

## **Career Case Study**



### ***Ondine, Senior Account Manager, Agency***

#### **Job overview**

I am currently working within a healthcare PR agency where I'm responsible for handling two UK communications programmes on behalf of our clients. I am also a member of the agency's Media and Regulations Specialist Teams, which act as a second pair of eyes and ears for the whole team and our clients, to ensure that we are aware of all the latest news and developments within the industry.

#### **Career path to current role?**

After leaving university in 2001 with a degree in biological psychology, I started working as an Assistant Press Officer for the UK's leading breast cancer research charity, Breast Cancer Campaign. Over a three year period, I specialised into the role of Science Media Officer which involved spearheading the charity's science communication function, which was non-existent when I joined the organisation. I worked to raise the profile of the research that the charity funded through proactive and reactive press relations and developing a Key Opinion Leader database and patient case study bank.

I joined my current agency as an Account Manager and I was quickly given the opportunity to expand my knowledge and skills base by working on a range of different prescription and consumer healthcare accounts both global, UK and not-for-profit. In August 2007, I was promoted to Senior Account Manager.

#### **Why I chose this career?**

At school my favourite subjects were Biology and English, two areas of interest which are not always immediately recognised as going hand in hand. My choice of A-levels reflected my personal dilemma, choosing all the sciences (Chemistry, Biology, Physics) and English. After a brief flirtation with the idea of studying medicine, which quickly became apparent during a work experience placement was not for me, I undertook a degree in Biological Psychology.

It was only during my time at university that it became clear that what was initially a dilemma (an interest in both Science and English), was actually a much sought after skill set and lent itself very nicely to a career in health communications.

The challenge that health communications offered in terms of finding ways of communicating often complex disease areas and scientific data into lay terminology really appealed to me, and meant that I could indulge my interest in health while still being creative and writing. A perfect combination!

**Typical day?**

I would say the most enjoyable thing about working in PR is that you rarely have a 'typical day'. The environment in which we operate means that you have to be flexible and ready to re-prioritise your 'to do' list to ensure that you can piggy back on any media opportunities that arise, react to that day's news stories and manage client requests.

However, if I had to summarise my role on a daily basis, it would be to oversee the day-to-day management and implementation of campaigns and account teams. I ensure that the client is kept updated and informed on the status of ongoing projects and made aware of any external factors that may affect the brand. I also spend time drafting and developing media materials and other external communications.

**Who do I get to work with?**

Pharmaceutical companies, third parties (patient and professional groups), healthcare professionals, journalists, design agencies and other PR and medical education agencies.

**What I love about my job / best bits?**

The challenge of working creatively within regulatory codes to develop innovative campaigns and implement exciting tactics for what are often complex disease areas and treatments.

I enjoy the diversity of the work we do and the people with whom we communicate – one day you can be in contact with a global Key Opinion Leader about a new piece of scientific data and the next day chatting through a creative brief with a design agency.

**What don't I enjoy / worst bits?**

Timesheets!!! A necessity of the job but also I have to say my least enjoyable bit.

**Proudest moment?**

My agency nominating me as their best hire of 2006.