

EXPLORE

PLAN

# PG Skills: Influencing, Persuading and Negotiating for professional success

APPLY

Connecting you  
to your future

# HOUSEKEEPING

- If you join with your microphone enabled please stay muted unless instructed to unmute
- Please keep your webcam switched off throughout
- Please join with your full name if possible
- If you lose audio at any point, click on the blue circle telephone/headphone symbol to leave and rejoin
- You can use the public chat box to ask any questions

**Please note:  
This webinar  
is being  
recorded**

# CAREERS NETWORK IS HERE FOR YOU

- 1:1 guidance support:
  - You don't need to have career ideas or a plan to come and talk to us: we help people who have no idea where to start as well!
  - To book an appointment, ask a question, have an application checked etc., please email [careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
- PG opportunity:
  - U21 PwC Innovation Challenge [www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/pg/u21challenge](http://www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/pg/u21challenge)
- PGT-specific opportunities:
  - Professional Development Award <https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/enroll/BNYYHJ>
- PGR-specific opportunities:
  - Career Mentor Beyond Academia <https://canvas.bham.ac.uk/enroll/M7WCDE>
  - Postgraduate Enterprise Summer School <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/pess>

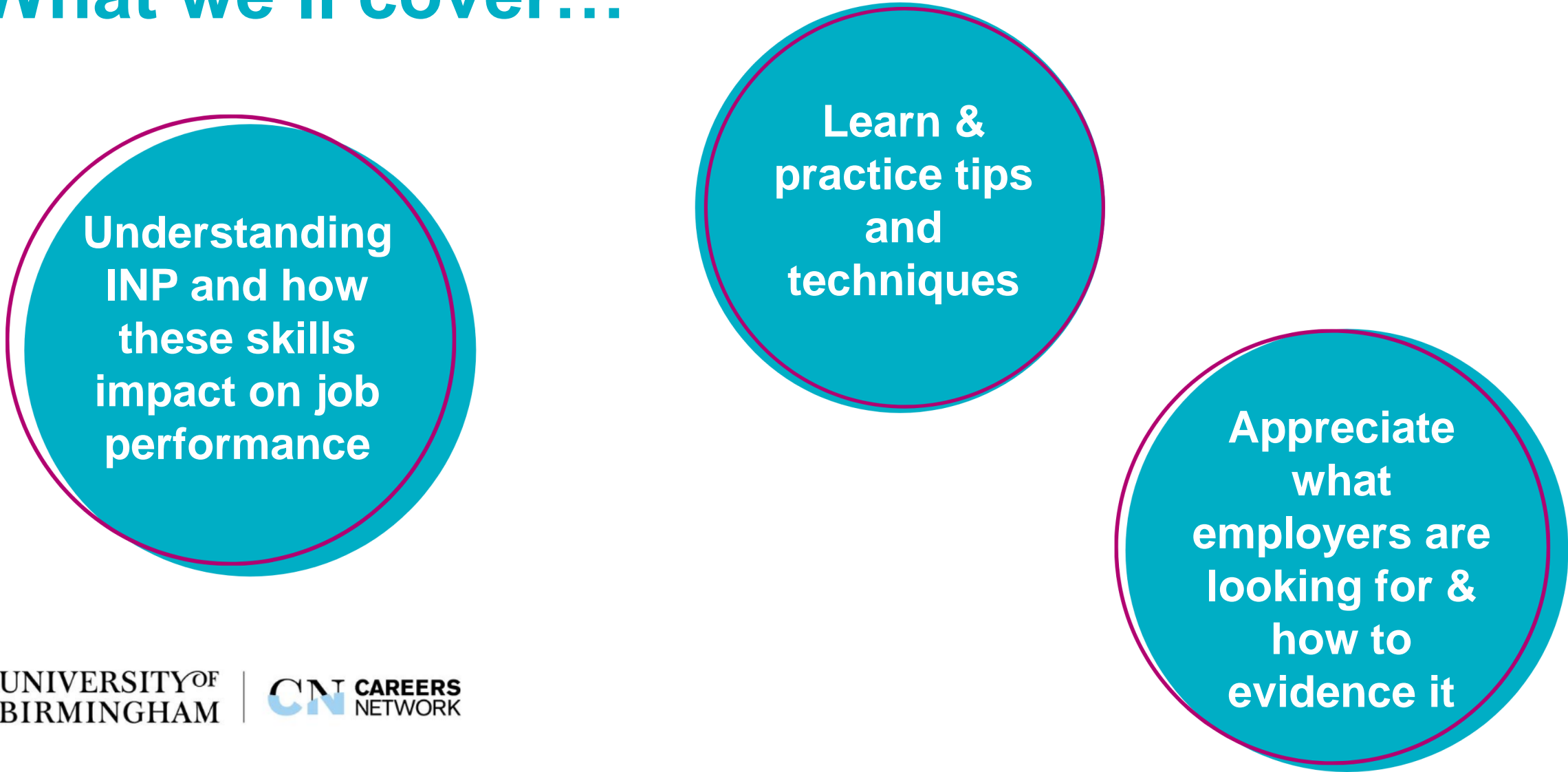
# PRESENTERS

Katie Hoare, PGR Entrepreneurial Development Officer

Anna Flatt, PGT Careers Adviser

Rob Pilbrow, Global Managing Director, Medical Writing,  
OPEN Health

# What we'll cover...



Understanding  
INP and how  
these skills  
impact on job  
performance

Learn &  
practice tips  
and  
techniques

Appreciate  
what  
employers are  
looking for &  
how to  
evidence it

# Agenda

---

Session	Leaders	Time
<b>Introduction</b>	Rob Pilbrow	5 minutes
<b>Presentation: The theory of persuasion and negotiation</b>	Rob Pilbrow	10 minutes
<b>Exercise 1 and discussion: Persuasion in practice</b>	Rob Pilbrow, Katie Hoare, Anna Flatt	15 minutes
<b>Presentation: The 6 principles of influence</b>	Rob Pilbrow	15 minutes
<b>Exercise 2: Interview word association</b>	Katie Hoare	5 minutes
<b>Presentation: Influence in an interview setting</b>	Rob Pilbrow	10 minutes
<b>Influencing, negotiating and persuading in job descriptions and applications</b>	Anna Flatt	10 minutes
<b>Presentation: Careers in medical communications</b>	Rob Pilbrow	5 minutes
<b>Questions</b>	Rob Pilbrow	10 minutes

