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

• >2.5 years experience in recruitment for med comms
A career in med comms?

Is medical communications the next step on your career path?

If so, which direction is right for you?

- Medical writing?
- Medical editing?
- Account management?
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!
Transferable skills

• Scientific/medical knowledge
• Writing skills
• Attention-to-detail
• Project management
• Time management
• Interpersonal and communication skills
• Flexibility
• Creativity
• Proactivity
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?
Applying for a job

• Networking and careers events enable you to meet representatives from med comms companies

• Job vacancies are generally posted on company websites and on specialist job boards e.g. NextMedCommsJob.com

• Make sure the cover letter or email that you send with your CV is well written … and take the time to proofread it!
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
Account management test

- Increasingly, tests are being introduced for trainee account management roles:
  - Written and verbal communications skills
  - Use of PowerPoint
  - Creative awareness
After the writing/editing test …

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

• At interview you need to:
  – Know as much as you can about med comms
  – Be informed about the company and all its offerings
  – Be knowledgeable about the role you have applied for
  – 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 well
At interview … …

Even if you have completed a pre-interview writing assignment, some companies ask for a short writing or editing test to be completed at interview.
The job offer

• Job title
• Salary
• Benefits (may include: pension, holiday, bonus schemes, private health care, life insurance, gym membership, etc.)
• Start date
• Probationary period
• Line manager

• If not provided already, this is the point at which you will be asked for the names and contact details of your referees
Need help to find that first role?
Karen Kent PhD

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