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?



A career in med comms?

Is medical communications the next step on your career path?



If so, which direction is right for you?



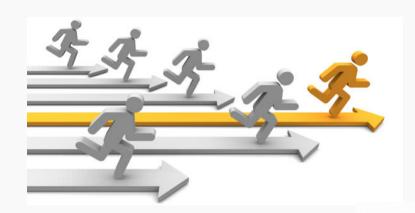
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... you need to get ahead of the competition...

... and stand out from the crowd!







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
 - Do you like writing? Can you write well? 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
 - Are you highly organised and can you multitask?
- Time management
 - Can you manage your own time effectively and work under pressure to meet deadlines?

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?
- Pro-activity
 - Can you work out what needs to be done and get on with it rather than wait to be told what to do?

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
- Many companies now recruit directly at entry-level
- 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

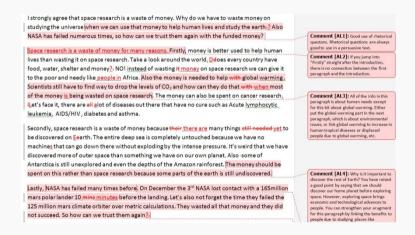
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At interview

- 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?



Need help to find that first role?

- An overview of the medical communications industry?
- The right company for you, in the right location?
- Review of your CV?
- A practice writing or editing test?
- Assistance with job applications?
- Interview preparation?
- Overview of industry guidelines?

Success (for some)!

Since January, candidates I have assisted have been offered jobs with:

- 7.4 Limited
- Abacus
- Adelphi
- Biowrite (NZ)
- Envision Pharma
- Evidera
- Fishawack
- OPG
- Porterhouse
- Textpharm

Karen Kent PhD

Email: kk.windhorse@gmail.com

Tel: 01474 853 987 / Mob: 0778 626 1259

Web: www.windhorseservices.co.uk

