

Medical Writing: Careers Insight Workshop, 24-25 May 2012

# What to expect of life in a MedComms Agency

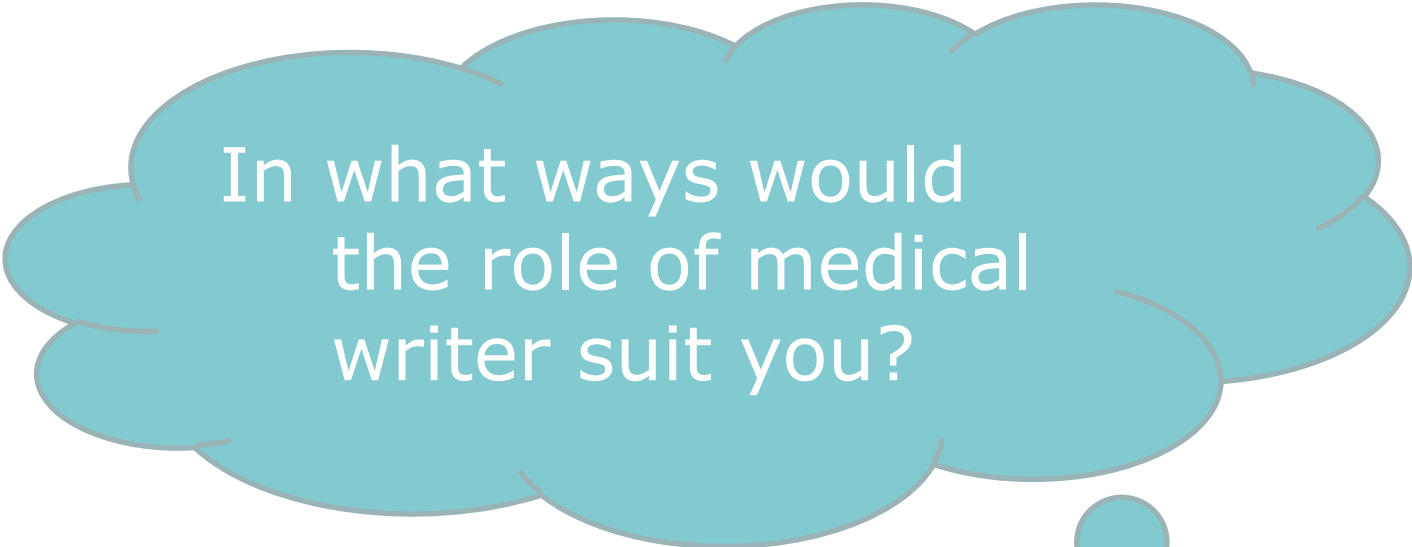
## Is Agency life for you?

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# View of life on the inside!

- Over 15 years' in-house agency experience
  - Medical communications/publishing
  - Client services, project management and editorial roles (but not writing!)
- External perspective
  - Performance coach helping professionals to work smarter

# Take a minute to reflect



In what ways would  
the role of medical  
writer suit you?



What questions  
do you still have  
Who do you need to  
ask?

# What to expect today?

- Challenges and opportunities of agency life
- What type of agency might suit you/your skills
- Next steps...

- ✓ Buzz of team work
- ✓ High pressure but exciting industry
- ✓ Lucrative career

- You get to say:
- ✓ 'Push the envelope'
  - ✓ 'Strategize'
  - ✓ 'Redefine the paradigm'

