

Medical Writing: Careers Insight Workshop, 23-24 May 2011

What to expect of life in a MedComms Agency

Is Agency life for you?

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An outsider's view of life on the inside!

- Over 15 years' in-house agency experience
 - Medical communications/publishing
 - Client services, project management and editorial roles (but not writing!)
- External perspective
 - Performance coach helping professionals to work smarter

What to expect today?

- Challenges and opportunities of agency life
- What type of agency might suit you/your skills
- Next steps

But first, your thoughts...

A minute to reflect

Q: In what ways would the role of medical writer suit you?

- Think: what interests you (writing/non-writing); what are your transferable skills

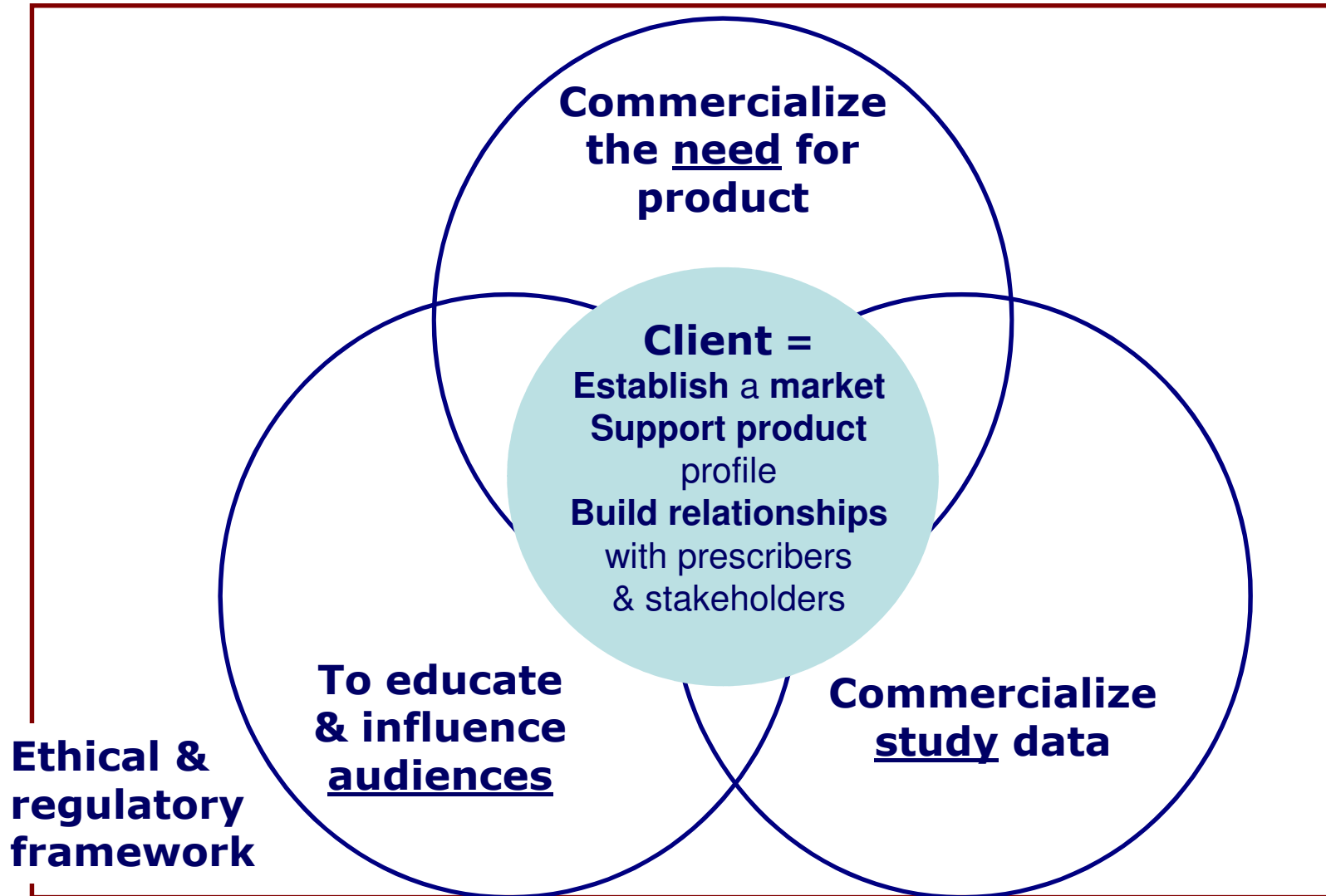
Q: What questions haven't yet been answered?

- Think: what/who do you need to ask?

