Medical Communications - The Agency Perspective

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Today’s Agenda

• What we do?
• How we do it?
• What we look for in a scientific writer?
• Training and career opportunities
What we don’t do!

• “Sell drugs”
• “Ghost write!”
• “Work for the Lancet”

Quote of the Day:
• “I have no idea what Dave does but he seems to enjoy it…something medical?”
© Dave’s Mum

What we actually do is…
Link clients to professionals, so they can help patients in need.
Translate Complex Scientific Data into Motivating Communications
Agenda

• What we do?
• How we do it?
• What we look for in a scientific writer?
• Training and career opportunities
What is “Pre-launch Marketing”? 

• Medical communication activities carried out before a drug is available for doctors to prescribe
• This can include:
  – Market Development
    • highlighting unmet medical needs
    • improving knowledge of a disease area
    • presenting a new therapeutic approach
  – Product Support
    • specific product information
  – Internal Communication
    • organisation and planning
Pre-marketing aims to maximise the return on investment in the time available.
Why is Pre-launch Marketing Important?

- Development of a new drug takes around 10-15 years
- For every new drug that succeeds there is another that fails
- Patent on new drug is for 20 years
- Cost of development ~$1 billion
- There maybe as little as 5 years to recoup investment
- Increasing competition and pressures on the industry make effective pharmaceutical marketing ever more important
- Medical communications can continue until well after launch
Typical Scientific Projects

Managing/tracking client’s data

Disseminating data/scientific messages

Journals
Manuscripts
Proceedings

Congresses
Abstracts
Scientific posters
Speaker slides
Symposium materials
Exhibit panels
Post-meeting publications

Stand Alone
Monographs
Websites
Slide kits
Newsletters
CD-ROM
Videos
The Scientific and Editorial Delivery Process

Confirm requirements + budgets

Project kickoff

Create schedules
(Liaison with Studio, Meetings, Exhibits, Despatch)

There is more to it than just writing good science!

Internal/Client/Faculty approvals

To Studio for layout

Internal/Client/Faculty approvals

To print + despatch/shipping

Reconciliation/Debrief
Agenda

- What we do?
- How we do it?
- **What we look for in a scientific writer?**
- Training and career opportunities
The Ideal Scientific Writer

Functional Skills

Excellent writing & editing skills
Eye for detail
Thinks ahead
Organised
Good communicator

Personal Attributes

Pragmatic
Creative
Adaptable
Assertive
Self-motivated
Articulate
‘Can do’ attitude
Sense of humour!

Knowledge

Clinical Understanding
Sound grasp of scientific concepts
Drug development process
Pharma industry

Ideal

Can do’ attitude

Pragmatic
Creative
Adaptable
Assertive
Self-motivated
Articulate
‘Can do’ attitude
Sense of humour!
Can You Meet The Daily Challenge?

- Working to budget
- Demanding clients
- Working to schedule
- Maintaining highest quality
- Constantly moving targets
The Rewards of Medical Writing

• Intellectual challenge
• Being at the forefront of medical science
• Developing good working relationships
  – Colleagues
  – Clients
  – Opinion leaders
• Seeing the end product
• Contributing to the company’s success/growth
• Remuneration, benefits
• Travel
Why PAREXEL MedCom?

- Over 90 on-staff Scientific Writers and Editors
  - 74% Advanced degrees, 60% with PhDs or MDs
  - 50% Published authors
  - Many on journal Editorial Boards
- Unrivalled training program – The Academy
- Breadth of opportunities within Scientific and Editorial Services
  - Promotion from within
  - Well defined career path
- Supportive, informal, and pleasant working environment
- Healthy emphasis on work life balance
- Sports and Social Club
How to become a Scientific Writer…

• Get a biomedical degree and/or relevant pharma experience
  – Advanced qualifications are preferable
• Practice your writing skills
  – You will be assessed via a writing sample!
  – Demonstrate an ability to write creatively and accurately
  – Demonstrate a deep understanding of science and interpretation of clinical trial/scientific data
• Apply
  – Direct: To agencies
  – Speculative: Networkpharma or Inpharm
  – Job adverts: Guardian, New Scientist, EMWA
• Interview
  – Screening call
  – Writing sample
  – Face-to-face interview
Dave’s Story

BSc in Physiology and Biochemistry

Medical Information (9 years)

Sales (1 Year)

Persuaded by former boss to join PAREXEL

Scientific Writer (7 years)
Charlie’s Story

BSc in Medical Biochemistry → Postgraduate research (4 years)

Medical Writer (6 years) → Head-hunted to join PAREXEL
Dominik’s Story

BSc in Biochemistry and Zoology

Environmental volunteer work in Brazil

Surfer and PAREXEL freelancer in Oz

MSc Environmental Conservation
Nick’s Story

City boy dreams of becoming a farmer

BSc Agriculture

PhD Biochemistry

Scientific Writer (11 years)

Medical publishing
Karen’s Story

BSc Biochemistry → Microbiologist at a soft drinks factory → Travel to New Zealand

Scientific Writer (3 years) → Post Doc in liver fibrosis → PhD Biochemistry
Agenda

- What we do?
- How we do it?
- What we look for in a new medical writer?
- Training and career opportunities
PAREXEL Fellowship of Scientific Writers and Editors

• Recognizes unique core competencies and supports and further enhances the world-class capability of PAREXEL
  – Scientific credentials
  – Scientific writing expertise
  – Editing and QC excellence

• Fellowship Professional Development
  – Foundation: Writers and Editors
  – Senior: Experienced Writers and Editorial Specialists
  – Masters: Managers, Directors, Lead Scientific Specialists, Scientific Strategic Advisors

• Associate Academy Members
  – Freelance professionals meeting PAREXEL’s professional standards
What Does the Academy Training Cover?

• PAREXEL has invested heavily in customized Academy training for Scientific Writers and Editors
• Provides ongoing professional development on:
  – Scientific writing for different audiences and media
  – Statistical analysis and interpretation
  – Publication program development and implementation
  – Publication guidelines (PhRMA, OIG, ICMJE, CONSORT, etc)
  – Project management
  – Quality control procedures
  – Communication excellence
• Training programs are conducted through structured workshops, seminars, and practical sessions
• Refresher courses are provided as required
Training and Development for Editorial Specialists

• A rigorous program of tailored training is available for Editorial Specialists, providing comprehensive skills in:
  • Copyediting
  • Proofreading, formatting, style guidelines
  • Use of grammar
  • Project management
  • Print and production processes; interactive media
  • Pharma guidelines
  • On-screen editing
  • PowerPoint
The Sales Slide!

Any Questions?