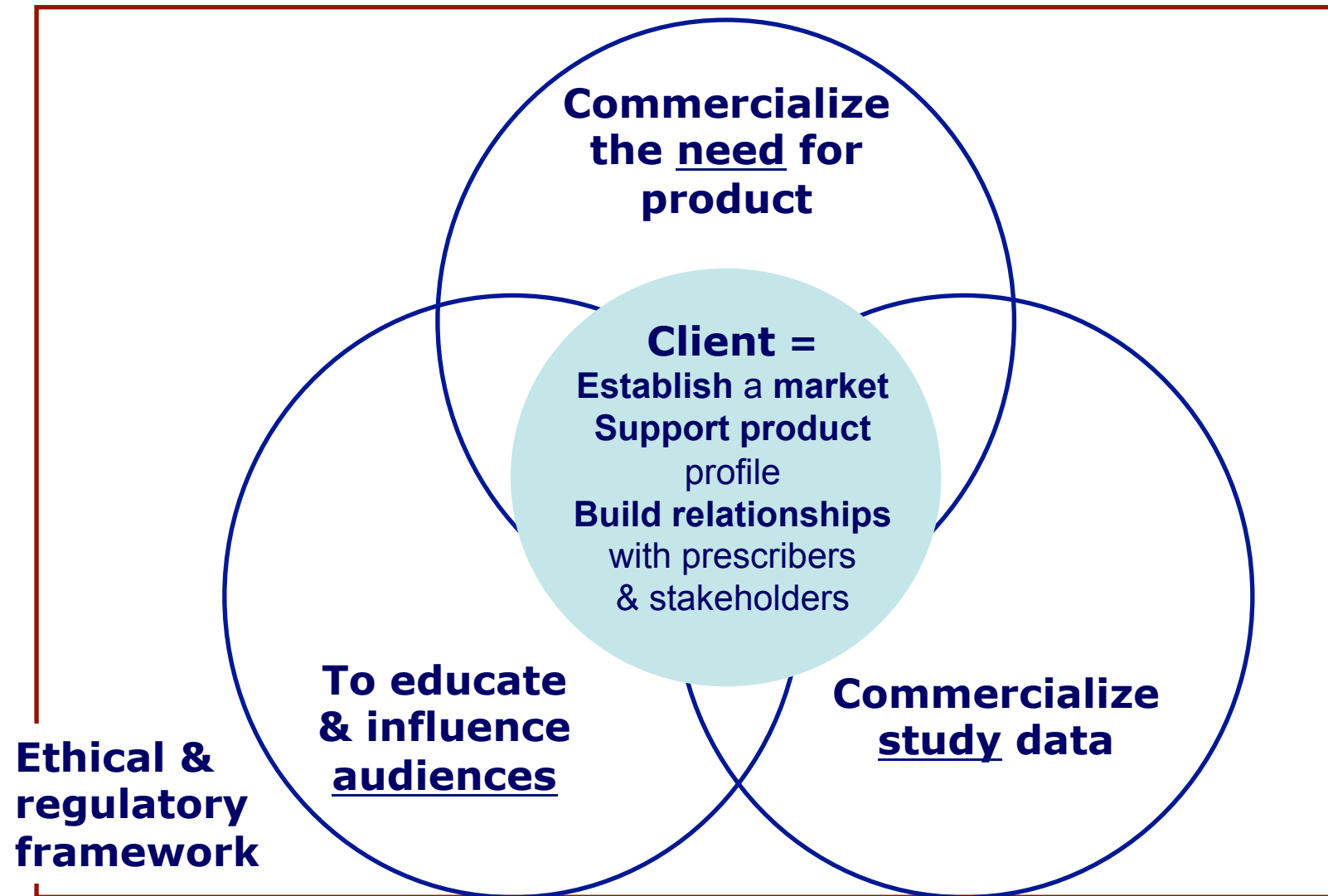
## What's it like in an agency?

Your desk can be anywhere in the world!

