

Medical Writer/Communicator

Thank you for your interest in this position. This document will give you more detailed information about Information Transfer, our work, and this role. At the end is a short test that we invite you to complete and return to us. Selection for interview will be on the basis of your experience, as described in your CV, and your performance on the test.

What we do

Information Transfer is a communication and training consultancy. We research, write, design and produce training and reference materials in all media, including e-learning courseware and delivery systems and multimedia training packages. We also offer strategic consultancy on communication issues, and design and build computer systems that enable users to share and access information.

Most of our clients are national or international firms and organisations. The subject matter of our training is typically technical information related to product knowledge and procedures, but we also develop training in soft skills. We can operate in any sector, though we have particular experience in finance, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and healthcare.

In the pharmaceuticals and healthcare sector we have established a niche position as a supplier of effective, original training materials of the highest quality. We have long-standing relationships with clients who value our excellent writing and communication skills, our creativity and our keen eye for detail, and who prefer the personal attention that we offer a small number of clients to the large agency approach.

Who we are and how we work

Information Transfer is a limited liability partnership. We employ twelve communication consultants (eight of whom are partners in the business), four technical staff, a marketing manager and two administrative staff. Our pharmaceutical and healthcare team consists of three core consultants with support from other consultants and freelancers as required. Two business development managers are responsible for our e-learning authoring system. An associated business employs four staff who produce and market a range of off-the-shelf financial compliance training materials.

More detail of our work is given in the 'Typical projects' section below. We devise and write all our materials in-house, and typically use outside suppliers only for specialist design, technical expertise, and printing. We pride ourselves on the high quality of our work, the frequency with which we exceed our clients' expectations, and our ability to get things right first time. We have won the E-learning Award in both 2006 and 2007 for "the best e-learning project securing widespread adoption", the IT Training Award 2007 for "e-Learning Project of the Year", and a National Training Award 2007 in the South East Region.

We work in an informal setting with little hierarchy or management, a working style that we value highly, but which people who are used to a formal, big company setting can find unusual. One of our strengths is the direct contact and excellent relationships that we have with our clients, and you can expect after a short time to be managing your own projects as well as writing materials and supervising their production. These competing demands require individuals who can work fast and effectively under pressure, manage their workloads and be their own quality controller.

We value and listen to the opinions of everyone in the organisation; good working relations and adult attitudes to teamwork are at the heart of our organisation. Two of our partners have been with Information Transfer since it was founded 26 years ago and all our partners have been recruited from within; in general, our staff turnover is extremely low. This is why the choice of the right person is crucial for both the new joiner and the company.

This role, and what we are looking for

In making this appointment we are seeking to consolidate our excellent reputation in the pharmaceutical industry and to lay the basis for expanding this valuable side of our business.

We expect that you will initially be working on existing projects, writing training materials which may be delivered as e-learning, PowerPoint presentations, audio programmes or in print. You will work with designers and technical staff to ensure that your ideas are implemented correctly, and that the materials are delivered to the client on time and to our desired standards.

From the beginning we will expect you to contribute ideas about the way we develop content. With other colleagues you will attend meetings with prospective customers, help identify their requirements and write proposals explaining how Information Transfer can help them. You will be alert to developments in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries and will be keen to influence our services and the way that we market them to clients.

As well as being an excellent writer and communicator, the ideal candidate will have:

- a degree in a biomedical or life science
- commercial experience, preferably in the pharmaceutical or healthcare industries
- a high degree of self-motivation and organisational skill
- the ability to work independently and as a member of a team
- an enquiring mind, prepared to be interested in other areas of business, industry or administration in addition to the pharmaceutical industry
- the adaptability and skill to work on virtually any topic
- computer literacy, and the ability to learn new applications and systems rapidly
- good presentation skills, and confidence in dealing with people at all levels in our clients' organisations
- imagination and creativity as well as a good eye for detail and accuracy
- energy and enthusiasm for contributing to the development and success of the company.

Previous experience of medical writing is desirable, but we also welcome applications from new entrants to this field with appropriate skills and abilities.

What we offer

We offer the satisfaction of stimulating work performed at a high standard, and direct involvement with clients. As a member of a small team you will have the potential to influence the development of our pharmaceutical business and to contribute to and share in its success.

We are keen to encourage personal development and will agree a training plan with our new recruit covering the technical aspects of our work. However, most training will be on-the-job through involvement in projects.

