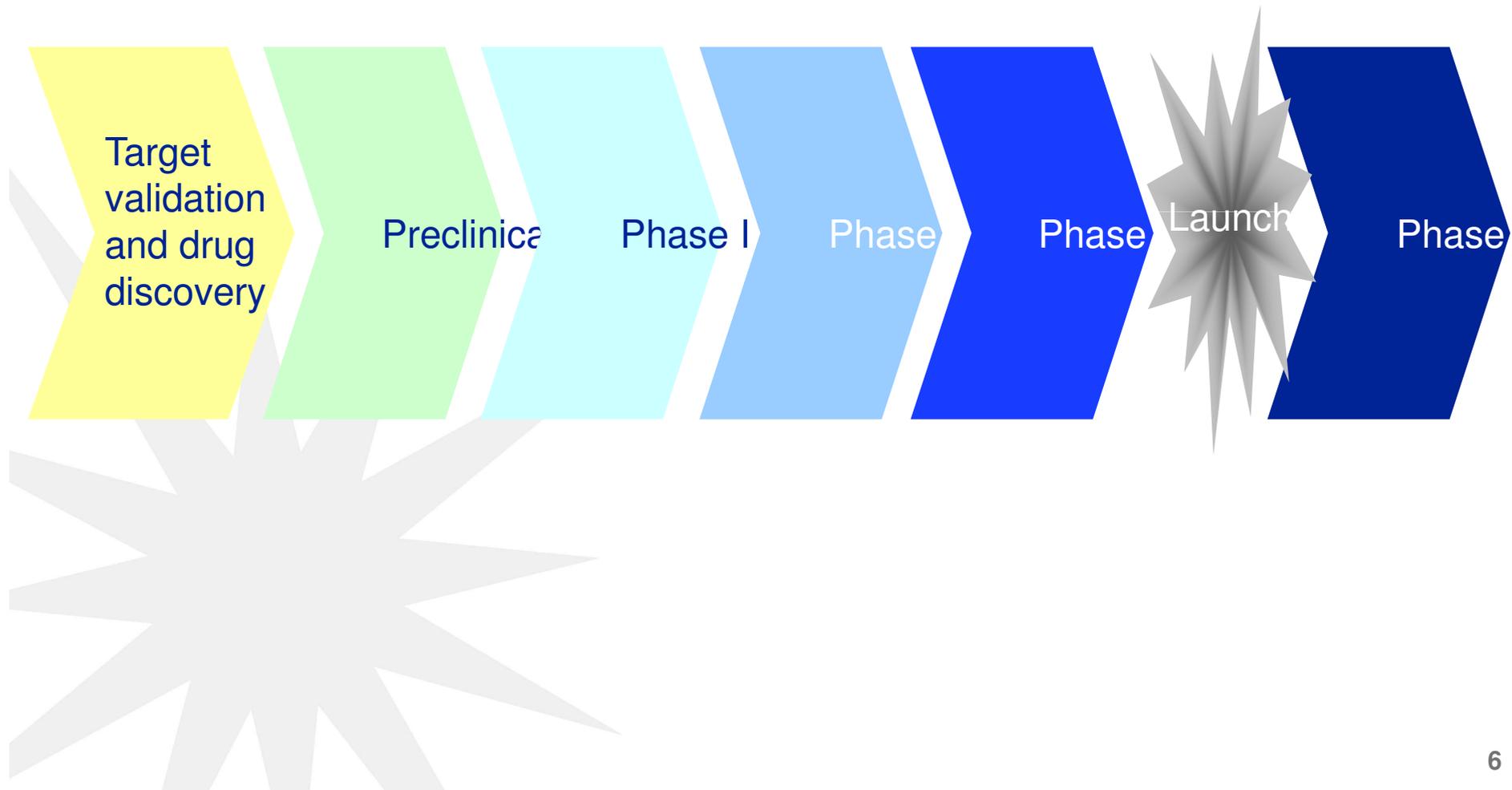




Medical communications and the pharmaceutical industry



Drug development: from bench to bedside

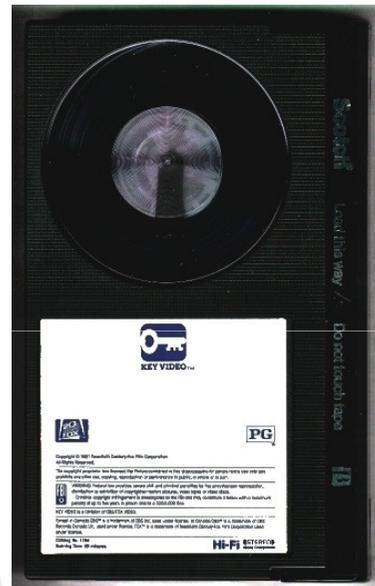


A good product alone is not enough

- It costs > \$1 billion to bring a drug to market
- For every ground-breaking drug that succeeds, there is another that fails
- Increasing pressures on the industry make effective pharmaceutical marketing ever more important



