

your future

A practical guide to the
recruitment process

Produced by

 ashfield in2focus[®]
healthcare sales & marketing

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Ashfield In2Focus is the UK's leading provider of professional sales teams and nurse advisors to the pharmaceutical industry.

To get the job you really want with Ashfield In2Focus you need to stand out from everyone else.

This guide is designed to help you understand our recruitment processes and familiarise you with some of the tools we use.

Future, talent, success.

Is **Pharmaceutical** **SALES** for me

Pharmaceutical sales is a fast-paced, high pressure and rewarding environment. With improved patient care and supporting the NHS at the forefront, there are many opportunities to progress and develop within this ever-changing industry.

Do I:

- Feel excited by a professional career that enhances patient care?
- Want to be developed in line with my potential?
- Want to further my knowledge through study?
- Possess ambition and the drive to succeed?
- Have exceptional communication skills?

If you answered yes to most of these questions, then read on!



Researching the role

In order to fully prepare for the recruitment process you will need to fully research the role of a medical representative.

If possible you should speak with a medical sales representative to gain an insight into their role.

Find out how they plan their day, how they set pre-call objectives and how they measure their success. Ask them about time-management, access issues and how they structure their sales calls, in addition to what they enjoy most about their job and which aspects they find the most challenging.

Think about what they tell you and consider how you would approach the role, what challenges you would face and how you plan to meet them.

Coupled with the research you undertake on the structure of the NHS, the GMS contract, the ABPI and NICE, you will develop a thorough understanding of the daily role of the medical sales representative, the NHS marketplace and the sales processes involved. Thorough preparation will ensure you are confident, well motivated and enthusiastic going into the recruitment process.

Stages of the recruitment process

The recruitment process may include various elements such as a telephone interview, aptitude testing, face-to-face interview or a full assessment centre day.

Advice

Always dress to impress. This means wearing a smart business suit at every step of the recruitment process even if you are told it is 'informal'. Remember that first impressions really do count.

Application and CV

Purpose:

To get an interview using evidence from your life or work.

Page: 12

Telephone screening

Purpose:

To ensure you meet the basic requirements for the role.

Page: 14

References:

Purpose:

To confirm that what you've said during the recruitment process is true.

Page: 16

Application Form

Purpose:

To obtain a standard set of answers directly comparing you with other applicants.

Page: 16

Telephone Interview

Purpose:

To make your first impression count and expand on your CV or application form.

Page: 18

Face-to-face Interviews

Purpose:

To show the interviewer that you have the required competencies and approach for the role.

Page: 19

Aptitude Testing

Purpose:

To test your numerical and verbal reasoning ability.

Page: 20

Assessment Centres

Purpose:

To demonstrate your competencies for the role through a range of exercises.

Page: 22

Writing your CV

— And getting it right

Your CV should interest the reader enough to make them want to meet you. Its purpose is to get you an interview, therefore it should be attractive and highlight what skills you can offer to a prospective employer. Aim to limit your CV to no more than 2 sides of A4 paper. You should adopt a clear, uncluttered layout with plenty of white space, and a consistent format.

Always tailor your CV and covering letter to the company and role you are applying for. Show that you understand the job, and the qualities the employer is looking for. Keep your CV up-to-date at all times to ensure that you do not forget vital details, and always provide the recruiter with the most up-to-date version.

Your details should be the first thing on your CV – your full name and contact details. Make sure this information is correct, as you would not want to miss out on opportunities when no one can get in touch with you. Use a professional-sounding email address to demonstrate your credibility.

Prepare a short professional profile at the top of your CV, to catch the recruiter's attention, and be prepared to justify this description in your interview.

You should then list your work experience, with your most recent position at the top. Remember to highlight your key achievements and

responsibilities in each role. Never leave any gaps in your career history – be honest about what you have done, but clearly highlight the benefits of the choices you have made.

Details of your education should follow, again in reverse order. Note the grades you achieved and the institution you attended, trying to keep this relevant to the desired role.

It is also a good idea at this point to list any skills which you have developed, for example IT packages you have used, languages learnt, and your driving licence status. Try to keep this relevant to the job, for example swimming badges or a cycling proficiency certificate may not be needed!

Hobbies or interests are optional – they may be provided in order to give the interviewer more insight into your skill base, for example by showing team work. You do not need to list your references if they take up too much space; however, you should state that they would be available on request.

Keep your CV concise and to the point, and interesting to an external reader. Avoid cluttering it up with pictures or unusual fonts. Only use abbreviations if they are universally known. Finally, always check for spelling and grammatical errors before submitting. You could ask a friend to look over it for a second opinion.

