From academia to medical communications

Dr Annick Moon

Medical communications consultant & writer
Medical communications

- Medical writer
- Medical editor
- Editorial project manager
- Account manager
- Project manager

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**Editorial Project Manager**
Medical Education Agency

Are you an energetic, ambitious and passionate individual with the desire and potential to join one of the largest healthcare communications agencies in the

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**Account Manager**
New Media Agency

You will manage projects including awareness and patient websites, interact with education programs and conferences,

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**Medical Editor**
Healthcare Communications Agency

Proofing copy to the highest standard for a full range of medical education and communications materials including scientific abstracts, papers, presentations, print items, and professional liaison with industry key contacts; managing materials through design.

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**Medical Writer**
International Med Comms

Suitable candidates will ideally have at least 18 months relevant writing experience with a background in either Medical Communications, Clinical Research, Academic Research or Publishing. A life science degree is preferable. You will display excellent organisational skills and acute attention to detail.
## Transferable skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Writing</td>
<td>o Thesis, papers, posters, slides, grant applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Presenting</td>
<td>o Conference presentations, transfer talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Project management</td>
<td>o Designing experiments and scheduling resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Project leading and mentoring</td>
<td>o Project students, teaching/demonstrating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Opinion leader experience</td>
<td>o Confidently discuss complex issues with leading experts (e.g. Friday night in the King’s Arms)</td>
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</table>
Research the industry

- **Professional bodies**
  - European Medical Writers Association – [www.emwa.org](http://www.emwa.org)
  - American Medical Writers Association – [www.ama.org](http://www.ama.org)
  - Healthcare Communications Association – [www.hca-uk.org](http://www.hca-uk.org)

- **Pharmaceutical industry news, views and information**
  - First Word – [www.firstwordplus.com](http://www.firstwordplus.com)
  - PharmaFocus – [www.pharmafocus.com](http://www.pharmafocus.com)
  - PharmaTimes – [www.pharmatimes.com](http://www.pharmatimes.com)
  - Pharmaceutical Executive – [www.pharmexeceurope.com](http://www.pharmexeceurope.com)
  - Pharmaceutical Marketing – [www.pmlive.com](http://www.pmlive.com)

- **Specialist jobs boards**
  - eMedCareers – [www.emedcareers.com](http://www.emedcareers.com)
  - InPharm – [www.inpharm.com](http://www.inpharm.com)
  - Pharmiweb – [www.pharmiweb.com](http://www.pharmiweb.com)
Things to Google before your interview

- Clinical trials
- Clinical development
- Satellite symposium
- Pharmaceutical marketing
- Product positioning
What is medical communications?

No...
- Journalism
- Academic publishing

Yes...
- Provide support to the pharmaceutical industry:
  - communicate clinical and commercial messages
Communications consultancy: an overview

Pharmaceutical client

I want patients to benefit from Puscurol®

Communications agency

Agree key messages:
- Puscurol® treats pusorrhoea
- Puscurol® works quickly
- Puscurol® is easy to administer

Agree strategy:
- Raise awareness of pusorrhoea
- Educate about Puscurol® mode of action
- Ascertain views of pusorrhoea experts

Agree tactics:
- Publish review about pus-related diseases
- Present Puscurol® data at conferences
- Speak to pus disease opinion leaders
Communications consultancy: an overview

Communications agency

- Manage publication process
- Content and copy edit
- Writer

Target audience

Disseminate messages

- Clinical manuscripts
- Conference activities
- Promotional material
# Communications consultancy: which agency does what

Full service communications agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotional</th>
<th>Legal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertising agency</td>
<td>Clinical research organisation/regulatory consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverts: Trade press; Consumer ads</td>
<td>Market access: FDA, EMEA; Health economics, e.g. NICE; Formulary packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional materials: Sales aids; Sales rep training materials; Direct mail; Exhibition stand materials</td>
<td>Regulatory documents: Clinical trial documentation; Clinical trial authorisations; Investigational new drug applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical education: Journal manuscripts; Conference presentations; Advisory boards</td>
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</table>

## Promotional services
- Trade press
- Consumer ads
- Sales aids
- Sales rep training materials
- Direct mail
- Exhibition stand materials

## Medical education
- Journal manuscripts
- Conference presentations
- Advisory boards

## Market access
- FDA, EMEA
- Health economics, e.g. NICE
- Formulary packs

## Regulatory documents
- Clinical trial documentation
- Clinical trial authorisations
- Investigational new drug applications
How to be a medical writer

1. Research the therapy area, covering:
   - The disease
   - The available therapies
   - Key trials and clinical data (own compound)
   - Key trials and clinical data (other compounds)
   - Who’s saying what about which therapies

2. Consider all of the information available, including:
   - The client’s brief
   - The views of the opinion leaders
   - The target audience
   - Effective and appropriate communication vehicles
   - The scientific evidence

3. Write scientifically accurate, beautifully crafted editorial, such as:
   - Educational documents that stand up to peer review
   - Promotional materials that present complex data in fresh and engaging ways
   - Persuasive, attention-grabbing copy
Why is clear communication important?

- The doctor examined the patient after removing his trousers
Why is clear communication important?

- People who live in cities see up to 5,000 marketing messages every day.

Common characteristics of a medical writer in no particular order

- Scientist (often has a PhD and post-docs)
- Enjoys writing
- Pedantic
- Usually has a favourite punctuation mark, a preferred font and a customised bullet point
- Good listener – able to communicate someone else’s opinion
- Excellent research and analysis skills
- Likes statistics
A day in the life of a lead writer

Opinion leaders

- Puscurol® works fast \textit{in vitro}
- The early data are impressive
- But mention the nausea

Medical writer

- Write high quality documents quickly
- Primary papers
- Reviews
- Case studies
- Conference materials
- Newsletters
- Monographs
- Websites
- Videos
- Slide kits
- Training materials
- Sales aids
- Build relationships with clients and opinion leaders
- Liaise with designers, writers, editors, account managers, project managers

Pharmaceutical client

- Puscurol® is better than Scabitel®
- Can you get published by August?

Phew: the writer has read the literature (done my homework!)
A day in the life of a lead writer

Work planner: lead writer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write PK/PD paper</td>
<td>Submission</td>
<td>Discuss feedback with client</td>
<td>PUSCUR trial reports (the big one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write pusorrhoea review</td>
<td>(in my dreams) target</td>
<td>over a pint?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring Prof Stilton re pusorrhoea in children – stop putting this off</td>
<td>feedback</td>
<td>Fly San Francisco (yay!)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write strategy document</td>
<td>deadline</td>
<td>PUS congress –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Print deadline (arg!)</td>
<td>Write report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book studio time</td>
<td>Prepare posters (X12)</td>
<td>Read pusorrhoea papers (X55)</td>
<td>Circulate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare slides (X12G)</td>
<td>(FLIP!)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare briefing documents</td>
<td>Advisory board</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(cancel sleep)</td>
<td>Find editor with spare time (or a unicorn)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Find and destroy bad punctuation (the scourge)</td>
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</table>
And finally

The human race is faced with a cruel choice: work or daytime television

Unknown