

DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

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Winter 2013

Medical Writing 911: Handling Emergency Situations with Care

By Ruwaida Vakil

Emergencies in medical writing are common. On September 24, 2013, Scott Kober, MBA, CCMEP, and Tracy E. Bunting-Early, PhD, led an interactive presentation to help medical writers handle medical writing emergencies with care and professionalism. AMWA-DVC sponsored the meeting, held in Ewing, NJ. Kober is the director of content development for the Institute for Continuing Healthcare Education in Philadelphia; Bunting-Early is a medical writer, consultant and owner of Bunting Medical Communications in Newark, DE.

Common Medical Writing Emergencies

Kober and Bunting-Early presented eight scenarios to address some of the common issues medical writers encounter. Using an interactive audience response system, audience members voted on potential outcomes for each scenario, which led to an interactive panel discussion. The scenarios and one potential solution for each are:

1. How to ask for more author input from a client that has provided little direction for a publication project:
 - o Potential solution: Share International Committee of Medical Journal Editors authorship guidelines and work out a solution with your client to ensure the authors give sufficient input moving forward.
2. How to build an online presence to attract new clients:
 - o Potential solution: Begin to create an online presence, starting with a website and a targeted LinkedIn profile. Consider developing a Twitter account. Look on the AMWA forums for advice and ask colleagues how they developed their online presence.
3. How to address issues of self-plagiarism with authors,

including the definition of plagiarism:

- Potential solution: Discuss this with your client and work with the client and author to explain that even self-plagiarism is unethical.

4. How to let your client know that you have a family emergency and may not make a deadline:

- Potential solution: Discuss this with your client and ask for an extension or provide part of the work so that the client can have someone else complete it. You can recommend other writers who can help.

5. How to hire a good writer:

- Potential solution: Create a list of the criteria you need and network with colleagues to find a good writer.

6. How to deal with a frustrating client/project (when pay is not the issue):

- Potential solution: Since freelance writers cannot always influence how an account/project is managed, be flexible while trying to partner with your client to improve or avoid inefficient factors.

7. The ethics of reusing portions of your previous writing on new projects:

- Potential solution: Find different ways of saying similar things when you are uncertain whether it is acceptable to "pick up" content. In most cases you shouldn't recycle your own writing.

8. What you should do when you feel your time was not respected on a job interview:

- Potential solution: Keep in mind that there may be an explanation, but it might also be a red flag about working for this company. If you are given the opportunity, politely relate the facts of your experience with your interview contact.

Learn More About Handling Medical Emergencies

Kober, Bunting-Early and colleagues gave a similar presentation with new scenarios on Google hangout on October 3, 2013. Watch the presentation on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWMTnLwYnhE>

Ruwaida Vakil, MS, is a freelance medical writer, communications specialist and owner of ProMed Write, LLC. Vakil is also the current membership chair for AMWA-DVC.

Planning for 2014 Freelance Workshop Under Way

AMWA-DVC's 2014 Freelance Workshop will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2014, in Philadelphia at the Hilton Philadelphia Airport hotel. Co-chairs Dawn M. Salamon (owner of Hop Toad Medical Writing LLC, Port Murray, NJ) and Tracy Bunting-Early, PhD, are planning content for the full-day workshop, which will feature presentations in the morning and roundtables in the afternoon.

A key focus this year is providing more content for experienced freelancers. "We are adapting the content to balance it between new presentations aimed specifically at experienced freelancers and content for newer freelancers," said Bunting-Early, owner of Bunting Medical Communications, Inc. (Newark, DE).

Call for Presenters and Roundtable Leaders, Ideas for Advanced Freelances

If you'd like to make a presentation or lead a roundtable at the Freelance Workshop, please complete our quick [survey](#).

We're also looking for:

- Lawyers who can serve on a panel about common agreement clauses.
- Input from experienced freelancers on what they would like to learn about at the Freelance Workshop.

Please email your suggestions to Bunting-Early: tracyb@tracybphd.com.

Look for details about the Freelance Workshop in DVC announcements, future issues of the Delawriter, and on the DVC website's [Upcoming Events](#).

Princeton Conference: April 26, 2014

AMWA-DVC's 18th Annual Princeton Conference will be held on Saturday, April 26, 2014, at the Princeton Marriott at Forrestal in Princeton, NJ, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This intensive one-day program offers regulatory and essential skills knowledge and networking through four credit workshops and two how-to sessions.

Chair Nick Sidorovich, MEd, President, Rolling Hill Media, LLC (Chatham, NJ), and co-chair Susan Dalton, MS, ELS, associate director, US Medical Writing, Bristol-Myers Squibb (Newtown, PA), have confirmed the credit workshops so far are:

- Writing the Investigator's Brochure, with Jane Stephenson, PhD, MBA, Director of Medical Writing, Boehringer Ingelheim;
- Writing the Final Report of a Clinical Trial, with Lawrence Liberti, MSc, RPh, RAC, Executive Director, Centre for Innovation in Regulatory Science.

For those wishing to mix recreation with their educational experience, the conference center is just a short 5-minute drive or cab ride to Princeton University and the popular cultural, shopping, and dining experiences of Nassau Street and Palmer Square in downtown Princeton.

Registration includes continental breakfast, a sumptuous buffet lunch, and gourmet break snacks! Registration is expected to open on January 24, 2014. Look for details in announcements from AMWA-DVC, and check the DVC website's [Upcoming Events](#).

Pre-Holiday Networking Event

Members of the AMWA-DVC gathered for a Pre-Holiday Networking Event on November 20, 2013, at Glenmorgan Bar & Grill at the Radnor Hotel in St. Davids, PA. The Biomedical Writing Programs at the University of the Sciences sponsored the event.