Your details should be the first thing – your full name and contact details

Use a professional sounding email address

Prepare a short profile at the top of your CV, to catch the recruiter's attention

You should then list your work experience, the most recent position at the top. Remember to highlight your key achievements and responsibilities in each role. Never leave any gaps in your career history – be honest, but clearly highlight the benefits of the choices you've made

Details of your education should follow, again in reverse order, include your grades and the institution you attended

List any skills which you have developed, for example IT packages you have used, languages learnt, and your driving licence status.

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Profile

A successful sales professional with over 3 years of experience in primary care roles. Strong planning, organisational and analytical skills coupled with well-developed networking and influencing abilities and a "can-do" attitude. I am looking to progress my career in a secondary care and/or account management role.

Work Experience

Global Pharmaceuticals Ltd (December 2006-Present)

Executive Medical Representative (October 2008-Present)

- Promoted to Executive Medical Representative following two years of strong sales performance on my territory (Berkshire and Buckinghamshire)
- Won 2009 Achievers Award for highest market share growth in UK
- Sales Vs Target >100% for all three of my products in two successive years
- Regional Champion for ETMS system, devised and ran training workshops for my team

Medical Representative (December 2006-October 2008)

- Joined Global Pharmaceuticals after a rigorous selection process
- Came second in my training course selling exercise (35 people)
- Passed my abpi exam with a distinction after eight months

Education

University of North London (October 2003-July 2006)

- BSc (Hons) Psychology 2.1

Sir James Rhodes School, Milton Keynes (September 1996-July 2003)

'A' Levels

- Biology – A
- Chemistry – C
- History – C

Interviews

You may be invited to various types of interview, for example a telephone interview or a face-to-face interview. Although the format of these interviews will vary, your preparation should be similar, for example you should research the company, its products and ensure that you are fully familiar with your CV, so that you can answer questions on it in the interview.

In any interview, ensure you retain a professional manner, language and tone, even in an 'informal' meeting. Be careful not to relax too much, and make sure you avoid using slang, or worse, swearing.

Telephone Interviews

A telephone interview will usually be the first stage of the application process and is your chance to make that first impression. Make sure you prepare as thoroughly as you would for a face-to-face interview. A telephone interview enables you to have your notes to hand, as a prompt.

Advice

If you have a telephone interview scheduled, make sure that you are available to answer your phone and that you have plenty of time to talk. Provide a landline number if possible, or ensure that you have full signal and battery on your mobile phone.

Remember:

Attitude – be confident, listen actively

Accuracy – be convincing, provide evidence support your claims

Competency-based Interviews

A competency-based interview is usually the main basis of any candidate selection. The interview may either be conducted on its own or as part of a more comprehensive assessment process. Questions will be based on specific selection criteria, and are designed to gather evidence of the key competencies required for success in the role, for example teamwork, or drive for results.

To achieve the maximum from your competency-based interview, you will need to prepare beforehand. Think of your past achievements then prepare and practise examples to use. Remember to use the STAR format, as explained on page 15. Learn to pace your answers, and do not use the same example for many questions. The interviewer may indicate how much time is available, and you should be able to maximise your impact during this time.

Try to establish rapport with the interviewer(s). In your examples you should talk in terms of what 'I' did, not what 'we' did. It can also be useful in an interview to demonstrate awareness of your development areas, in order to describe how you would improve future performance.

Finally, prepare some questions to ask at the end of your interview. These should be about the company or role, rather than the salary or benefits at this stage. Do not ask questions which you could have answered yourself

with some simple research. However, you could show how much research you have done by using clarifying questions, for example to check your understanding or to have a point expanded on.

Appearance

Wear your smartest work clothes so that you feel confident. Ensure you arrive in plenty of time so you are calm and mentally prepared. Do not bring any unnecessary bags into the interview with you!

Advice

Prepare your required documents and clothing the night before and plan your travel arrangements in advance, in order to avoid panic before your interview.

Competency based questions are designed to give you the opportunity to use real examples from your previous employment to demonstrate your suitability for the role.

SWOT, BRAG and shine like a STAR

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is a strategic analysis tool which is useful in many situations, including an interview. You may be asked to prepare an analysis on yourself in presentation format. The four components are as follows:

Strengths – attributes you have that are helpful in achieving the role

Weaknesses – development areas you have that are limitations in achieving the role

Opportunities – external factors which have a potentially positive impact

Threats – external factors which have a potentially negative impact

Brag File

You may be asked to provide a brag file at your face-to-face interview or assessment centre. This is a folder made up from evidence of your past achievements, for example certificates, emails, written statements and sales figures. Try to keep this up-to-date by adding new achievements as they occur. You should keep copies of your degree certificate, passport and

driving licence in your brag file, so that you always have them available.

