Starting your career in MedComms

Jane Smith
What is MedComms?

MedComms agencies work with pharmaceutical clients to raise awareness of diseases and treatments, educating and informing healthcare professionals about the benefits and risks of new therapies, supported by clinical and economic data.
Why is it so important?

Pharmaceutical company

Healthcare professionals

MedComms: bridging the knowledge gap
How do we bridge the knowledge gap?

**Strategic**
- Brand planning
- Market and competitor analyses
- Communications strategy development

**Tactical**
- **Meetings**
  - Satellite symposia
  - Standalone meetings
  - Advisory boards
  - Booth content
  - Virtual events
  - Expert engagement

- **Scientific content**
  - Slide sets
  - Publications
  - Literature reviews
  - HEOR and market access materials
  - Patient communications

- **Training materials**
  - Promotional materials
  - Objection handlers
  - Speaker training
  - Visual aids and detail aids
  - e-Learning

- **Digital**
  - Websites/apps
  - Videos and animations
  - Infographics
  - Social media
  - VR and AR

**Communications strategy development**
What does MedComms mean to me?

MedComms agencies work with pharmaceutical clients to raise awareness of diseases and treatments, educating and informing healthcare professionals about the benefits and risks of new therapies, supported by clinical and economic data.

- Intellectually stimulating and rewarding
- Chance to expand scientific understanding
- Opportunity for development and growth
- Teamwork and collaboration
- May involve travel to meet clients/KOLs
What are the entry opportunities?

Key attributes for any role: scientific knowledge, teamwork, eye for detail, organizational skills, good communication, adaptability and eagerness to learn
Working as part of a team

Advisory board

Objectives and briefing calls
- Agenda
- Venue logistics
- Attendee travel plans
- Slide presentations
- Pre-reading materials
- Signage and materials
- Slide rehearsals/tech checks
- Onsite attendance
- Post-meeting report
- Evaluation forms
Choosing an agency – key criteria

**Size and structure**
Smaller, nimble independent business or large international network organization?

**Reputation**
Strong heritage? High-quality deliverables? Positive team morale? High team retention rate?

**Market focus**
Supports Global HQ clients or an individual market/region?

**Culture**
Supportive? Friendly? Collaborative?

**Types of work**
Full service (eg publications, digital, training, meetings) or specialist?

**Career progression**
Formal training or tailored support?

No two agencies are the same – you need to find the best fit for you
Sources of information

Websites, networking events, internships/work experience are all invaluable sources of information to ensure that you are prepared for the interview and for your first day on the job.
My journey into MedComms

Mary Thorp
This time last year...

Scientific research
- Stem cell research project
- Academic poster
- Written literature review and dissertation

Teamwork
- Ladies' Rugby
- Choir
- Orchestra

Communication skills
- Volunteering with young adults with disabilities
- Waitressing
- Laboratory work

Responsibility
- President of Sheffield University rugby team
- Section leader of King’s school orchestra
- Camp counsellor
MedComms vacancy

Vacancy
Trainee medical writer
AMICULUM Limited
Location: Bollington

Throughout my Master’s degree, I regularly produced **posters and presentations** and enjoyed the challenge of making these visually impactful and accessible to scientists and non-scientists alike. I have also demonstrated both **teamwork** and **leadership** through my role as Club President for my Ladies’ Rugby team.
Unsuccessful application

New internship vacancy
The interview
From the interview to the current day

- Oct 2017: 3-month internship
- Dec 2017: Offered full-time position
- Sept 2018: Trainee account handler

- Finance
- Client liaison
- Project management
- Scientific project work

Trainee account handler
What skills have I developed?

- Communication
- Financial acumen
- Organization and prioritization
- Industry knowledge
- Relationship development
A ‘typical day’

09:00 - 10:00: Team meeting
10:00 - 11:00: Emails
11:00 - 12:00: Account finance
12:00 - 13:00: Lunch!
13:00 - 14:00: Client call
14:00 - 15:00: Brainstorm meeting
15:00 - 16:00: Project work
What I’ve learned

- Work in MedComms is extremely varied
- Effective prioritization of work is key
- All work is done as part of a team
- New ideas and creativity are valued
Strength in diversity

**Driver**
- Decisive
- Direct and efficient
- Administrative skills

**Analytical**
- Organized
- Inquisitive
- Problem-solver

**Amiable**
- Relationship building
- Team player
- Counselling skills

**Expressive**
- Spontaneous
- Multi-tasking
- Enthusiastic
Why MedComms?
One year on…