Betamax vs VHS



Betamax
High definition
Innovative
Lost



VHS
Lower definition
Copycat technology
Won

Apple vs Microsoft



Apple Macintosh
Innovative
Reliable
Lost



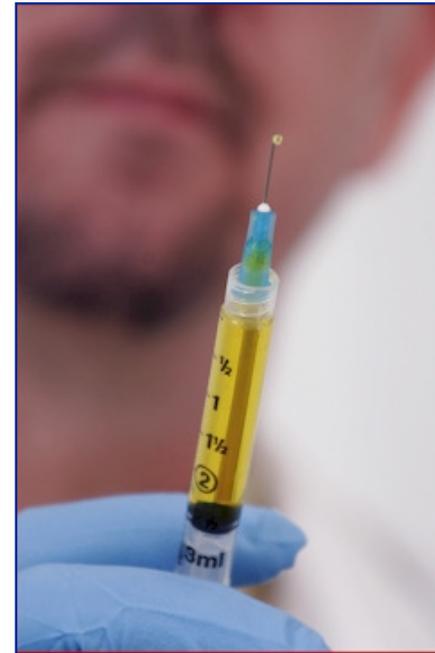
Windows

Microsoft Windows
Copycat technology
Crashed a lot
Won

Selected disasters of pharmaceutical marketing

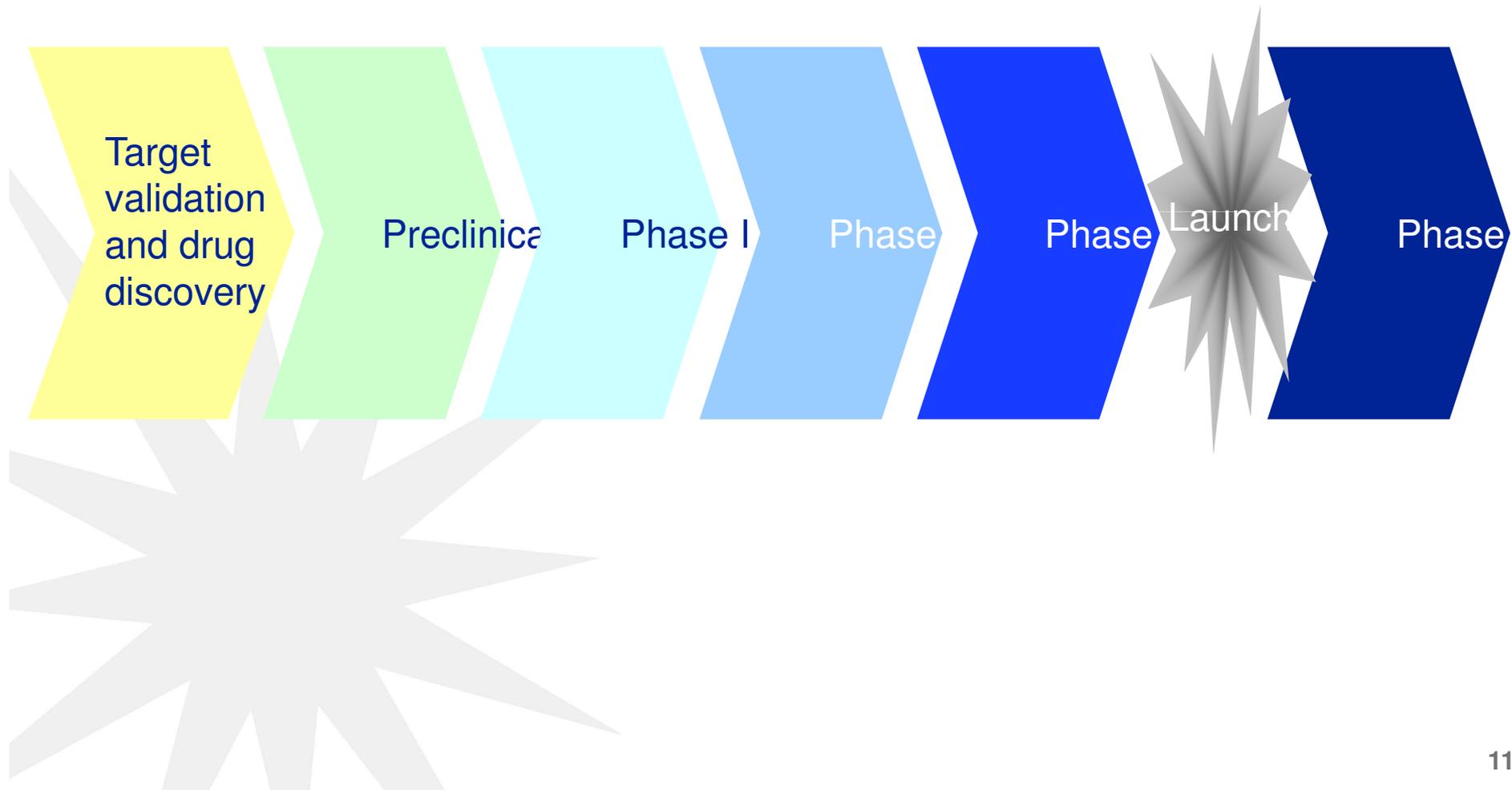


Exubera (inhaled insulin)
2006–2007



Eminase (anistreplase)
1985–1995

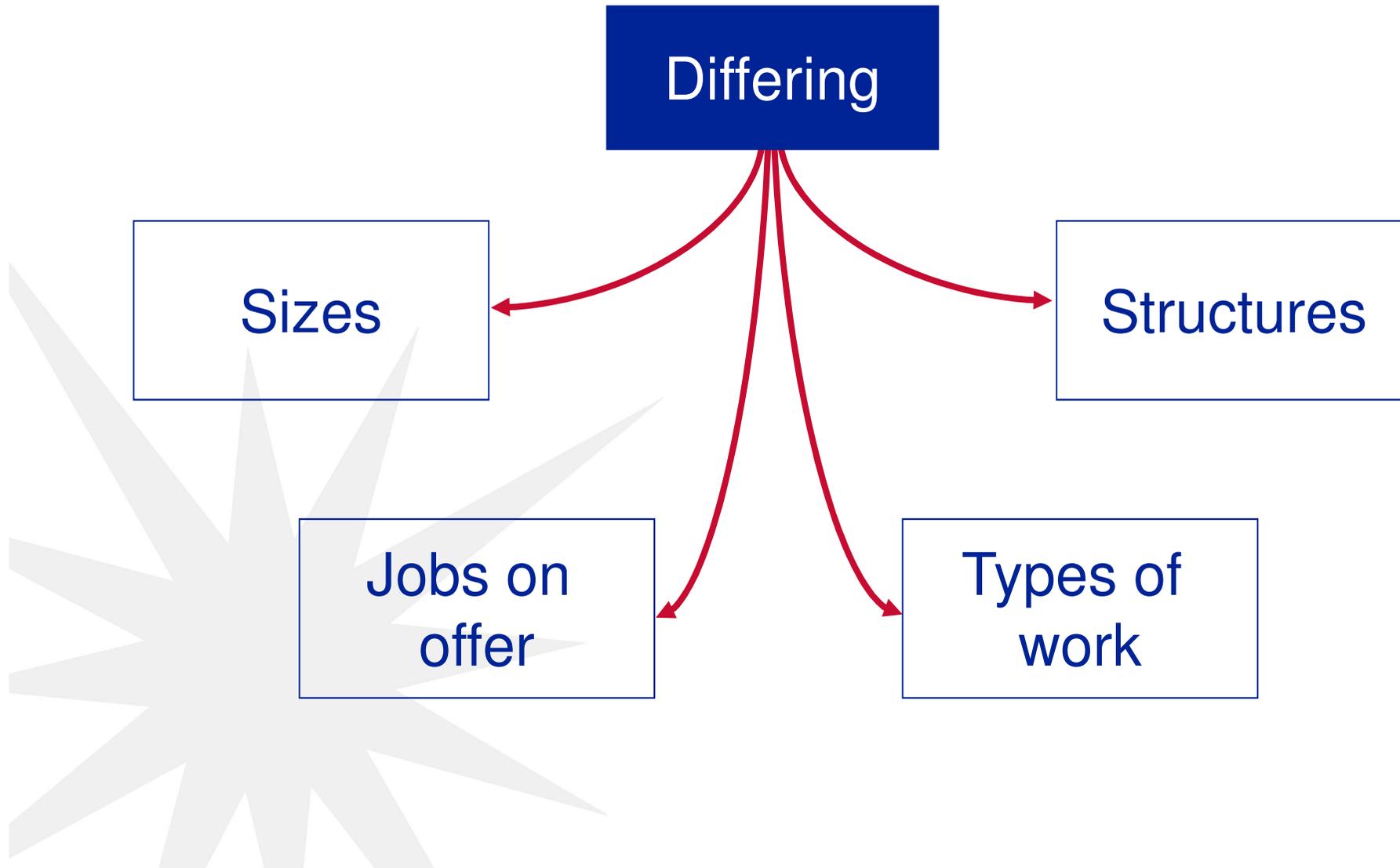
Marketing: not just a post-launch activity