The STAR Model

This is a useful tool to use when answering interview questions, or when considering answers to application form questions.

The four elements are as follows:

Situation – provide a brief background to the example you are giving

Task – detail what had to be achieved

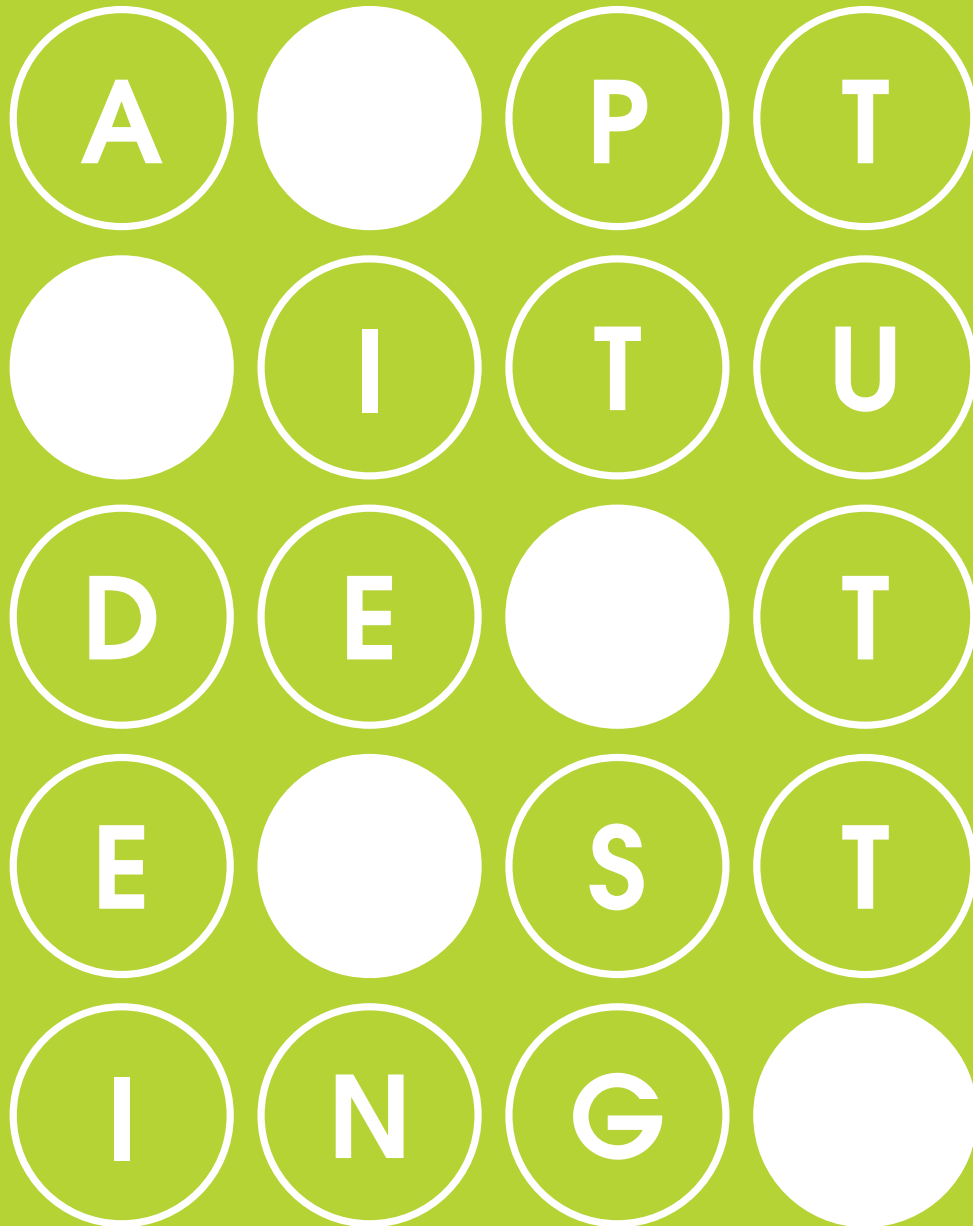
Action – describe what you had to do, what skills you used to do this, what was difficult and how you solved this problem.

Result – provide details of the positive outcome.

Sticking to this model should provide the interviewer with all the information they need when you are giving an example of your skills. Prepare answers in which you can demonstrate all the elements - most weighting should be on your Action, but you also need a Result.

When using the STAR model you should not speculate on what you should do, but talk about real situations you have been in.

