

ABSTRACT

Sharing my experience of returning to the industry after my Industrial Placement year and completing the final year of my BSc, the benefits of returning to the same company and therapeutic area. What had my placement year within the programming department at Amgen prepared me for? Additional training sessions I have benefitted from to increase my industry knowledge and an overview of the new challenges faced in my role during my year since returning.

PLACEMENT YEAR EXPERIENCE

From July 2011 to June 2012 I worked as a Biostatistical Programming Placement Student at Amgen in Cambridge, UK. I had the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge I had learnt at university to a professional environment, learn new skills, earn a bit of money and evaluate a potential career in the pharmaceutical industry.

I worked primarily with Programmers and Statisticians across two therapeutic areas on both early and late phase studies. My responsibilities as a study team programmer allowed me to contribute to project deliverables and gain a realistic representation of day-to-day work. I developed a huge amount of transferable technical and soft skills to apply to my final year of university and into the start of my career.



PLACEMENT TO PERMANENT: MY STORY

RETURNING & ONE YEAR ON

After completing my BSc, I chose to return to Amgen based on my experience as a student, the company's values, training investment and focus on my personal development. Returning to the same team and therapeutic area, I began my permanent role already familiar with the team, product and processes. Since then I have continued to face new challenges and have had opportunities to take on lead activities.

PLACEMENT YEAR EXPERIENCE

Steep learning curve to obtain broad industry overview.

3 month induction plan to develop skills & integrate into the team:

- Introduction to industry & clinical development
- Company & departmental processes
- Programming & technical development:
 - External SAS® fundamentals course
 - Online course for SAS certification: Base Programming for SAS 9
 - In-house SAS procedure training with experienced programmers
 - **Lots of SAS programming**

Interaction with Programming & Statistics departments. Manager & programming team located in the same office.



Real study work for ongoing and reporting studies. Experience of database locks & deliveries, lower complexity and looser timelines.

- Programming ADaM datasets
- Source & validation tables, figures & listings
- Creating plots on blinded data for data review committees
- Exploratory analysis programming patient profile plots

Responsible for own programs.

Awareness of Amgen's pipeline, especially of products working on.

Understanding of company and departmental standards through manuals, interaction with manager and lead programmer.

Key learning

Base knowledge in place, development is directional to desired career path.

Training

- PSI's Introduction To Industry Training - 6 x 2-day sessions
- Programming & technical development:
 - In house conferences & departmental meetings
 - External online SAS macro training course
 - Writing personal development plans and annual goals
 - **Lots of on the job training** - learning through experience and close interaction with manager and colleagues

Interaction

Sole study programmer in the Uxbridge office. More meetings and increased interaction with other departments, the global team & off-shore contracting team members.

Daily activities KEY

- Programming
- Study start up
- Assigning & coordinating work
- Training
- Cross functional interaction

Programming activities

Programming study deliverables – responsible for more complex and critical programs with tighter timelines.

- Programming and writing specifications for ADaM datasets including primary efficacy ADaM
- Source & validation tables, more challenging Kaplan-Meier, univariate & multivariate analyses
- Handling ad hoc requests

Accountability

Higher expectation. Responsible for own programs and reviewing and overseeing generation & delivery of all outputs. Creating specifications for others to follow. More involvement in wider study team decisions.

