THE AGENCY ADVANTAGE

PROFILE OF A MEDICAL DIRECTOR

HEATHER VANSEGGELEN, PHD GLOBAL MEDICAL DIRECTOR, PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES

OVERVIEW OF MEDICAL AFFAIRS

Medical Affairs serves as a critical bridge between pharmaceutical innovation and real-world healthcare. It integrates scientific expertise, healthcare professional engagement, and patient-focused strategies to ensure treatments achieve their full potential. Medical Directors like Heather lead this charge by driving evidence generation, guiding strategy, and fostering collaboration across the healthcare ecosystem.

MEDICAL DIRECTOR: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Medical Strategy and Planning**: Designing and implementing strategies to address medical and scientific priorities.
- **Evidence Generation:** Overseeing integrated evidence plans and ensuring robust data generation to support clinical and commercial objectives.
- **Scientific Narrative:** Leading the development of compelling narratives that resonate with diverse audiences.
- **Education and Training:** Equipping regional teams with the knowledge and materials needed for effective engagement.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Building strong relationships with healthcare professionals, patient advocacy groups, and internal teams.
- **Digital Integration**: Championing the use of technology and innovative approaches to enhance outcomes.

HEATHER'S BACKGROUND

- **Education**: PhD in Immunology from McMaster University, focusing on CAR-T cells.
- **Career Path**: Began in pharma as a Scientific Advisor in Vaccines at GSK Canada. Transitioned from pre-clinical immunology to Medical Affairs through a combination of networking, focus, and serendipity.
- **Experience**: Over 9 years in Medical Affairs, including 2.5 years in global roles and extensive work with the Canadian medical team.

CURRENT ROLE

As a Global Medical Director for Pneumococcal Vaccines, Heather:

- Develops and executes global medical strategies, tactics, and materials to support vaccine launches.
- Ensures that strategic actions are insight-driven, addressing the unmet needs of patients and healthcare professionals.
- Collaborates cross-functionally to align global and regional objectives for maximum impact.

HEATHER'S VISION FOR MEDICAL AFFAIRS

Heather envisions Medical Affairs as a driver of innovation, leveraging technology and cross-industry insights to improve patient outcomes. By adopting diverse perspectives and maximizing digital tools, she aims to empower teams and advance healthcare solutions globally.

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KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Medical Strategy and Planning:** Designing and implementing strategies to address medical and scientific priorities.
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AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

- High workload
- Lots of competing priorities, but requires focussed time

BENEFITS

- Lots of contact with external experts
- Interesting and varied work from medical education to evidence generation

ADVICE FOR ASPIRING MEDICAL AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

1. **Stay Curious**: Continuously ask questions and seek new knowledge.
2. **Be Proactive**: Take initiative in your role and look for ways to contribute beyond expectations.
3. **Build and Maintain Networks**: Networking doesn't stop when you land a job—it's a lifelong effort, both internally and externally.
4. **Learn from Other Industries**: Borrowing best practices from other sectors can inspire innovation in medical affairs.

HEATHER'S PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Heather is passionate about collaboration, insight-driven decision-making, and creating strategies that prioritise patients. Her work reflects a commitment to scientific rigor, stakeholder engagement, and delivering meaningful health outcomes.