"Our online Biomedical Writing Program at the University of the Sciences is proud and happy to sponsor this networking event with the AMWA-DVC. The AMWA and the DVC have worked tirelessly for the medical writing community, and we appreciate their efforts and inclusion of us in their family," said Danny A. Benau, PhD, Director and Associate Professor of the Biomedical Writing Programs, and Kelleen Flaherty, Assistant Professor of the Biomedical Writing Programs. "We wish everyone safe and happy holidays!"

DVC Well Represented at AMWA's Annual Conference and on the Executive Committee

More than 60 AMWA-DVC members enhanced their knowledge and skills, and networked with colleagues, at AMWA's 73rd Annual Conference, held November 6-9, 2013, in Columbus, Ohio. Many also participated as speakers or roundtable leaders and as members of the Annual Conference Committee and national's Executive Committee.

DVC's Executive Committee Members

DVC's Brian Bass officially began his term as AMWA president at the end of the conference. The owner of Bass Global, Inc. in Robbinsville, NJ, Bass is an award-winning freelance medical writer with 25+ years experience in writing scientific,

educational, and promotional materials for the pharmaceutical, diagnostic, orthopedic, and medical device industries. He is co-author of *The Accidental Medical Writer* (with DVC's Cynthia L. Kryder, MS), a book series for people who want to launch freelance medical writing careers.

Bass has served both AMWA national and DVC for many years, as a workshop leader, founder and chair of DVC's Princeton Conference, and past president of DVC. He is also an AMWA Fellow. Like many other medical writers, Bass found a home in AMWA. "Over the years I like to think I have become pretty successful, and I have AMWA to thank for that," he said, noting AMWA's unequaled education program and the generosity, camaraderie, and networking, of members. "I am humbled, grateful, and excited to be president," he said.

Other DVC members on the AMWA Executive Committee are:

- Cynthia L. Kryder, MS, freelance medical writer and editor (Phoenixville, PA): Membership Chair, and a member of the Annual Conference Committee
- Nick Sidorovich, MSED, president, Rolling Hill Media, LLC (Chatham, NJ): Chapter Relations Coordinator
- Scott Kober, MBA, CCMEP, director of content development, Institute for Continuing Healthcare Education (Philadelphia, PA): Education Chair

DVC Members Network and Learn

Kent Steinriede, MS, organized a sold-out chapter dinner for DVC members during the conference. "A group of nearly 30 DVC members went to the Pearl Restaurant, where we consumed everything from oyster stout to fried chicken with greens and cinnamon buns," said Steinriede, a regulatory writer with Parexel (Bala Cynwyd, PA) and DVC Pennsylvania Program Chair.

Christin Melton, ELS, CMPP, attended the Annual Conference for the first time. "I was pleased with how knowledgeable all the speakers were and how friendly everyone was," she said. "Having worked in medical publishing for several years, I would never have believed I'd come away with so many new ideas, some of which I have already started using. Although this year's conference just ended, I'm already looking forward to next year's." Melton is a Medical Publications Specialist at Precise Publications, LLC (Bedminster, NJ).

Elizabeth McKenna, PhD, also attended the Annual Conference for the first time. "As a new member, I wasn't sure if attending the AMWA Annual Conference would be worth it but I'm so glad I did," said McKenna, who is a science writer at the American Association for Cancer Research (Philadelphia). "In addition to progress I made toward completing a certificate because of the large number of workshops being offered, I attended open sessions and roundtables that provided really useful career information and was able to network with other AMWA members both in my chapter and from across the country."

DVC's Online Job Board Publicized Nationally

DVC rolled out its new online [job board](#) to people outside the chapter during the Annual Conference. Companies and recruiters can post a job opening (for full-time, part-time, or freelance/contract work) for 45 days for a low fee (\$15 for members or \$30 for nonmembers). "Vendors and hiring managers were enthusiastic about having this resource," said Joanne Rosenberg, MS, ELS, senior manager of Global Medical Writing at Allergan, Inc. (Bridgewater, NJ). Members who are contacted by recruiters are respectfully asked to mention the job board and provide the link.

Upcoming Annual Conferences

The next two annual conferences are:

- 74th Annual Conference: Memphis, TN, October 8-11, 2014
- 75th Annual Conference: San Antonio, TX, September 30-October 3, 2015

News from National

AMWA's 2013 Annual Conference included a board meeting, at which DVC President Joanne Rosenberg, MS, ELS, and immediate past President Jennifer Maybin, MA, ELS, were the delegates from our chapter. Actions and news of interest to DVC members from the meeting include the board's approval of amendments to [DVC's bylaws](#), which are now effective, and discussion of members' perception of the new AMWA Online Community Forums.

Summary of the DVC Bylaws Amendments

- Elections: To enable more chapter members to participate in election of officers, the voting method was changed from in-person attendance at a meeting to electronic voting. The President-elect is responsible for implementing electronic voting.
- Committees and committee structure: To facilitate the work being done within the chapter, some committees have been added and the structure has been changed. Communications will become a standing committee. The minimum number of members was removed from most committees, allowing the chairs more flexibility.
- Chapter manual: The immediate past president was charged with creating and/or maintaining the chapter manual.
- Amendments: A simpler process for amendments is now being used that allows amendments to be proposed outside of chapter meetings but still gives members an opportunity to comment on proposed changes, with a minimum open comment period of two weeks. The chapter's Executive Committee will vote on amendments prior to submission to the national AMWA Board of

Directors.

AMWA's Online Community Forums

Did you know that you can have postings to the new AMWA community forums pushed out to you via email? Just follow these steps:

1. Log into amwa.org.
2. From the Quick Links Menu, click on Online Forums.
3. Click into the forum you want to follow.
4. Under "Forum Options," choose "Watch this Forum" from the drop-down options.

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