# Introductions

---

# Rob Pilbrow

## Global Managing Director, Medical Writing

---

- I have a BSc in biochemistry, an MPhil in molecular cell biology and an MSc in health economics and health policy, all from the **University of Birmingham**.
- I have **15 years of global medical communications experience**, having spent my career in a variety of medical writing and medical communications leadership roles.
- In my role, I am responsible for **training and development of medical writers**, and growth of my company's medical writing and scientific services function.



# The theory of persuasion and negotiation

---

# Some definitions.....

---

**Persuading.** The ability to convince others to take a desired viewpoint or action.

**Negotiating.** The ability to discuss and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement.

**Influencing.** The ability to effectively persuade and negotiate.

# What are they not?

---

Arguing

Haranguing

Forcing your will

Pestering

Harassing

Using a power imbalance

Employers  
highly value  
these skills

### At interview:

‘Tell me about a time when you persuaded someone to come round to your way of thinking: how did you go about it?’

‘What would you do in the situation that you had to discuss late delivery of a project with a client?’

Or.... ‘Persuade me to give you this job’

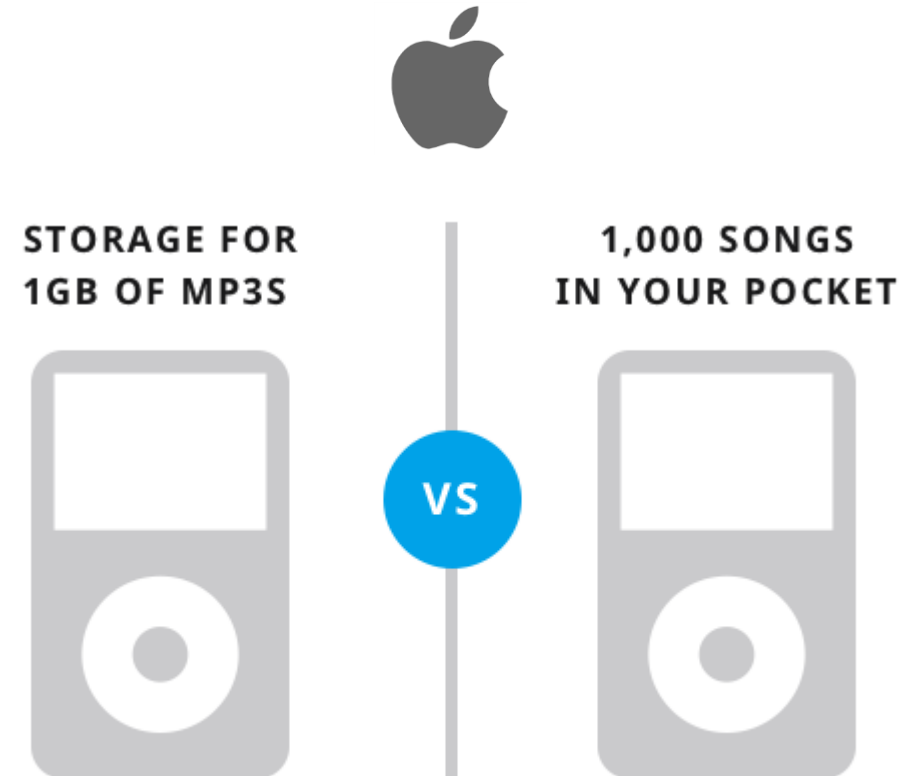
- Don’t worry, you (probably) won’t ever be asked this directly...
- But essentially, an interview is 45 minutes of you answering this question! (and at the same time, you establishing if the job is right for you)

# Key principle of persuasion

---

Stress the benefits,  
not the features

*“Features tell, but benefits sell”*



# Features and benefits

---

Feature  
(Attribute)



- Factual information about a product
- **Informs** – ‘Our product is/has/does....’

Benefit  
(Claim)



- Gives context to the information for the listener, **framed in way which is beneficial to them**
- **Persuasive** – Which means that....’

# Principles of persuasion

---

Key point:

For your benefits to mean something, you need to understand your audience!

# Negotiating your way to success

---

When we think of negotiation

- Business setting
- Transaction
- Contract



# Negotiating your way to success

---

But these skills can be used in a much broader setting

- Whose approach shall we follow to solve this problem?
- Where shall we go on holiday?
- What resources will be available to me in my role?