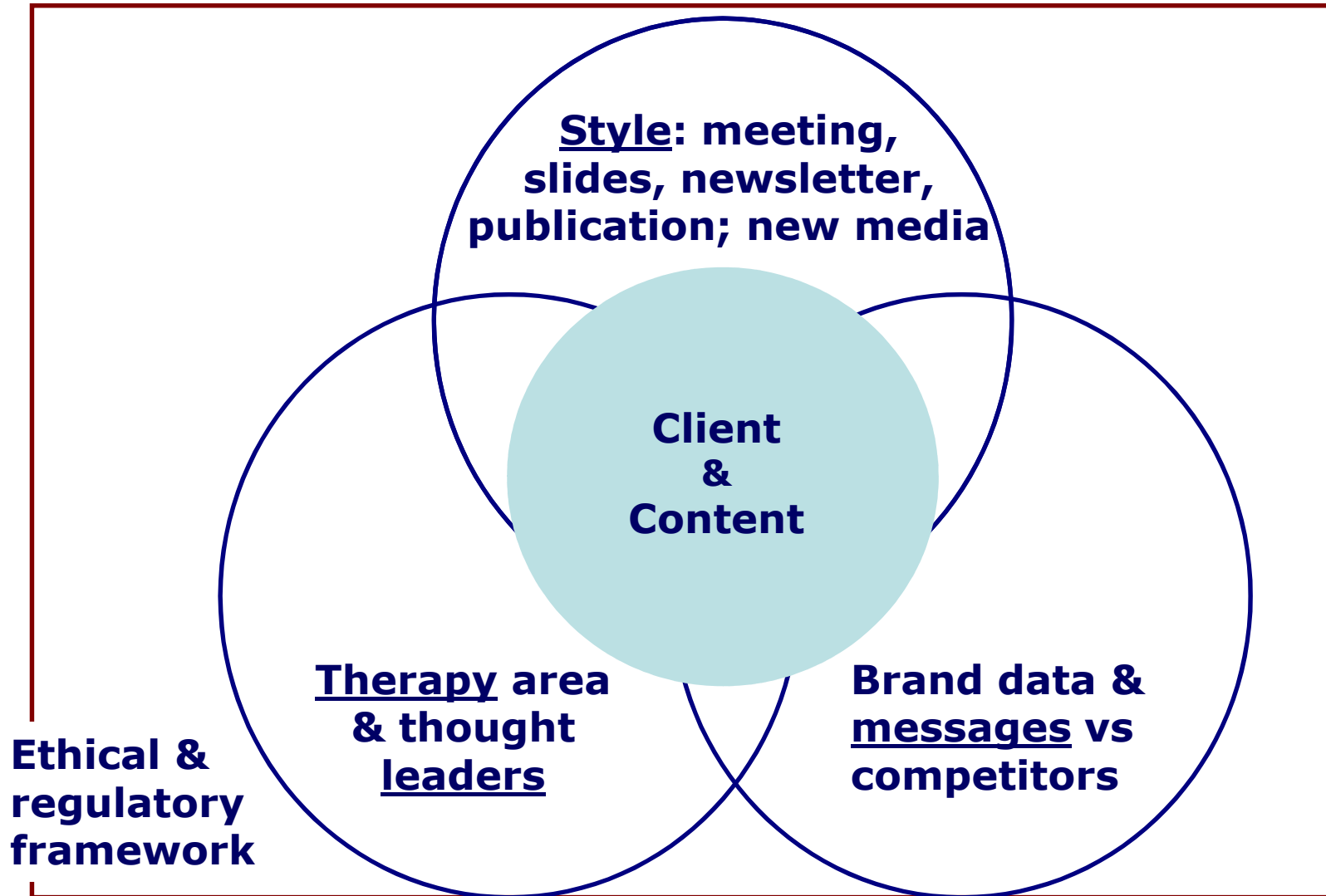
Are all Agencies the same?

(Key challenges & opportunities)

