



Advance your medical writing career with essential soft skills

Medical writing demands a comprehensive set of technical skills, from mastering regulatory and ethical guidelines to honing exceptional writing abilities. The foundation of superior medical writing is built on the hard skills acquired through education, hands-on experience, and ongoing professional growth. However, it is increasingly evident that integrating non-technical or “soft” skills can elevate one’s medical writing skills and bolster career progression. In our rapidly evolving and interconnected world, soft skills are becoming indispensable. They empower individuals to manage complexities, collaborate effectively, and excel in the 21st-century workplace. As we navigate

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through changes driven by technological advancements (artificial intelligence [AI], amongst others), globalisation, and economic fluctuations, understanding and enhancing soft skills is crucial for medical writers who aim to stay ahead. This issue of *Medical Writing* delves into acquiring and correctly applying soft skills across the different areas of medical writing. It offers rich insights and inspiration for medical writers at every career level, while emphasising how these skills can make a significant difference in their professional journey.

The path into medical writing is neither easy nor direct. Many who complete their academic journeys struggle to break into the craft. As a regulatory medical writer with fresh eyes, **Vivek Ranjan** shares his insight on six key soft skills critical for his successful transition into the regulatory writing industry. Similarly, from PhD to author, **Matteo Tardelli** paints the picture of his transition from academia into the publishing industry – a journey many aspiring medical writers can relate to. Matteo explains how nurturing his skills in networking, resilience, and self-discipline during his PhD laid the foundation for his success in the dynamic world of publishing. He details practical strategies to



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help you do the same.

But entering the field is just the beginning. To ensure a fruitful career, medical writers should continue to strengthen their soft skills. In the rising age of AI, medical writers can leverage AI to help them with the more technical aspects of the craft. This signifies a shift in how medical writers may work in the future with a focus on soft skills. To this end, **Corinne Swainger** provides an overview of essential soft skills for a medical writer. Among the many soft skills, **Ananya Bhowmick, Seema Abhijeet Kaveeshwar, and Susmita Sahu** bring emotional intelligence to the forefront. They discuss its impact on performance, such as communication and interpersonal skills, and the different ways to further develop one's emotional intelligence. **Asha Liju, Diana Daniel, and Grishma Kanchan** go one step further, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence in an era of rapid advancement in AI. From communication to conflict management and critical thinking, these "3 C's" have an enormous influence on the success of a medical writer's work or career. The authors highlight the interplay among the 3 C's, emphasising emotional intelligence as a cornerstone for their successful application.

Speaking of big changes, the COVID-19 pandemic marked a significant period of mass migration from offline to online activities across various aspects of life and business. What was once a necessity is now a choice for many employees and employers. **Hanna Kurlanda-Witek** discusses the impact of remote working on soft skills development and work delivery and shares expert insights from four professionals in the industry on the topic. As a remote medical writer focused on developing patient information resources, **Catherine Richards Golini's** key stakeholders are patients and patient associations. Developing trust and rapport to discuss the personal experiences of diverse patient groups online can certainly come with its challenges. Catherine provides a unique understanding of the soft skills necessary to manage these sensitive conversations.

Medical writing is a dynamic field that may come with a lot of unpredictability. **Phani Ayalavajjala and Roy D'Souza** demonstrate this using three examples from the medical regulatory writing field. Their article sheds light on how resilience enables medical writers to overcome adversities and how to develop this key skill. **Jonathan Mackinnon, Anuradha Alahari, Leo Daffue, Wiebke Griemberg, Mati Kargren, Chris Matthews, Kavita Muchandi, and Gunnar Schilling** dive deeper into one of the most common and important regulatory documents



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written by medical writers: clinical study protocols. These documents provide guidelines on how a clinical study must be performed. Clinical studies may be performed globally or locally depending on the scope of the study. Additionally, the team members may come from different regions of the world. The authors provide an overview of how to work with multicultural teams and further zone in on regional differences when working on clinical study protocols.

Last but not least, climbing the career ladder is a journey of continuous growth, self-discovery, and strategic advancement, marked by both challenges and triumphs along the way. Having a mentor can make a world of difference to how quickly you ascend. The relationship between a mentor and a mentee is built on trust, respect, and a shared commitment to learning and

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growth. It has significant potential to impact a mentee's personal and professional development, shaping their career trajectory and contributing to their success. **Nicola Haycock** provides an overview of this relationship in a medical writing environment, outlines the characteristics of a good mentor and mentee, and shows how each contributes to the mentoring process. Becoming a boss is a natural part of career progression, but becoming a good boss is about more than just balancing organisational goals, expectations from superiors,

and the widely different needs of individual team members. According to **Alexandra Hoegberg**, it's an intentional commitment that requires self-reflection, competence development, and an honest and regular assessment of your own and your team's progress. Alexandra shares insights into leading a creative team in a scientific environment with tips on how to make it work for you.

Overall, the take-home message is that soft skills are indispensable for medical writers in this era, and even more important when considering career progression. The articles collected here explore soft skills from different angles and corners of medical writing, from geographic area to seniority. We hope you will enjoy this issue and that some of these articles resonate with you in your everyday work.

Clare and Nicole

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Clare Chang, PhD, has a background in molecular biology and started her medical writing journey immediately after her PhD. She started as a medical regulatory writer at a contract research organisation (CRO). She is currently an Associate Director Clinical Regulatory Writer at AstraZeneca, based in Sweden. She works mostly on submission documents for market authorisation of new indications or new drugs. She has been a proud EMWA member since 2017. She is also one of the section editors for the Regulatory Matters section of *Medical Writing*.



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A dictionary of most common hashtags can be found at <https://www.hashtags.org/definition/~h/>.

For your info, EMWA is compiling a list of standardised hashtags for our social media use.



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