And with a broad range of 'negotiating partners'

- Peers
- Colleagues
- Family
- Partners
- Friends
- Suppliers



<https://unsplash.com/photos/5QgluuBxKwM>

# Basics of negotiation

---

**What's the best possible outcome for you?**

**What's your bottom line?**

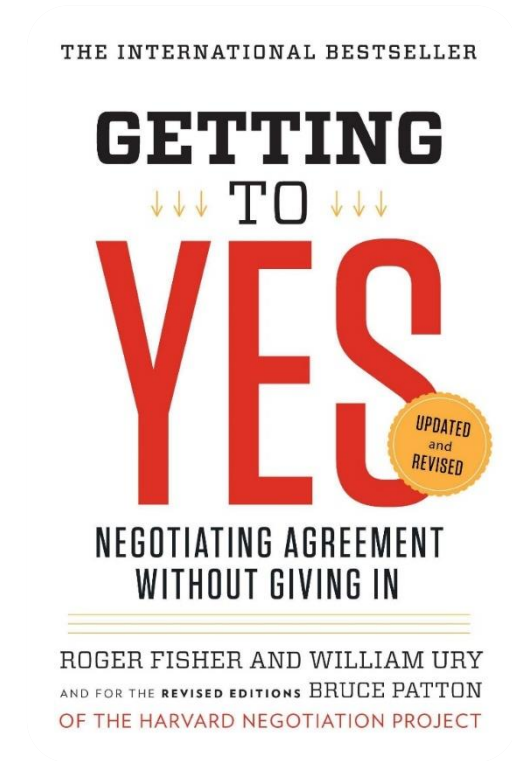
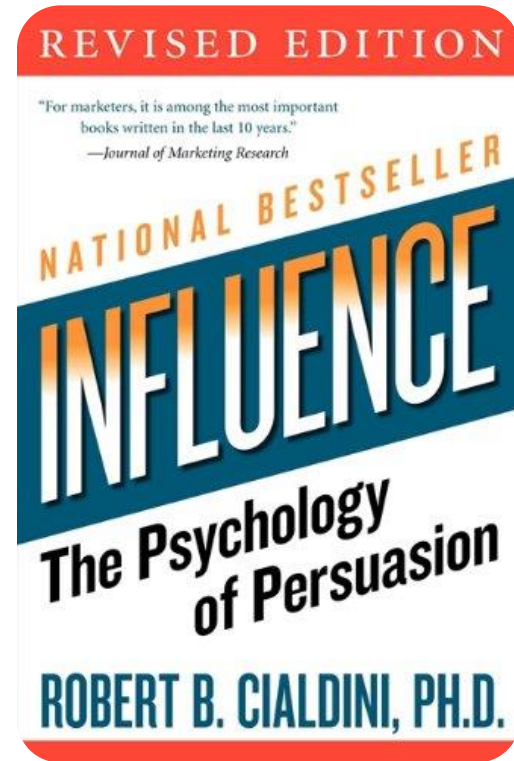
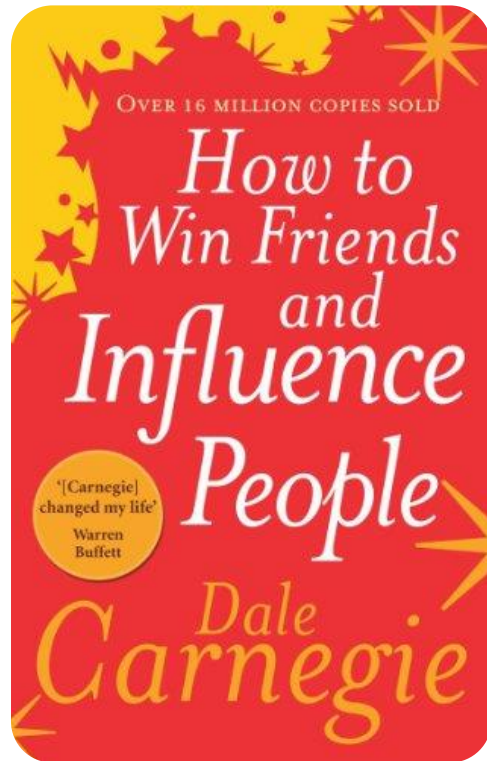
**What's your plan B?**

**What might your negotiating partner want?**

**Don't think about beating your negotiating 'opponent', or coming out on top**

**Think win/win for long-term partnership**

- Win/Win is a synergistic situation where both parties can mutually benefit



Three key books

# Exercise 1: Persuasion in practice

---

# Persuasion in practice

---

Work in small groups in the virtual break-out rooms

Taking turns, one person has to persuade the group of the benefits (not features!) of the item they are shown, while the other person is there to be persuaded

- To help out the persuader, you can ask the group **three upfront questions** to elicit their feelings towards the item – think carefully about these three questions!
- While the person is describing the item, think about how persuasive their answers are and how influenced you were

**Swap roles after 2 minutes** and then do the same for the next item. Try to give everyone a turn!

Rob, Katie and Anna will be floating between groups and listening in

# BREAK-OUT ACTIVITY

- 10 minutes
- Invited to a room with a small group
- Can turn on mic and webcam
- Introduce yourselves i.e. name & degree
- Open images page in new tab
- Choose one of the items
- Take it in turns to try to persuade the others of the benefits of the item

**Test your  
powers of  
persuasion**

# GROUP FEEDBACK

If you experience issues with audio after returning from your break-out room please leave and re-join the audio by clicking on the blue circle with either a telephone or headphone symbol which is located below this slide



**Tell us  
how  
you got  
on**

# The 6 principles of influence

---



# The 6 principles of influence

---



SOCIAL PROOF



COMMITMENT



RECIPROCATION

## INFLUENCE



LIKING



AUTHORITY



SCARCITY

Reciprocity –  
You, then me,  
then you, then  
me.....