Aptitude Testing



As part of the recruitment process, you may occasionally be asked to complete an assessment to determine whether you demonstrate the required skills or competencies for the desired role. Most are now completed online, but a written version may form part of an assessment centre. There are many types of aptitude testing, the most common two being:

Verbal and Numerical Reasoning Assessments

As their titles suggest, these assessments are designed to assess your verbal and numerical reasoning skills. Prepare yourself by reviewing practise questions beforehand. You could also test yourself on crosswords, mental arithmetic and analysing tables or graphs.

Personality Profile

This type of exercise provides information to the recruiter about your values and behaviours. There are no right or wrong answers for the types of questions given, so you should answer as honestly and spontaneously as possible. The questionnaire will often measure consistency in your answers, so do not try to catch it out but be yourself.

Advice

Remember to stay calm and to complete the questions in a relaxed atmosphere. Allow time to complete each question, but be aware of the time constraints.

Assessment centres

Assessment centres usually last either all day or half a day. They involve a number of exercises, each concentrating on particular competencies. These are outlined below.

Prepare for the assessment day by continuing your research on the role, the products, the company and their competitors. Revise any information you have given on your CV or application form, and any notes you took after the telephone or face-to-face interviews. Remind yourself of your past achievements and strengths, highlighting those which could be used as examples. Consider the questions you may be asked on the day, for example, why do you want that specific role? Also prepare by thinking about any items you may need with you during the day, such as pen, pencil and calculator.

Finally, be aware that not all the other candidates will be competing for the same vacancy as you – there may be more than one role available on the day. Also the exercises are not designed to trick you, just to highlight your strengths, so try to relax and give your best throughout the day!

Advice

Remember to dress smartly and professionally, and to plan your route before you go. Aim to arrive early in case of delays – you will not want to feel rushed.

Group Exercise

This will challenge your ability to work as part of a team, and to show up your particular skills when it comes to negotiating, influencing or compromising. You may be given a scenario and asked to work as a team to analyse and solve a problem, and to decide on the outcome.

Advice

Make sure you understand the brief and instructions, then try to ignore the assessors and concentrate on the task.

The final answer is usually less important than the debate and group participation. Make sure you listen to the other members, make eye contact, and try to involve quieter members of the group. Show respect for everyone and do not interrupt or undermine others' contributions. You need to be able to put your point across but also recognise the need to compromise where appropriate. Remember to speak clearly and confidently. Refer back to the original brief regularly throughout the exercise and try to keep track of time.

“Exercises are not designed to trick you, just to highlight your strengths, so try to relax and give your best throughout the day”

Role Play

You will be given a brief and some time to prepare for the role play exercise. The exercise will be designed to see how you interact with someone face-to-face - an assessor will act out the part of a customer or colleague.

Advice

Use open questions and listen well. Adopt a relaxed posture so as not to seem threatening. Also be aware of how you pace the meeting.

The role-play is usually a selling scenario but could be a different interaction e.g. a dissatisfied customer.

You may want to research into the various sales models that are available, in order to aid the structure of your approach. All these models will include key steps such as building rapport and closing, and you should stick to a solid structure when conducting your role play.

Presentation

You will usually be given a brief for the presentation beforehand, but sometimes be asked to prepare it on the day. The format will usually be in Powerpoint, on a memory stick and also printed as a handout. Ensure your slides are clear and professional, with correct spelling and grammar and if you have time practice it to ensure you use the time available.

Make sure you understand the instructions by reading through the brief carefully. Take time to plan your answer, and to cover all the points. Try to think of your audience, and the possible questions they may ask. Remain professional – begin with a formal introduction, and end by thanking the audience and asking if they have any further questions.

Advice

Stick to the time limit but do not waffle to fill gaps.

In-tray exercise

In-tray exercises are designed to evaluate your planning, prioritising and organising skills. You will be given various documents to analyse and arrange, according to the brief or business need. There may be a mixture of emails, memos, telephone calls and letters needing action. Take time to absorb all the supplied information, and begin by making a 'to do' list so that you do not miss anything. Refer back to the instructions and to your list all the way through. Avoid assumption – calmly check all the details, being aware of red herrings! Finally, state clearly what you would do – do not leave it up to the assessor to guess your thoughts.

Business plan

For a business plan, you will be required to gather and analyse information to answer questions on a business scenario. You may be asked to prepare a plan of presentation outlining your findings and recommendations. Use clear sections and headings - if you use bullet points follow these up with some commentary and depth. Think about using the **SMART** model when structuring your business plan:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound

Clearly summarise how you would take things forward, and remember to manage your time well in order to fully complete the task.