What sorts of things do agencies do?



Are all agencies the same?



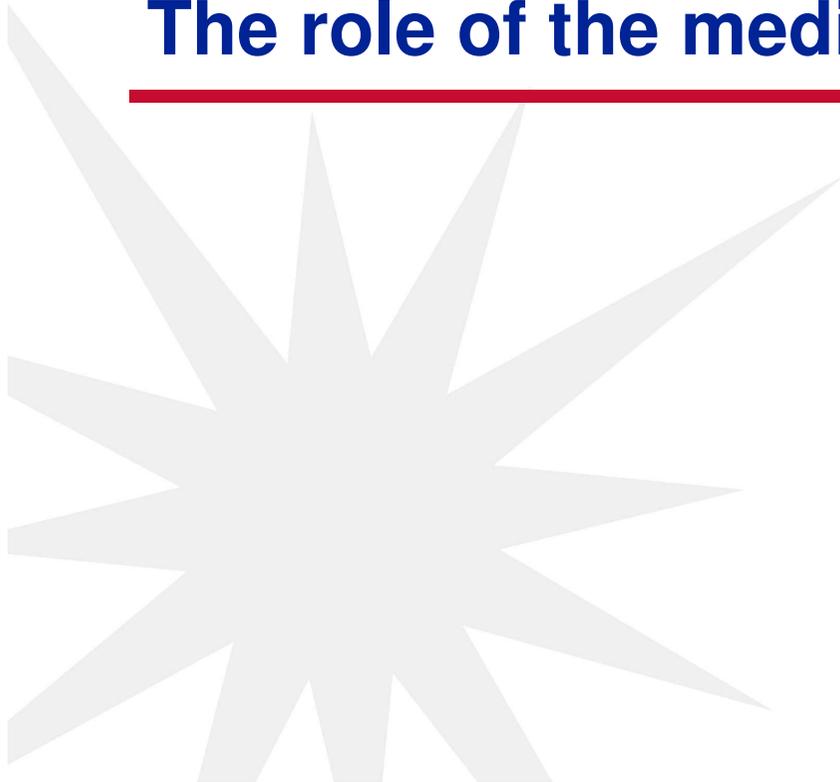
What role could I have in an agency?