## The theory

People feel obligated to return favours to people who have done favours for them in the past

## Examples

Exchanging cards and presents

Returning compliments

Companies offering free samples/trials

## Applying the principle

### **Be the first to give:**

Information

Service

Concessions

# Commitment and consistency – The starting point

## The theory

People feel a strong internal desire to be consistent with their past words and actions, and any public commitments that they have made

## Examples

Keeping your word

Public ceremonies

## Applying the principle

### **Start:**

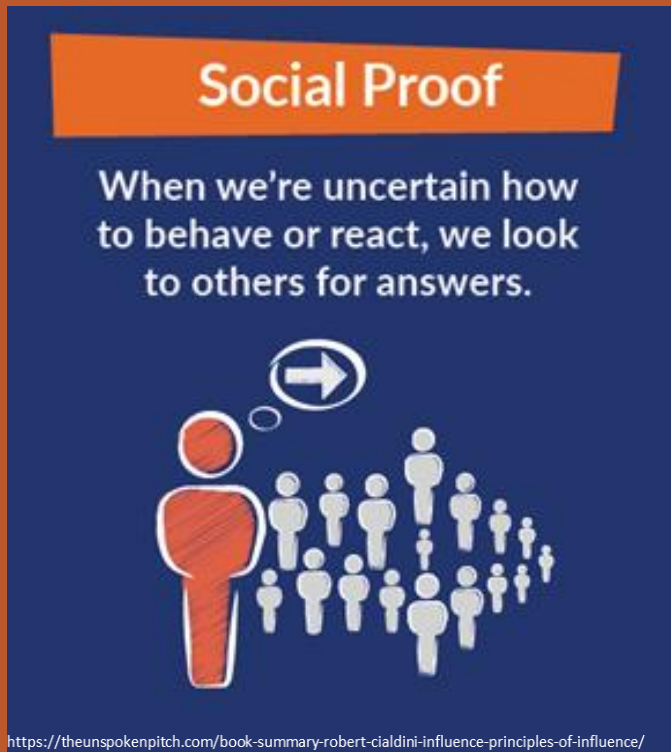
Small and build

With existing commitments

Towards voluntary choices



# Social proof – People proof, people power



## The theory

**People follow the crowd, especially if they are similar to them, and like to be associated with popular things**

## Examples

Online reviews

Queues

Tip jars already full of money

## Applying the principle

**Unleash people power by showing:**

Experiences of many others

Others' past successes

Testimonials of similar others

# Liking – Making friends to influence people

## The theory

People are more apt to say 'yes' to people that they like

## Examples

Halo effect

Association marketing

## Applying the principle

Uncover:

Similarities

Areas for genuine compliments

Opportunities for collaboration



# Authority – Showing knowing



## The theory

People defer to experts and those in a position of authority

## Examples

Credentials

Awards

Affiliations

## Applying the principle

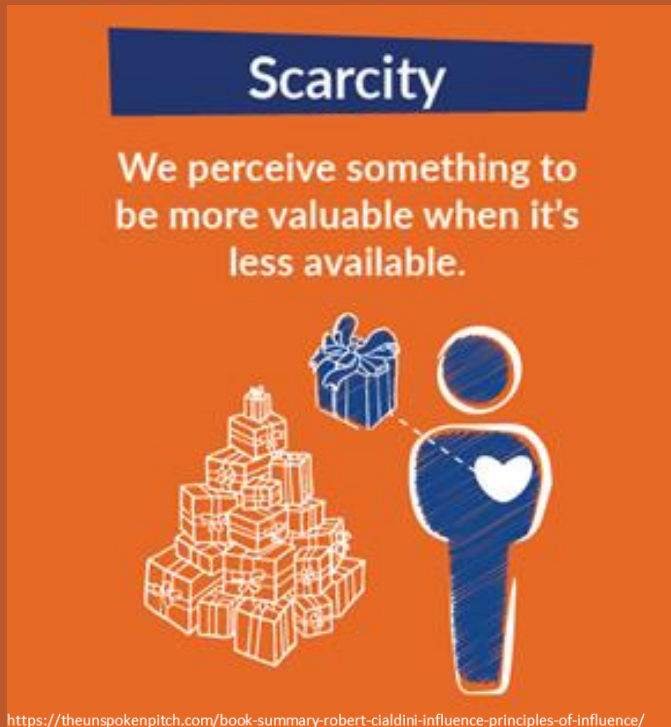
**Establish position through:**

Professionalism

Industry/subject matter knowledge

Your credentials

# Scarcity – The rule of the rare



## The theory

People value things if they perceive them to be scarce

## Examples

Time-limited offers

‘Must end Sunday’

‘15 other people are looking at this deal’

## Applying the principle

### Emphasise:

Genuine scarcity

Unique features (and the benefits!)

Exclusive information

# A final word on these principles

---

Ethical use of these principles is key

Be truthful and genuine

Apply honesty and integrity

Don't seek to trick or manipulate

Any of these principles used badly will backfire!





# Influence in the workplace

---

## Commitment and consistency

The single most important piece of advice when building your professional reputation is to set firm commitments and always meet them

**Say what you'll do, and then do what you said**

### Managing expectations – underpromise and overdeliver

- **Very many people do the opposite: overpromise and underdeliver**
  - No surer way to wreck your credibility!
- Say you're going to send a presentation by Friday – send it on Thursday
- Say you're going to send someone three useful web links – give them five and explain what each describes
- Clear, regular communication is key!

# Influence in the workplace

---

The concept of 'Influence without authority' is particularly important at the start of your career

## Lateral leadership

- Develop your personal brand of leadership, based on trust, consistency, expertise, attitude and empathy. Become adept at communicating and championing your interests.

## Networking

- Identify people whose support is essential or helpful to success of your initiatives and invest in getting to know them and their professional interests

## Coalition building

- An idea or initiative being driven by several people is far more likely to succeed than one driven by a sole proponent

## Consultation

- Bring key stakeholders along with you and solicit their ideas as well as their reactions to your ideas to secure ownership and engagement. Regular updates are better than a big reveal.

# Influencing decision-making in the workplace

---

## **Act in line with a clear strategy**

- Start with the desired end in mind (Covey - The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People)

## **When presenting ideas to decision makers, realise that it is your responsibility to sell**

- It is not their responsibility to buy. They can choose another alternative, ask for significant changes or simply do nothing. What makes your idea a compelling proposition?

