

Careers Insight Workshop, 18-19 May 2015

# What to expect of life in a MedComms Agency

## Is Agency life for you?

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# View of life on the inside!

- 20 years' experience
  - Medical communications/publishing
  - Client services, project management and editorial roles (but not writing!)
- External perspective
  - Coaching, performance manager, development team for new event management software



# What to expect today?

# A minute to reflect

How might medical  
writer role **suit you?**

What **questions**  
do you still have?

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

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

## Agency life – what to expect?

Your desk can be anywhere in the world!

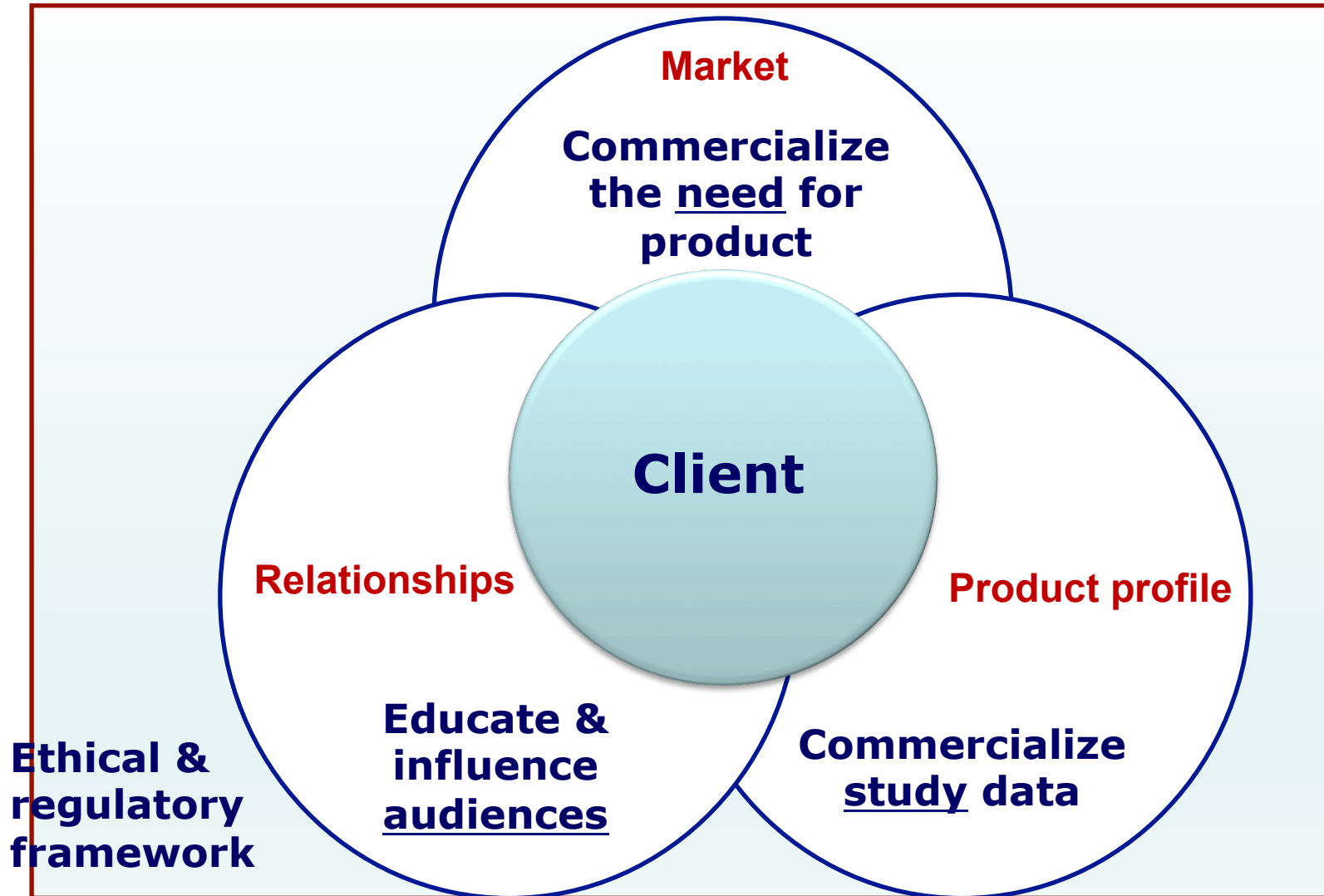
- ✓ Congress meeting room
- ✓ Hotel room
- ✓ Corporate headquarters
- ✓ Departure lounge

You learn on your feet!

