

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR



Cultivating Passion and Curiosity in Medical Writers: The Need for Dynamic and Agile Training Programs

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My journey in writing began in 1999 as a science communicator right after grad school, before moving to regulatory writing in 2005 with minimal formal training. Early on, I was handed the ICH E3 guidance for clinical study reports and had to navigate through it on my own. My tasks varied daily, ranging from clinical data reporting to understanding submission procedures, including physically preparing documents for US Food and Drug Administration submission—the blue pronged folders are memorable. Fortunately, today's training resources and electronic submissions make the process much smoother.

When I interview new candidates, they often ask what I view as the key differentiators for top performing writers. Without hesitation, passion, curiosity, and agility. Love WHY we write, and embrace WHY we adapt. Medical writing is a dynamic and rewarding profession after all. We learn something new almost daily by navigating new therapeutic areas, emerging technologies, and evolving regulations and guidelines. We are invigorated by these challenges because we know our words matter to our patients. Our work is critical for advancing medical science and improving public health.

Over the last 20 years, the medical writing profession has evolved significantly as the industry has become more globalized, competitive, and regulated. Medical writers face an increasing volume and complexity of data, collaboration with mostly virtual stakeholders, and evolving advances in science and technology. Their training and professional growth needs are also increasing. Those of us trusted with their development need to consider the vast diversity of beneficial training topics (ranging from soft skills for matrix leadership to stakeholder management to generative artificial intelligence prompt engineering)—all while creating an environment that fosters curiosity, rewards agility, and remains driven by patient care.

In this issue, we explore how we foster a medical writer's career, from finding the right candidate, to providing education and training, to encouraging career progression and professional development. We aim for our training programs to be adaptable, mirroring the adaptability we expect from our writers as they encounter changing demands and challenges. We hope you are curious to learn more about the predictable characteristics of a candidate who finds joy in this role and the kinds of training approaches to nurture them at different stages of professional growth.