## **Focus on the needs of the decision maker and how your proposal supports these**

- Rather than focusing on the achievement of YOUR objectives, put yourself in the shoes of each decision-maker. What do they need to see to get them to 'Yes'?

## **Proactively raise and address issues/likely objections**

- Anticipate each major stakeholder's reaction and practice objection handling

## **Present a balanced view**

- Don't just sell the benefits. Every initiative or project carries some risk. Be confident but realistic.

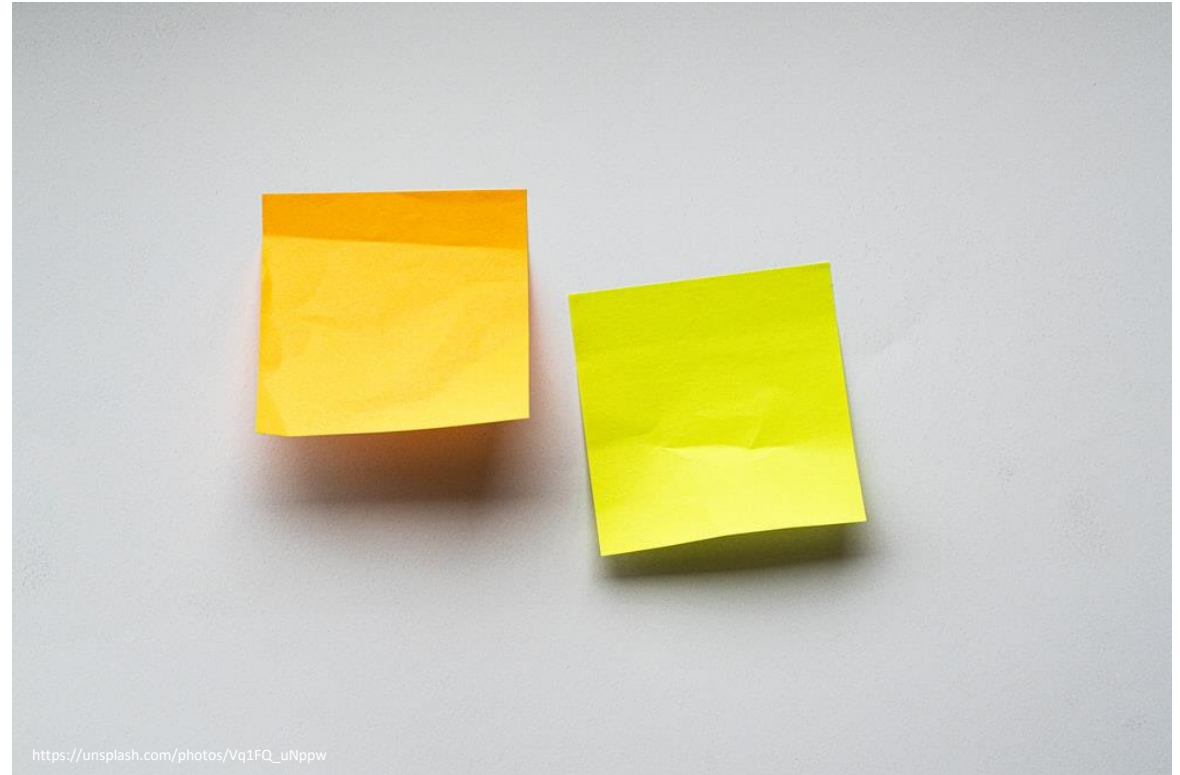
## Exercise 2: Interview word association

---

# Exercise: Interview word association

---

**Using the Menti  
link in the chat,  
please enter one  
word you  
associate with  
interviews**



# Influence in an interview setting

---

# Interviews are not interrogations

---

It's a two-way street: the employer making sure you are right for them, and YOU making sure they're right for you

Having this in mind subconsciously shifts the perceived power imbalance in the interview and will increase your confidence

# Interviews are not interrogations

---

Also, remember that the interviewer **WANTS** to hire someone; they're not trying to catch you out, trip you up or embarrass you

Any questions they ask are to elicit your suitability for the position and your ability to deal with the challenges and demands of the role

By showing them that you fully understand the role, the company and their needs, you'll be doing them a huge favour – they will be relieved!



# Framing

---

**At or near the start of the interview:**

**Before we begin, I wonder if you can answer a question: Why did you invite me to interview? What was it about my candidacy that stood out to you and that you feel is well matched to the role?**

**Such questions show confidence and proactivity**

What you will have done is to focus the evaluator's attention on the features of your resume that are most attractive to them

**Don't shoe-horn it in and use your own words – needs to be done in a natural way**

# One of the most powerful questions you can ask at interview

---

At the end of the interview, when invited to ask questions:

**From what you have seen today, is there anything you think I could have improved upon, or any reason why you think I am not suitable for this role? I ask as I'd like to take this opportunity to address any concerns.**

This question shows real confidence and proactivity

It encourages the interviewer to raise any challenges there and then

If they don't raise any issues, and then subsequently reject you, it **challenges the consistency principle**

# The 6 principles of influence: How they might be applied to an interview situation

## **Reciprocity**

Not gifts(!), but genuine compliments about the company and interviewers (do your research) can elicit compliments/goodwill in your direction. Share information/ knowledge freely. Send an email after the interview – not a generic one, but recap what you've learnt from the interview and demonstrate genuine gratitude for the opportunity.

## **Commitment and consistency**

Be consistent with your cover letter and CV (no surprises at interview). Demonstrate clear commitment to the role and company. Also elicit commitment for your candidacy from interviewer through smart questioning.

## **Social proof**

Talk about how you've been highly rated and praised by other managers. Showcase your social skills, e.g. how you interact with other members of staff. Dress smartly – show you understand different social settings, i.e. the importance of the interview. They will be picturing you performing your role in front of clients/senior stakeholders.

