

Introduction to Healthcare Business Intelligence

Someone once said that “knowledge is power” and this is as true in the pharmaceutical industry as anywhere else. Business Intelligence provides that knowledge and is one of the most important aspects of the pharmaceutical industry. It covers a diverse and dynamic range of career options, all of which are based around the core principle of seeking out and using information in an intelligent way in order to maximise the potential for brands, products, or services. You need to have an enquiring mind, strong analytical skills and great communication skills to succeed but the rewards from working in this industry are fantastic. You may end up working at one of the pharmaceutical companies, playing a vital supporting role to the brand teams as they face the challenge of promoting their products in this highly regulated market. Or you may prefer to work for one of the many market research agencies and consultancies that partner with and provide expertise to the industry. Whichever path you decide to follow - and many people in the industry have spent time on both sides of the fence - you will find the roles challenging, rewarding and a lot of fun.

Pharmaceutical companies

Different companies structure their Business Intelligence departments in different ways but broadly speaking there are two types of role. The first type of role, often called “Business Intelligence Manager” or similar, provides support for all of the Brand Team’s information needs. This can include interpreting sales audit data and other syndicated data sources, commissioning agencies to conduct bespoke market research studies with key customer groups and patients and forecasting future revenue on the basis of sales performance. The second type of role is more specialised and is often called “Sales Analytics Manager” or similar. This focuses more on the interpretation of sales data to provide intelligence for future planning and resourcing. Both roles are vital and both provide fantastic opportunities to get in front of senior management and input into key strategic decisions relatively early in your career. While the majority of those who fill these roles are graduates, companies rarely recruit graduates directly into either of these positions. Most applicants are recruited following a spell in another part of the company, such as the sales force, or from market research agencies and consultancies.

Market Research Agencies and Consultancies

There are countless agencies and consultancies that provide services to the pharmaceutical industry. They range from large multinational organisations to small boutique consultancies so the choice of career path is wide open. There are opportunities to specialise in *qualitative* research, finding out the answers to the “why” questions and focusing on understanding the behaviour and attitudes of customers. Or equally there are opportunities to specialise in *quantitative* research, typically answering the “what” or “how many” questions. Many in the industry like to keep their hand in at both! As well as the technical aspects of the job there is a need for finely honed people skills as our client relationships are at

the heart of the business. As with the client side roles, working for an agency gives you the opportunity to influence vital strategic decisions from an early stage in your career. Most of the large agencies and many of the smaller ones have regular graduate intakes and graduate development programmes. If you have what it takes you can expect to progress quickly up the ranks.

Whichever path you choose you can be sure that you will have early responsibility, you will be challenged, you will input into important strategic decisions and meet inspiring people and you will enjoy a variety and continual learning experience to rival that of most other career options.