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

**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.

**Medical Editor**
Healthcare Communications Agency

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

**Account Manager**
New Media Agency

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

**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...
## Transferable skills

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

- Disseminate messages
  - Clinical manuscripts
  - Conference activities
  - Promotional material

Target audience

Manage publication process

Content and copy edit

writer
Communications consultancy: which agency does what

Promotional

- Adverts: Trade press; Consumer ads
- Promotional materials: 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

Legal

Full service communications agency

Advertising agency

Clinical research organisation/regulatory consultancy
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 in vitro
The early data are impressive
But mention the nausea

Pharmaceutical client

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

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

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

Work planner: lead writer

March

- Write PK/PD paper
- Write pusorrhoea review
- Ring Prof Stilton re pusorrhoea in children - stop putting this off
- Write strategy document
- Book studio time
  - Prepare posters (X12)
  - Prepare slides (X120)
  - Prepare briefing documents
    - (cancel sleep)
  - Read pusorrhoea papers (X55)
    - (FLIP1)

April

- Submission
  - Target
  - Feedback
- Circulate strategy document
- Don't forget to ask client about the PUS221 study

May

- Discuss feedback with client over a pint?
- Fly San Francisco (yay!)
- PUS congress
- Write report
- Advisory board
- Find editor with spare time (or a unicorn)

June

- PUSCOUR trial reports
  - (the big one)
- Find and destroy bad punctuation (the scourge)

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And finally

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

*Unknown*