# The 6 principles of influence: How they might be applied to an interview situation (cont.)

## **Liking**

Smile and look pleased to be there. Demonstrate real interest in interviewers – give genuine compliments. Encourage them to talk about their greatest achievements. Listen carefully to their questions and information. Uncover similarities through prior research and small-talk.

## **Authority**

Demonstrate that you are a subject matter expert, no matter how narrow the field. Highlight positions, titles, credentials.....anything that illustrates authority and responsibility and talk about these with confidence. No-one knows as much about your PhD or postgraduate research project as you do!

## **Scarcity**

Be committed to the opportunity, but also demonstrate that you have other options, e.g. job applications in process – you want to end the interview with the interviewer worried about missing out on you! Appear in demand and not likely to be available for long.

# Use the STAR approach for competency-based interviews

---

1. **Situation**: Set the scene and give the necessary details of your example
2. **Task**: Describe what **your** responsibility was in that situation
3. **Action**: Explain exactly what steps **you** took to address it
4. **Result**: Share what outcomes **your actions** achieved

## **Tips for use:**

- Stay focused and concise – don't waffle.
  - Aim for a response of a minute or two; not a 5 minute monologue
- Ensure your chosen example actually answers the question asked
  - Focus on what YOU did, not what the team did
- Give yourself time to prepare: listen to the question, choose the right example and tell a good story
- Be positive – often the question focuses on a negative. Address this quickly and move to positive actions and results.

Influencing, negotiating and persuading  
in job descriptions and applications

---




**Strong negotiation and oral communication skills working with colleagues, partner organisations, and funding agencies both in the UK and abroad.**

**Resource Development Manager –  
Opportunity International**



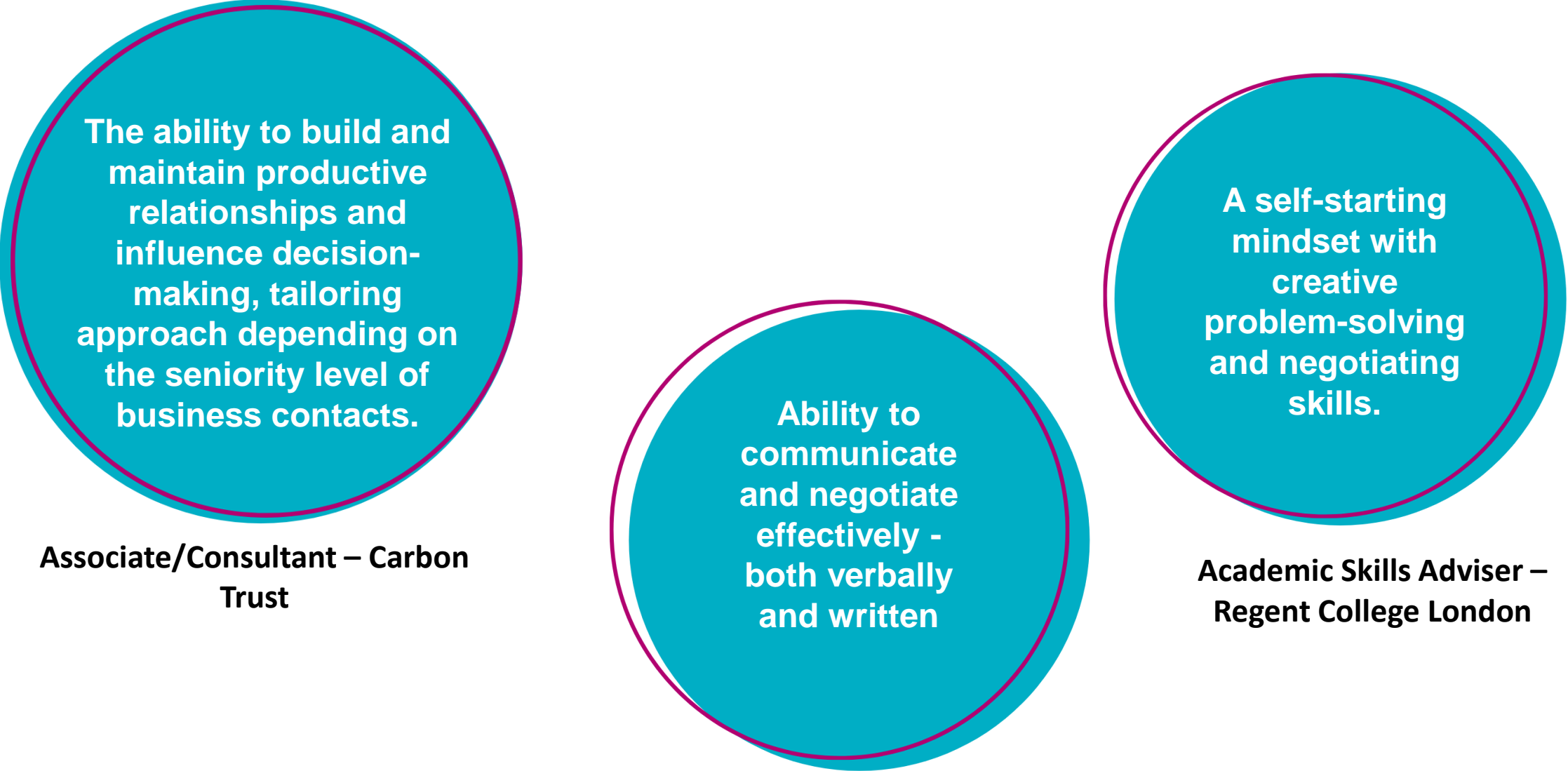
**Excellent communication skills including diplomacy, negotiation and presentation skills**

**Fundraising Officer - Hourglass**



**The ability to network and build relationships effectively and give persuasive presentations with confidence and credibility**

**Learning and Development Officer – Hertfordshire County Council**



The ability to build and maintain productive relationships and influence decision-making, tailoring approach depending on the seniority level of business contacts.