- Medical writer
- Medical editor
- Account manager
- Event organizer
- Business development





The role of the medical writer



A day in the life of a medical writer

- Reading scientific papers
- Internet research
- Writing text (Word or PowerPoint)
- Editing and proof-reading
- Meeting colleagues to discuss timelines, costs and resources
- Phone calls with clients or authors
- Reading and sending e-mails

Different models = different benefits

- **Departmental model**

- Account manager takes the lead with client and project management
- Writer focuses on writing
- Sales people are responsible for business development

- **Team model**

- Writer manages own project from proposal to invoicing
 - writing
 - client/author liaison
 - design
 - approval
 - business development



What it is really like – advantages

- Being at the forefront of medical science
- Applying scientific understanding in a commercial environment
- Working with the leading experts in their field
- Having opportunities for travel
- Enjoying a variety of projects



Meeting experts in the therapy area

What it is really like – disadvantages

- Demanding clients
- Egotistical ‘opinion leaders’
- Commercial processes
- Commercial slant
- Timesheets and invoices





Application process and career progression



What an agency is looking for

- Able to write clear and concise English
- Interested in application of science
- Structured thinker
- Intelligent and flexible
- Personable and polite



Getting in

Speculative applications

- Network Pharma
- www.pmlive.com
- www.inpharm.com

Respond to job adverts

- *New Scientist*
- *Guardian* on Mondays
- www.emwa.org

Use the university
contacts database

Writing test

Interview 1

Interview 2

What would the ideal test look like?

- Attention to detail (spotting and avoiding data inconsistencies and misspelled words)
- Well-structured text and unambiguous sentences
- An appropriate and readable writing style (including flexibility to write manuscripts, newsletters, slides and marketing materials)
- Appropriate background research, including an ability to bring out the key points from both clinical and commercial perspectives
- Ability to follow a brief (word count, structure and target audience)
- Evidence of enthusiasm and creative flair

Questions to ask at interview

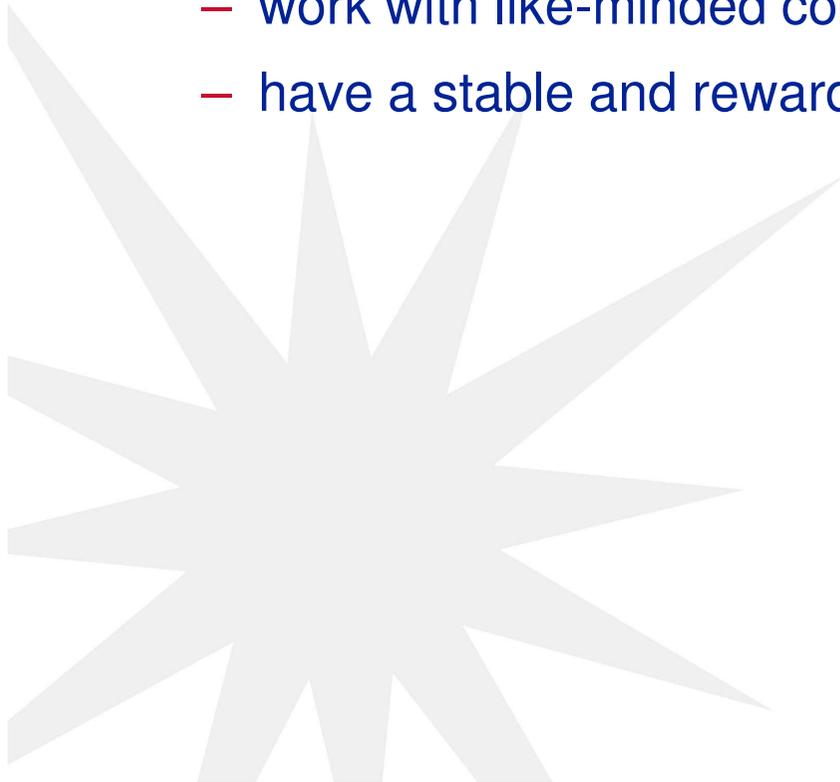
- Will I have direct client and author contact?
- Will I have control over my own projects?
- How varied will the writing be?
- Will I get the opportunity to work in different therapy areas?
- Can I specialize if I wish?
- Is there the opportunity to travel?
- Is there a bonus scheme?

Opportunities for career progression

- Staying put
 - Changing job title
 - More responsibility
 - Greater independence
 - More money
 - Contribute more to strategic projects
 - Management involvement
 - Training new writers
- Moving on
 - Other agencies
 - Industry positions
 - Freelance

Why medical communications?

- It offers the chance to:
 - use your scientific training
 - learn about science as applied to medicine
 - see how the commercial world works
 - work with like-minded colleagues
 - have a stable and rewarding career





Thank you!