Advice

Try to vary the report by using charts, statistics and diagrams. Use a professional and confident tone to impact on the interviewer, and check for spelling or grammatical errors before submitting or delivering your results.

Career opportunities

Below are brief details on just some of the roles that you could achieve with Ashfield In2Focus:

Trainee Medical Sales Representative Full time/Part time

Your first medical sales role will provide you with training on selling skills, territory planning and the product knowledge you will need to speak confidently with your customers. You will be responsible for the achievement of sales targets on your territory, working either alone or as part of a territory team. You might be working in a dedicated with a single client company or a syndicated role representing several companies' products. During your first year you will study for your ABPI examination – this qualification is essential if you want to continue working in pharmaceutical sales.

You will be professional, results-orientated and have exceptional communication skills. Ideally you will be educated to degree level and/or have previous sales experience.

Experienced Medical Sales Representative Full time/Part time

Once you have passed the ABPI examination and gained significant experience as a representative, you will have the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities in your team, such as becoming a product champion, chairing regional meetings and mentoring newer colleagues in addition to achieving your own business objectives. If you are consistently over-achieving you will be

eligible to apply for Senior or Executive Representative status to demonstrate your ability and gain additional benefits.

You will be ABPI qualified and have a track-record of success as a medical representative.

Hospital Representative Full time/Part time

Working in secondary care, your key customers will be hospital doctors and nurses as you aim to achieve formulary status for your products and achieve your sales targets. You will need expert knowledge of your products and strong networking and account management skills.

You will be confident discussing clinical studies with senior medical professionals, and be able to use networks to achieve positive outcomes for your customers, their patients and you products.

Key Account Manager Full time/Part time

Working in primary care, secondary care or both, your customers are likely to be key opinion leaders who have a major influence on prescribing. Analysing the business potential of your territory, you will create account plans to ensure you achieve your sales objectives and develop excellent customer relationships.

You will have exceptional business acumen, networking skills and selling skills and be

confident taking full accountability for your results.

Regional Business Manager Full time

You will manage a team of representatives, spending most of your time coaching them on field development days. Responsible for the achievement of individual and regional business objectives, you will also manage your team's development, absence, meeting budgets, expenses and some HR processes. It is also likely that you will work closely with client managers and/or representatives.

You will have a successful track record as a representative, excellent people skills and strong coaching and leadership abilities.

Resourcing Executive Full time

Working in our Head Office in Leicestershire, your role will involve working with candidates and clients to fill vacancies throughout the company. You will need to understand the roles you are recruiting for and be able to sell both Ashfield In2Focus and the client company to candidates. You will need strong communication and teamworking skills along with the ability to multi-task and work to recruitment deadlines.

You will have significant experience in a sales or nursing role and may be required to relocate to work in our international headquarters in Leicestershire.

Training Executive Full time

You will be responsible for the design and delivery of a wide range of training courses, including inductions, selling skills, product training and our Achievers courses. The courses will be delivered to both Ashfield In2Focus and client employees. You will need excellent planning and organisational skills along with exceptional presentation

and facilitation abilities.

You will have significant experience in a sales or nursing role and may be required to relocate to work in our international headquarters in Leicestershire

Nurse Advisor Full time/Part time

This exciting role is the first step many registered nurses take in their careers working alongside the pharmaceutical industry in a complementary, non-promotional capacity. Many of our nurses work in an educational or advisory capacity to promote excellent patient care. All of our programmes are designed to deliver gold standard projects and are fully compliant with all current guidelines and regulations. Supported by a dedicated medical team and training resource, we will ensure that you are fully equipped to fulfil this dynamic, challenging opportunity.

You will need to be a registered nurse.

Nurse Manager Full time

You will manage a team of nurses, spending most of your time coaching them on field development days. Responsible for the achievement of individual and regional objectives, you will also manage your team's development, absence, meeting budgets, expenses and some HR processes.

You will have a successful track record as a nurse advisor, excellent people skills and strong coaching and leadership abilities.

Please note that for any field based roll you will require the ability to drive.

In summary

I have:

- A smart, professional appearance
- An understanding of the company, its products and the role
- A firm handshake
- My brag file
- A positive, honest approach
- My presentation, business plan and anything required for the assessment centre

I am:

- Prepared and professional
- Calm and composed
- Smiling and relaxed
- Enthusiastic
- Driven and motivated
- Going to secure this job!

Investigate further

www.ashfieldin2focus.com

www.ashfieldin2focuscareers.com

www.allaboutmedicalsales.com

www.abpi.org.uk

www.dh.gov.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

www.nice.org.uk

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