**Associate/Consultant – Carbon Trust**

Ability to communicate and negotiate effectively - both verbally and written

**Graduate/Trainee Surveyor – Saul Gerrard Surveyors**

A self-starting mindset with creative problem-solving and negotiating skills.

**Academic Skills Adviser – Regent College London**



# What examples might you use to demonstrate your skills in influencing, negotiating and persuading?

Negotiating the direction of your dissertation/thesis/project with a supervisor

Persuading others to follow a suggested course of action during a group task


Presenting a convincing argument in your research

# Where will employers look for evidence of these skills?

- CV
- Competency questions in applications and interviews
- Situational judgement tests
- Assessment Centres

## Questions could include:

- Tell me about a time when you had to bring others around to your way of thinking
- If you were managing a team, how would you persuade them to accept an unpopular decision?



<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/cvs-applications-interviews-assessment-centres.aspx>

# Careers in medical communications

---

# Medical communications: An introduction

---

## What is medical communications?

- *“A general term for the communication of medical, scientific, and healthcare-related information to a range of different audiences and in a variety of different ways”*

## What do medical communications agencies do?

- *“Act as a consultancy for pharmaceutical companies to help raise awareness of their products through education and promotion”*

# Important skills for a medical writer

---



Medical writers are not....

- Health journalists
- Scientific publishers
- “Ghost-writers”!



# Important skills for an account executive

---

- Good communicator and listener
- Excellent 'people skills'
- Personable, likeable, diplomatic individual
- Systematic, organised approach to work
- Adaptable, problem-solving attitude
- Motivated 'go-getter'
- Attention to detail



# Rewards of medical communications

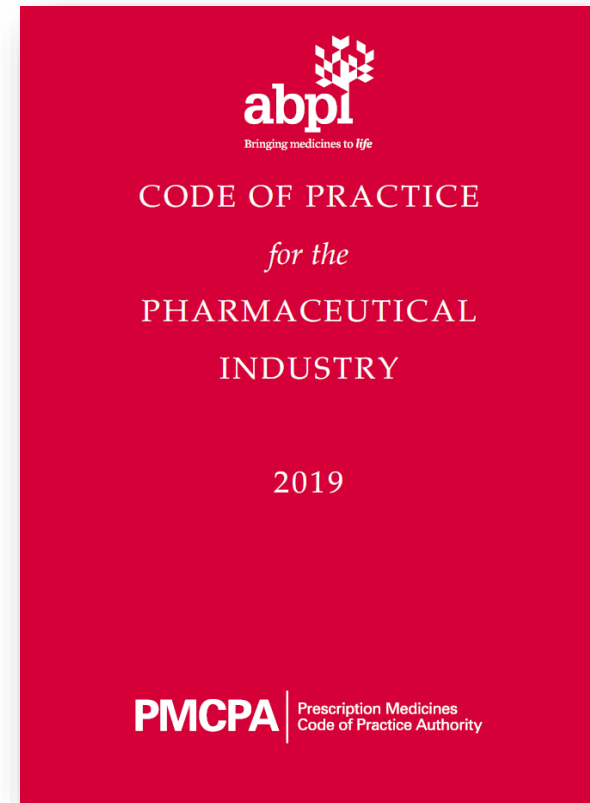
---

- Supporting programmes that benefit patient care
- Being at the forefront of medical science
- Translate theory learnt during your degree to the world of medicine and pharmaceuticals
- Developing good working relationships with:
  - External experts
  - Clients
- Opportunity to be creative
- Being part of a vibrant, fast-growing, successful company
- Project completion – seeing the end product!
- Attendance of international meetings