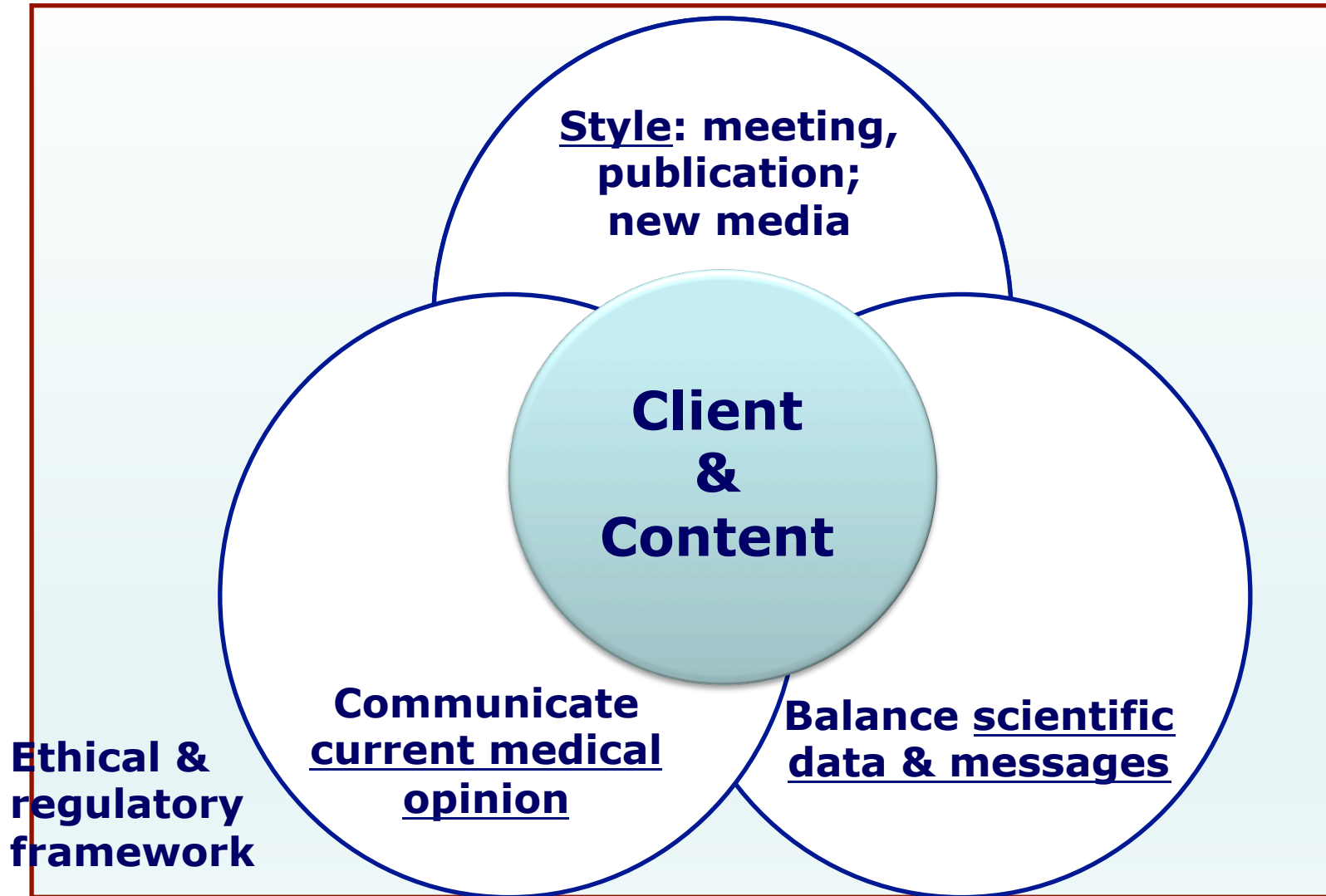
# Pharmaceutical marketing =



# Medical Communications=



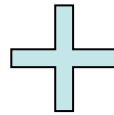
# Medical Writing =





# BUT Agency = service provider

**Objective 1:**  
Achieve sales targets



**Objective 2:**  
Achieve profit targets

**Develop & pitch**



**Implement & deliver**

- ✓ New clients
- ✓ Repeat business
- ✓ New services
- ✓ Into other depts.
- ✓ New products
- ✓ New indications
- ✓ New therapy areas

- ✓ Other accounts
- ✓ Other projects
- ✓ Other project stages  
(editing, design, production)
- ✓ Non-writing (admin,  
meetings, project  
management, etc)

**Dual focus reduces dependency on existing clients**

# 4 Realities of agency life...



- You are a resource with competing priorities and deadlines
- You learn 'live' and in-front of clients – but it takes time to be trusted
- Life would be easier without your team!
- Life would be easier without your client!

# 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?

# Agencies will change because client and landscape are changing

- Changing pharma client

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

- Increasing competition

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

So, 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 team structure

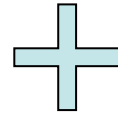
- Writing model
  - Freelance/in-house writers
- Key relationships
  - Writer + editor / project manager / account manager
  - Fixed teams or matrix
- Job titles don't predict role
  - Editor/project editor/project manager/account exec/account manager

# Where can you add value?

- 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



# Lots of opportunities beyond writing



- ✓ 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

**Think about potential beyond medical writing**

What they don't mention  
in the job-ad...

# Common afflictions reported by agency staff\*

- Project-creep (a slowly growing specification)
- Canujustitis (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

# 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

Thank you.