We offer a salary related to prior experience, a contributory pension scheme, life assurance and 25 days annual holiday (in addition to statutory holidays). In successful years we make bonus payments.

Where we work

Our office is close to the centre of Cambridge. We occupy the first and second floors – the building does not have a lift.

Typical projects

Some of our recent projects are described below.

Bayer HealthCare wanted to train its hospital representatives on a new cannabis-based treatment for spasticity in multiple sclerosis. A particular requirement was to communicate complex subject matter – covering anatomy, pharmacology and market positioning – in a fresh and engaging way.

Our proposal outlined a blended learning solution with printed self-instructional booklets, 'e-guides', computer-delivered assessments and group training sessions – a solution aimed at creating a learning experience that was stimulating, effective and motivating. Bayer selected us on the basis of our proposal, which they said went far beyond what they had expected and indicated a novel, individual approach.

GSK Biologicals is the world's leading supplier of vaccines. For more than 20 years, Information Transfer has provided a wide range of materials to support the training of GSK Biologicals' staff and their customers.

The resources we have developed include training manuals, booklets and brochures, dynamic PowerPoint presentations, e-learning courses and on-line assessments, often in several different languages.

Bio Products Laboratory (BPL) is a not-for-profit organisation, wholly owned by the British government's Department of Health, which provides high quality plasma-derived products to a growing worldwide market. To support their commitment to excellence, BPL decided to convert all their product knowledge materials from print to e-learning, and to deliver them both on CD-ROM and via the Web to their international staff and customers.

Information Transfer was commissioned to help them provide modules that would be accessible to a wide user base, including customers for whom English was not a first language. The project was challenging in that existing materials were not structured for training, and quite 'dry' source subject matter had to be made as engaging and interactive as possible.

Information Transfer produced e-learning modules delivered as Web pages using standard HTML and Java to ensure that the programme ran consistently and reliably in most web-browsing environments. We also created a customised learning management system for delivering the courses – providing BPL managers with a straightforward and intuitive interface through which they can monitor trainee usage and assess progress. This 'Learning Centre' is integrated with the existing BPL website, providing a focus for ongoing staff training.

Organon Laboratories' UK Training Department needed to produce a set of printed and e-learning modules for their representatives, to explain a highly complex disease and its treatment. Information Transfer was asked to transform source material that was written at a high technical level into an engaging, illustrated and accurate course that would not only help sales people get to grips with the product but would also be of value to marketing personnel. To complicate matters, the course was needed prior to in-house training that was scheduled to take place in just a few weeks.

The most cost-effective and efficient solution was for Information Transfer to take on a complete revision of the printed source materials and convert them into a form that would explain the therapeutic area clearly, simply and accurately. This involved the design of explanatory illustrations and graphics to bring the specialist content to life. In parallel we devised a series of e-Tutors – on-line modules that cross-referred to the manual modules, setting out their learning objectives

and key facts, and presenting key illustrations and animations. The e-Tutors also contained quizzes, using engaging and varied question types that tested understanding rather than just retention of facts.

E-learning now plays a major part in Organon's training and development programme and the company (which recently became part of Schering-Plough) has asked Information Transfer to develop courses and quizzes for other major products in its portfolio for their companies in Europe, Australia and the USA. To manage and track the programmes, Organon uses Information Transfer's Knowledge Centre, a knowledge management system that allows delivery of both e-learning (collections of modules and assessments) and additional resources (links to websites, documents, presentations, clinical papers etc.).

Priory Group, Europe's leading provider of private mental health care, wanted to implement quality training for its care and support staff covering a wide range of issues, from health and safety to care of patients. As well as encouraging high levels of skill and competence, the training had to ensure that staff at over 40 widely varying sites understood and shared Priory's commitment to enabling patients to regain control of their lives.

We devised a blended learning and development programme for all new joiners, with higher levels for refresher training and Continuing Professional Development for existing staff. The programme combines bespoke and generic e-learning materials with classroom training and coaching.

As part of the implementation of the programme we created some 25 e-learning modules. We wrote the modules, working from material provided by Priory, and then managed the production of the modules by an off-shore supplier. We also designed and built a learning management system to deliver online learning materials and to manage the delivery of a blend of offline learning activities. A key feature of the programme is its ability to deliver tailored training to staff in different roles, at different sites, and with very different levels of IT literacy.