# Challenges of medical communications

---

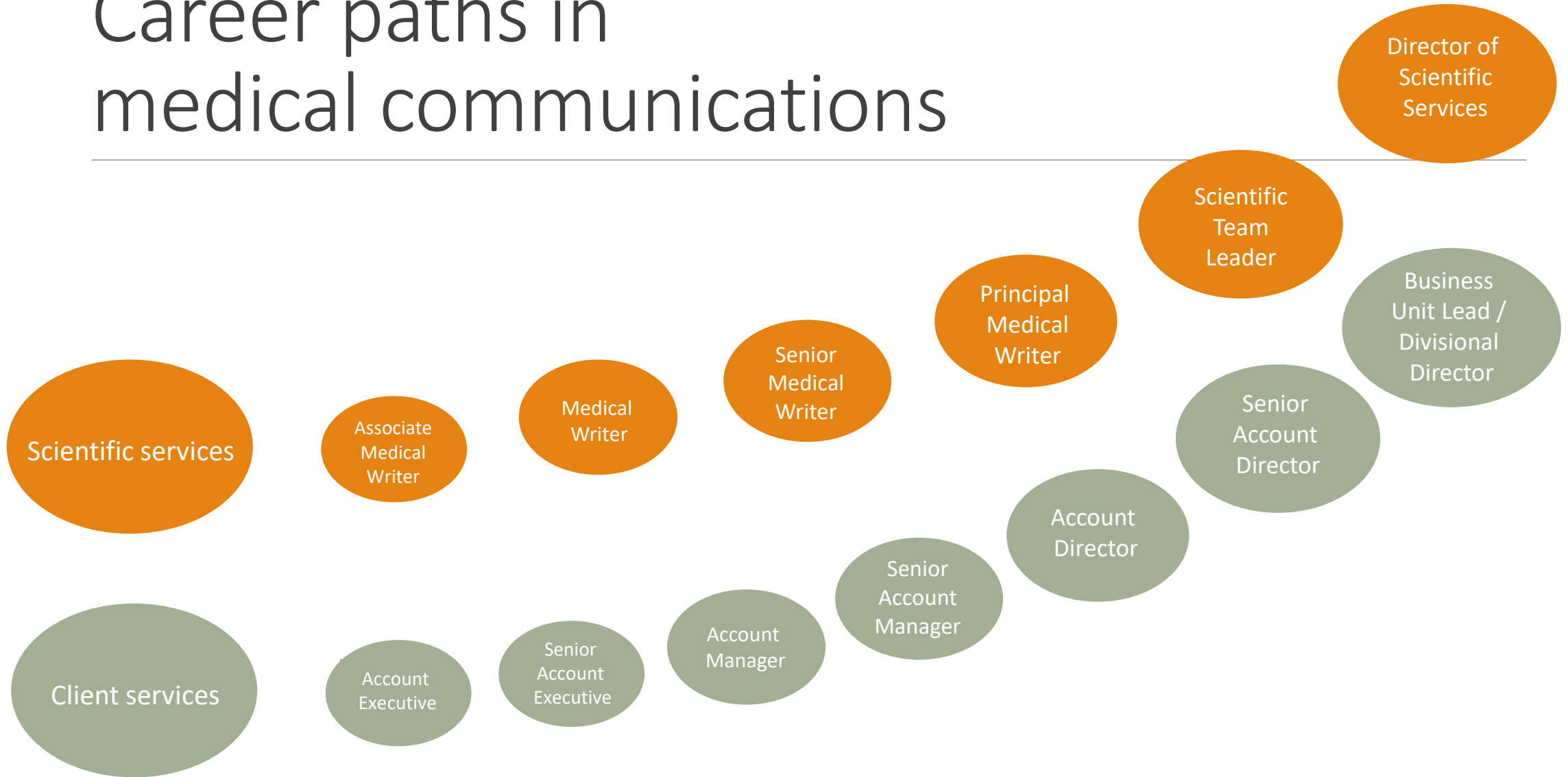
- Working within the UK (ABPI) and international codes of compliance
- Meeting the expectations of clients and other key stakeholders
- Juggling multiple projects
- Tight deadlines





# Career paths in medical communications

---



# How to get into medical communications?

---

- A biosciences/ biomedical/ life sciences degree
  - Required for medical writing
  - Advantageous for account management
- While not essential, postgraduate qualifications can be a real advantage
  - Employers will value the skills rather than the knowledge obtained in postgraduate study
- Internships can be an excellent way to get some experience in the industry

# Typical entry-level roles

---

## Associate Medical Writer

- Develop written materials in line with client requirements, internal editorial policy and key product messages
- Ensure all written material is appropriately pitched, on brief, on time, fully referenced and, where applicable, abides by the ABPI Code of Practice
- Attend conferences / advisory board meetings
- Ensure line manager and accounts team, where appropriate, are continually updated on project progress
- Develop an understanding of the various client brand and disease areas
- Undertake or direct research into therapy areas, as needed
- Work effectively with external authors / advisors

## Account Executive

- Co-ordinating status update meetings
- Co-ordinating development of weekly status reports
- Development of client contact reports
- Financial management across accounts
- General administration
- Liaison with creative and science writing teams
- Client liaison

# Where can I find out more information?

---

## OPEN Health Group:

<https://www.openhealthgroup.com>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/open-health/>

<https://twitter.com/OPENHealth>

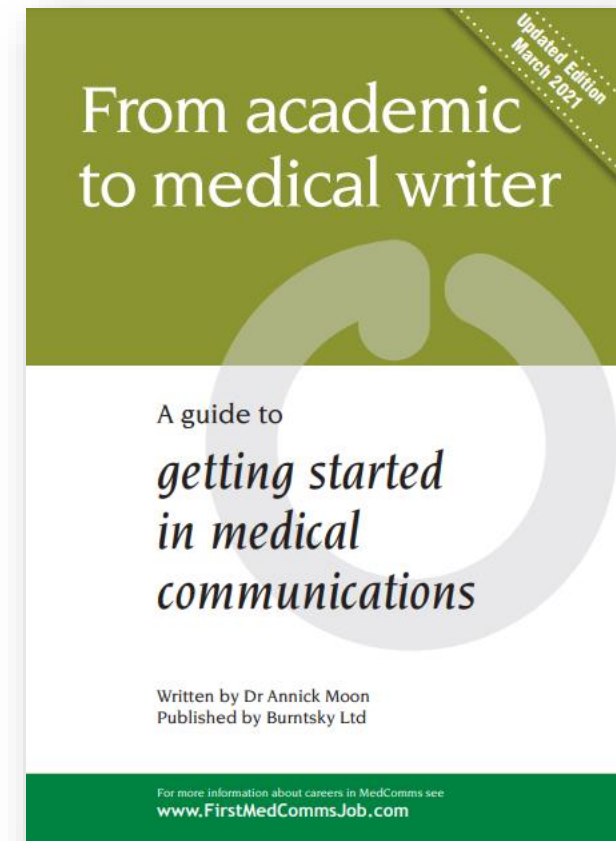
Email: [talentteam@openhealthgroup.com](mailto:talentteam@openhealthgroup.com)

## Web resources:

<http://www.medcommsnetworking.co.uk/startingout/>

<https://medcommsday.com/>

<http://www.nextmedcommsjob.com/>





# Questions

---

# Thank you

---

Contact: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/pilbrow/>

**After this event you will receive an email requesting some feedback (it only takes 2 minutes)**

**At such a challenging time we really want to deliver what you need.**

**We look forward to welcoming you to future events.**



Tell us what you found useful so we can do more of it.

Tell us what we could do differently and we'll make changes.



# THANK YOU FOR JOINING US

Contact us via [careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:careersenquiries@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

[www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/pg](http://www.intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/careers/pg)

UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**CN** CAREERS  
NETWORK