

Entry-level Recruitment

Tips on how to get that first job in med comms

Profile of Karen Kent

- PhD in veterinary microbiology
- Post docs in animal and human infectious diseases, including 9 years working on HIV vaccine development
- Moved into med comms in 1998 as a Medical Writer
- Held in-house roles until June 2011, then set up my own business
- >2 years experience in recruitment for med comms

A career in med comms?

- Is medical communications the next rung on your career ladder?



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- If so, which direction?
 - Medical Writing?
 - Medical Editing?
 - Account Management?

Which company is right for you?

- Location
 - The main centres are London, Oxford and the NW – but there are companies dotted across the UK
 - Check out the map on the MedComms Networking site
- Size of company
 - Large international corporation versus a smaller, privately owned company ... or something in between?
- Main focus of work
 - Publication planning, meetings and monographs, or a mix of deliverables?

Getting that first job

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BUT HOW?

Your CV

- Concise – maximum of two pages
 - Personal profile – 2 or 3 sentences that capture who you are and what you can offer med comms
 - Work experience – focus on transferrable skills and experience rather than laboratory techniques
 - Education – list chronologically, most recent first
 - Personal interests – optional, but I like to know that people have a life outside of work!

Key skills and experience

- Scientific/medical knowledge
 - Proven by PhD and post-doctoral experience
- Writing skills
 - Can you write well? Do you like writing? Do you have the versatility to adapt your writing for different audiences?
- Attention-to-detail
 - Do you have a high level of attention-to-detail? Can you edit and proofread your own work?
- Project management
 - Can you multi-task?
- Time management
 - Can you manage your own time effectively?

Key skills and experience

- **Interpersonal and communication skills**
 - Can you communicate well with colleagues and clients? Are you a team player?
- **Flexibility**
 - Are you prepared to work outside of your job description and be flexible with your working hours?
- **Creativity**
 - Do you have a creative flair and a good eye for artwork and page layout? Do you think creatively with strategic insight?
- **Proactivity**
 - Can you work out what needs to be done and get on with it rather than wait to be told what to do?

Applying for a job

- Many companies now recruit directly at entry-level
- Job vacancies are generally posted on company websites and on specialist job boards e.g. NextMedCommsJob.com
- Networking and careers events enable you to meet representatives from med comms companies

Medical writing test

The purpose of a writing test is to assess your current writing ability and future potential:

- Scientific understanding
- General writing ability
- Commercial writing ability

Your work will be reviewed for:

- Scientific content and interpretation of data
- How appropriate the article is for the stated audience
- Use of English – spelling, punctuation and grammar

Medical editing test

For anyone aspiring to be a medical editor or production editor, the purpose of an editing test is to assess your:

- General use of English
- Ability to copy edit and proofread
- Eye for design and layout

After the writing/editing test ...

Only if your test meets the required standard will you be called for interview

- At interview you need to:
 - Be knowledgeable about the role you have applied for
 - Know as much as you can about the company and all its offerings
 - Be aware of relevant industry guidelines

At interview

- Be confident enough so your interviewer knows you are capable of doing the job ...

At interview

- Be confident enough so your interviewer knows you are capable of doing the job ... but be humble enough so your interviewer knows you will take constructive criticism as you learn the ropes!



Blood becomes fluid, its ability is a few fold higher than fermented soybean.	PREP : by
Containing the high active chitosan.	PREP : by of
Effective in treating	PREP : on
Removes life-style related diseases via an enzyme substance.	PREP : Remedy
Thrombosis-dissolution enzyme, produced by an unusual biological treatment, dissolves arteriosclerosis followed by hyperlipemia or blood platelets that produce thrombus, and prevents arteriosclerosis. It has much higher efficacy in thrombosis-dissolution than marketed nattokinase.	PREP : by
	PREP : the
	PREP : has the
	PREP : unique function of
	PREP : which

With many companies recruiting directly,
is there still a role for recruiters in the
entry-level landscape?

How could a recruiter help you?

- Offer an overview of the medical communications industry
- Provide guidance on medical communications companies recruiting entry-level candidates in your chosen location
- CV review
- Detailed assessment of a practice writing or editing test tailored for the medical communications industry
- Assistance with job applications
- Interview preparation and overview of industry guidelines

Entry-level consultancy

- Apparent need for a different kind of recruitment service to support scientists and academics wanting to move into medical communications
- A new service will be offered to candidates on a fee-paying basis
- I will welcome the opportunity to assist med comms companies to find high-calibre, entry-level candidates

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