This project was delivered by a team of Information Transfer consultants, using a wide range of the core skills that underpin our business:

- **initial consultancy** – using site visits, interviews and desk research to determine how best to meet Priory's business and learning objectives
- **client presentations** – to communicate our ideas and influence key decision-makers within Priory
- **content creation** – rapidly assimilating subject knowledge from a range of source materials and using this knowledge to write effective e-learning materials
- **user interface design** – using our understanding of Priory's people to create an intuitive and effective online learning environment for them
- **production of functional specifications** for technical developers – to ensure that the technology behind the learning is built to meet the needs of the learners
- **communications planning** – using workshops and interviews to develop an internal communication plan to support implementation of the new materials
- **project management** – managing internal and external resources such as graphic design, video production, voiceover artists, multimedia development and print production to tight timescales and high quality standards
- and, above all, **client management** – understanding and responding to the needs of the client to build a successful and mutually rewarding relationship.

Further information

For further information, please contact Rachel Meller on 01223 312227.

Application Test: Medical Writer/Communicator

February 2008

Please answer all three questions

1. Write a short letter to a local newspaper *either* supporting *or* opposing the principle of 'pay-as-you-go' road pricing. Then take the *opposite* position and present your argument as a 60-second contribution to a radio debate.
2. The following paragraph is taken from a text book on asthma (Clark and Rees, *Practical Management of Asthma*). Explain how you would present this information as part of a training programme for pharmaceutical sales representatives selling a new asthma device. Assume minimal background knowledge of the subject. Please include an example of your approach.

Interaction with nerves

The other important element to be considered in the epithelium is the nervous input. Three types of neural mechanism are involved in control of the airways. The cholinergic fibres constrict smooth muscle. Stimulation of beta adrenoceptors dilates the muscle. There is little or no adrenergic nerve supply to bronchial smooth muscle, so circulating adrenaline provides the main stimulus to these receptors. The third system is the nonadrenergic, noncholinergic (NANC) system, which has various transmitters that can produce constriction or dilatation. It is likely that there is an interaction between the inflammatory aspects of asthma and the neural mechanisms. There may be neurogenic inflammation, and inflammatory mediators may affect the release of neurotransmitters.

3. Please read the brief below and answer the question at the end.

Allied Widgets is a manufacturing company that produces high-tech widgets for the telecommunications industry. The main head office/manufacturing site employs 1300 people. There are 45 in the executive management team, 30 in sales and marketing, 220 in support services like administration, security and HR, with the remainder working in the core areas of production and distribution.

In addition to the main site, Allied Widgets employs a field sales force of 35 and a field support team of 60. The field-based staff are divided into five regional sales and support teams covering the whole of the UK, and all have laptops and internet access from home.

Allied Widgets is changing the way it delivers basic health and safety training. Currently this training is delivered as 3 half-day classroom sessions, mandatory for all staff. However, the content of the first session is very basic 'background' knowledge, and the training team believe that this can be much more efficiently delivered as an online learning course.

A bespoke 'Basic health and safety in the workplace' e-learning course has been produced for Allied Widgets, relating basic health and safety principles to the specific working environment of the business. It also contains a short assessment test. The module will be taken by staff within their first week of joining the company, and annually thereafter as refresher training.

The company's training team want to launch the new module in six weeks' time. In order to test attitudes to e-learning, they are requiring all staff to complete the module within one month of its launch, regardless of when their annual refresher training is due. The company has no previous experience with e-learning, although it does have an effective and reasonably well-used intranet.

The training team has asked you to devise a communications plan to explain these changes to all staff, and to encourage people to use the new module.

Using the information you have, write an outline of the communication plan you would present to the training team. (Think in terms of the different audiences you need to reach, the messages that may be required and the communication channels available to you.) The plan will be distributed in advance of the meeting and so must both have impact and be succinct – team members are unlikely to read more than two pages. At the end of the plan, list the first three questions you would ask the training team when you sit down to discuss your plan with them.

Please send the completed test, with your CV, to:

Nikki VandenBergh, Information Transfer LLP,
Burleigh House, 15 Newmarket Road, Cambridge, CB5 8EG

If you wish you may email your application to Nikki at nv@intran.co.uk

Please quote reference **08/P/EMWA**.

State your salary expectations in your covering letter, and tell us how you found out about this position.

Closing date for applications: **Monday 4th February 2008**