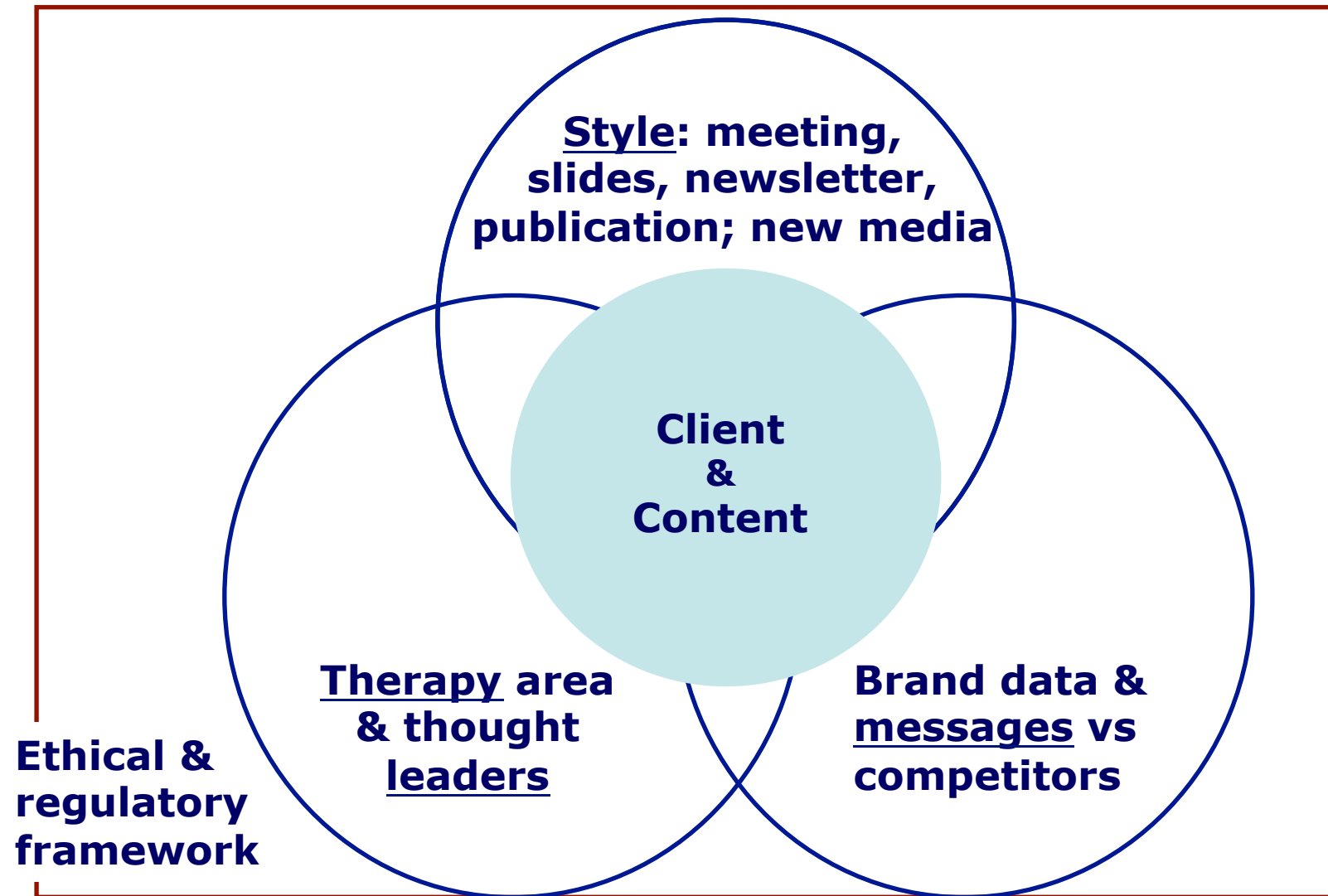
- ✓ Congress meeting room
- ✓ Hotel room
- ✓ Corporate headquarters
- ✓ Departure lounge

You learn on your feet!

