What to expect of life in a MedComms Agency

Is Agency life for you?

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An outsider’s 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
What to expect today?

- Challenges and opportunities of agency life
- What type of agency might suit you/your skills
- Your plan of action

But first, your thoughts...
Your careers insights...

Q: In what ways would the role of medical writer suit you?
   – Think: what interests you (writing/non-writing); what are your transferable skills

Q: What questions haven’t yet been answered?
   – Think: what/who do you need to ask?
Are all Agencies the same?

(Key challenges & opportunities)
Pharmaceutical Marketing =

- Establish a market
- Build relationships with prescribers & stakeholders
- Support product profile

New product

Ethical & regulatory framework

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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)
Medical Communications =

- Commercialize the need for product
- To educate & influence audiences
- Commercialize study data

Ethical & regulatory framework

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Agencies are service providers

**Objective 1:** Achieve sales targets
- Develop and pitch
  - New clients
  - Repeat business
  - New services
  - Into other depts.
  - New products
  - New indications
  - New therapy areas

**Objective 2:** Achieve profit targets
- Implement and deliver
  - Other accounts
  - Other projects
  - Other project stages (editing, design, production)
  - Non-writing (admin, meetings, project management, etc)

New clients reduce dependency on existing clients
Medical Writer =

- Style: meeting, slides, newsletter, publication; new technologies
- Content & client
- Therapy area & thought leaders
- Brand data & messages vs competitors

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Realities of agency life

- You are a resource with competing priorities and deadlines
- Learning takes place on ‘live’ projects and in-front of clients
- 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?
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**
- New clients
- New products/indications
- New therapy areas
- Creating new services
- Leading pitches

**Operational**
- Project management
- Medical Direction
- QA/QC
- Line management
- Training/development
- Level of client contact

**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
- (… telepathic abilities)
Action planning...
Taking action...

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

Transferable skills + areas of interest

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