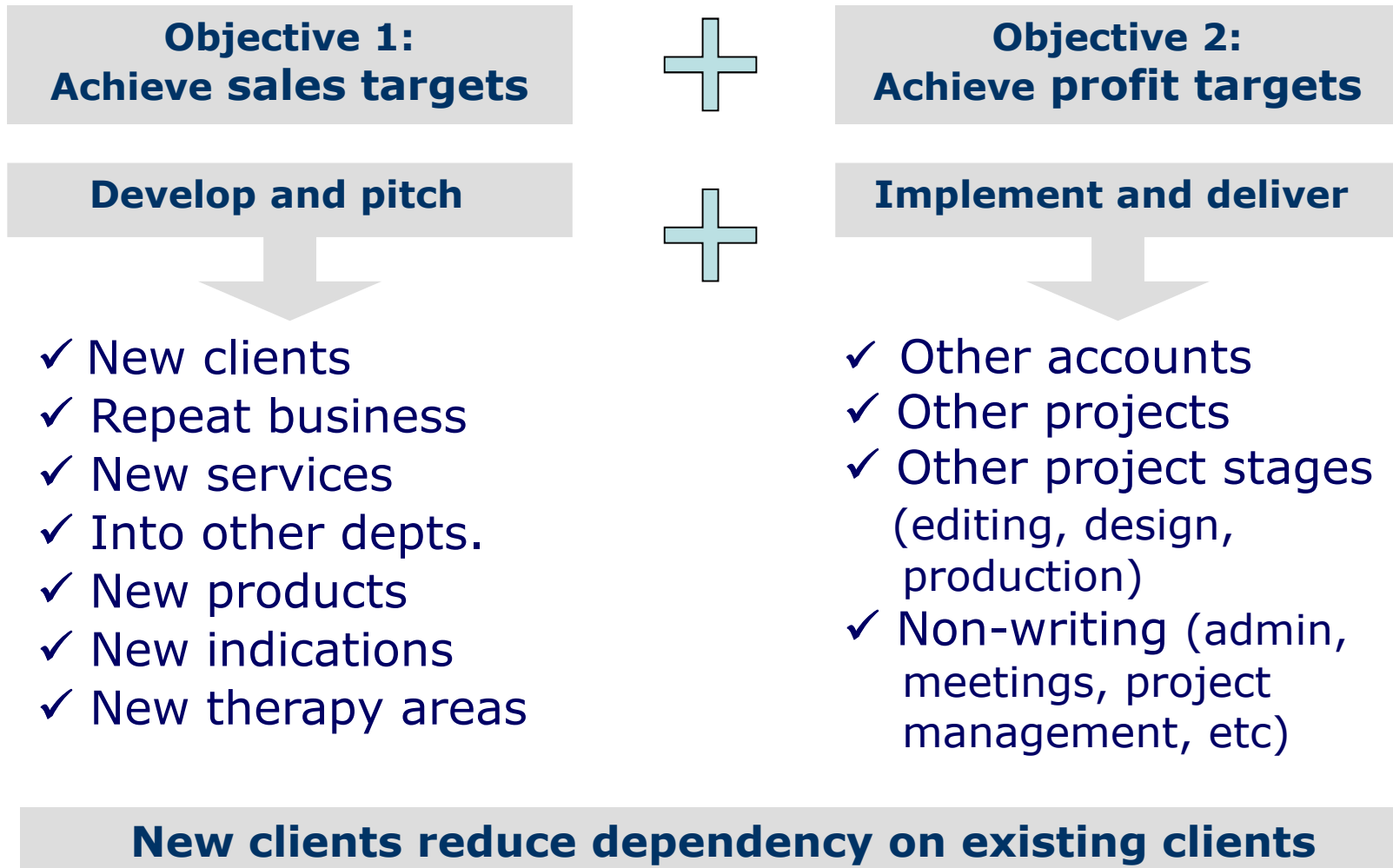
Medical Communications =



Medical Writer =



Agencies are service providers



But, pharmaceutical clients are changing

- Profile

- Highly business aware + personal career
- High turnover = low corporate memory + experience
- Time/resource pressured

- Intense competition

- Clients switch - because they can!
- Low barrier (multinationals → individuals)

Realities of agency life



- You are a resource with competing priorities and deadlines
- Learning takes place on 'live' projects and in-front of clients – but it can take time to be trusted
- Your desk can be anywhere in the world!
- Even 'a job well-done' is not always a simple measure

What's a job well done?



- ✓ Produced to brief (objective)
 - Deliver on time, to budget, quality
 - Balance science, marketing, ethical & regulatory

- ✓ A happy client (subjective)
 - Make their lives easier and help in career
 - But is the client always right?

What suits you/your skills?

Depends on agency style/culture

- Size/niche/multi service
- Structure and style
 - Hierarchical/flat/business units
 - Formal/entrepreneurial
- Support services
 - Systems/processes/financials/IT
 - HR, esp. training & development opportunities

Depends on account team structure

- Writing model
 - Freelance/in-house writers
- Key relationships
 - Writer + editor / project manager / account manager
 - Fixed teams or matrix
- Job titles don't predict role
 - Editor/project editor/project manager/account exec/account manager

What opportunities are you looking for?

**Business development
+ Client service**



Operational + Editorial

- ✓ New clients
- ✓ New products/indications
- ✓ New therapy areas
- ✓ Creating new services
- ✓ Leading pitches
- ✓ Strategic direction

- ✓ Project management
- ✓ Medical Direction
- ✓ QA/QC
- ✓ Line management
- ✓ Training/development
- ✓ Budgeting & finance

WINNING and KEEPING clients

Think about your transferable skills

- Challenger and solution finder
- Editor and quality controller
- Chaser and coordinator
- Trusted client adviser and negotiator
- Project tracker and financial controller
- New business opportunity spotter
- Value-adder

What you won't find in a job-ad...

Common afflictions reported by agency staff*

- Project-creep (a slowly growing specification)
- Canujustitis (need for freebies; '*lastminute.com*')
- Dripfeedsia (pressure to start w/o all data)
- Timeline stenosis (narrowing of the deadlines)
- RSI (Repetitive Sign-off Interference)

*Tongue firmly in cheek

Your Career Insights...

Taking action...

Q: In what way would the role of medical writer suit you?

Transferable skills/areas of interest/type of agency

Q: What is your goal from this workshop?

Or what/who do you still need to ask?

Q: What are your next steps?

Making contacts, starting research, CV etc