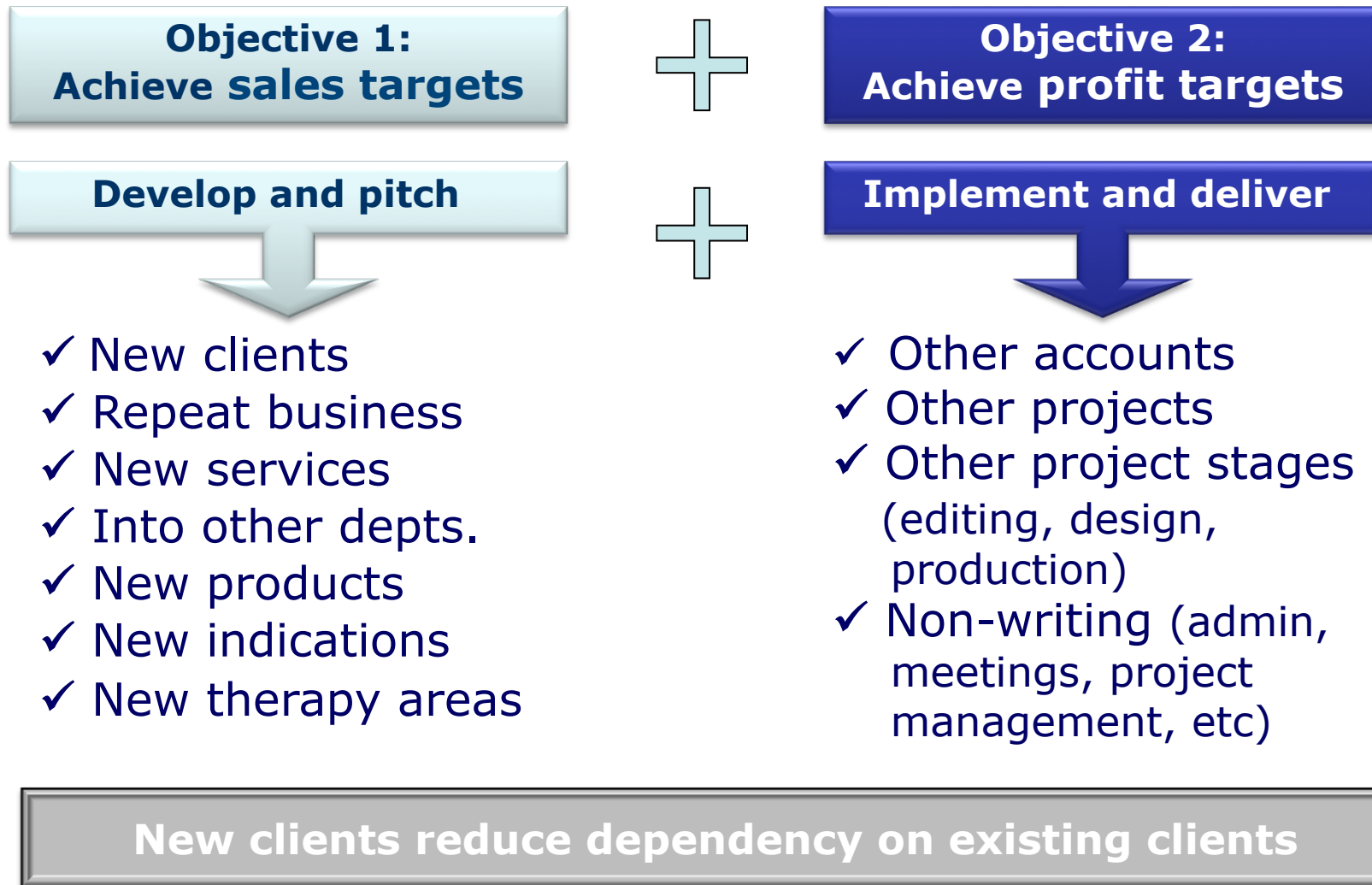
# Medical Communications =



# Medical Writer =



# Agencies are service providers





# Realities of agency life



- You are a resource with competing priorities and deadlines
- Learning takes place on ‘live’ projects and in-front of clients – but it can take time to be trusted
- Your desk can be anywhere in the world!
- Even ‘a job well-done’ is not always a simple measure

# What's a job well done?



- ✓ Produced to brief (objective)
  - Deliver on time, to budget, quality
  - Balance science, marketing, ethical & regulatory
- ✓ A happy client (subjective)
  - Make their lives easier and help in career
  - But is the client always right?

# But, pharmaceutical clients are changing

- Profile

- Highly business aware + personal career
- High turnover = low corporate memory + experience
- Time/resource pressured

- Intense competition

- Clients switch - because they can!
- Low barrier (multinationals → individuals)

What suits you/your skills?

# Depends on agency style/culture

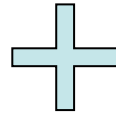
- Size/niche/multi service
- Structure and style
  - Hierarchical/flat/business units
  - Formal/entrepreneurial
- Support services
  - Systems/processes/financials/IT
  - HR, esp. training & development opportunities

# Depends on account team structure

- Writing model
  - Freelance/in-house writers
- Key relationships
  - Writer + editor / project manager / account manager
  - Fixed teams or matrix
- Job titles don't predict role
  - Editor/project editor/project manager/account exec/account manager

# What opportunities are you looking for?

**Business development  
+ Client service**



**Operational + Editorial**

- ✓ New clients
- ✓ New products/indications
- ✓ New therapy areas
- ✓ Creating new services
- ✓ Leading pitches
- ✓ Strategic direction

- ✓ Project management
- ✓ Medical Direction
- ✓ QA/QC
- ✓ Line management
- ✓ Training/development
- ✓ Budgeting & finance

**WINNING and KEEPING clients**

# Think about your transferable skills

- Challenger and solution finder
- Editor and quality controller
- Chaser and coordinator
- Trusted client adviser and negotiator
- Project tracker and financial controller
- New business opportunity spotter
- Value-adder



What you won't find in a job-ad...

# Common afflictions reported by agency staff\*

- Project-creep (a slowly growing specification)
- Canujustitis (need for freebies; '*lastminute.com*') )
- Dripfeedsia (pressure to start w/o all data)
- Timeline stenosis (narrowing of the deadlines)
- RSI (Repetitive Sign-off Interference)

\*Tongue firmly in cheek

# Your Career Insights...

# Taking action...

Q: In what way would the role of medical writer suit you?

Transferable skills/areas of interest/type of agency

Q: What is your goal from this workshop?

Or what/who do you still need to ask?

Q: What are your next steps?

Making contacts, starting research, CV etc