Company awareness

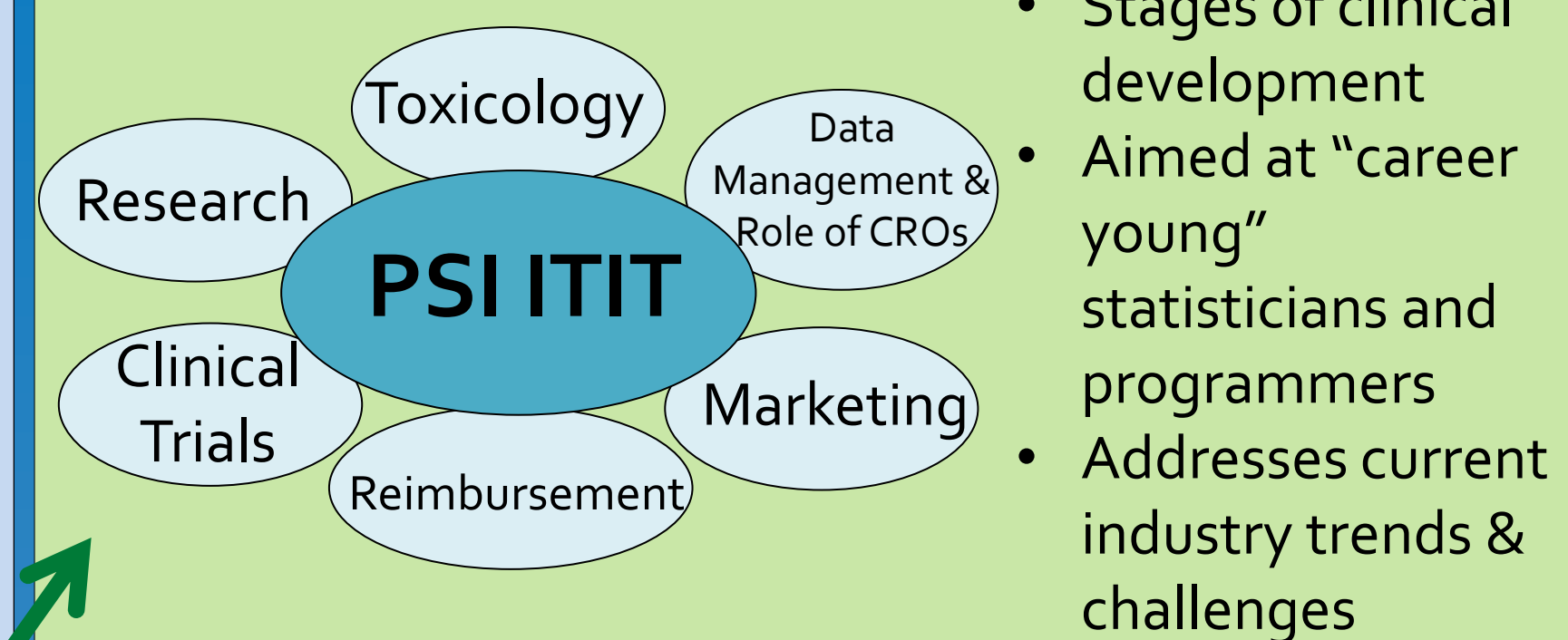
Increased awareness of Amgen's pipeline, share price, internal framework and strategic direction.

Standards & efficiency

Increased awareness of industry standards and tools to automate processes or increase efficiency.

SIMILARITIES & TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

- Company's training investment & developmental commitment
- Continued professional development where placement left off
- Many transferable technical programming and soft skills
- Same therapeutic area, product and study team
- Familiarity with processes, continue to learn about new & updated processes



COMPANY REQUIREMENTS

The success of any industrial placement is dependent on the individual fully committing and integrating into the team and the company having a good structure in place to support their development and offer worthwhile, challenging and diverse work that encourages them to consider a career in the industry.

Requirements from the company:

- Well-structured placement to maximize the student's learning as well as contribution to the team
- Diverse work representative of a permanent employment
- Introductory period planned before the student starts
- Development plan in place for evidence of achievements
- Manager's direct involvement and support
- Interaction with numerous members of the organization

Gains for the company:

- Adds energy to the environment & encourages collaboration
- Benefit from the work produced throughout the year
- Potential that the student may return

CONCLUSION

My professional placement offered me a year's experience and a foot in the door of the industry which I have no doubt would have been much harder without having had that year. I had not anticipated how much I could gain in technical and developmental skills, life experience, and being able to 'try out' an industry before committing to that path. More specifically I could evaluate whether Amgen would be a company I would like to work for permanently.

I gained so much that has set me up for a professional role within programming at Amgen, however the skills obtained I believe would have been transferable to many different career paths.