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?
A career in med comms?

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

- 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 … …

- The entry-level market is highly competitive … …
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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!
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
Karen Kent PhD

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