

Career Spotlight: From Academia to the Bioscience / Biotech Industry

Notes from a social scientist

Lea Lahnstein, General Electric Healthcare
KCL PhD student 2009 - 2012

(Views completely my own!)

A little bit about me:

There's more than one way to skin a cat!

Since 2015: GE Healthcare, global HQ

Working on the Chief Technology Officer's direct staff on Technology, Research and Medical Solutions

2012 – 2014 Indivumed / IndivuTest GmbH, Hamburg

Responsible for the planning and implementation of projects to introduce individualised cancer therapy to the German healthcare system and make it commercially competitive:

2009 – 2012 Centre for Biomedicine and Society (CBAS), King's College London

PhD *Enacting Biobanks: Governance as Scientific and Ethical Practice*: Conducted fieldwork with scientists and policy-makers through interviews and participant observation; · Co-produced a report for the Austrian Ministry of Health on direct-to-consumer genome testing; Unpacked and presented practices of biobanking (handling of biological data and samples) and the direction of cutting-edge biomedical research and development

2006 – 2009 Institute for Science, Innovation and Society, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

MLitt on the international regulation of bioscience: Training in quantitative and advanced qualitative research methods; science and technology studies; risk theories

2005 – 2006 London School of Economics and Political Science: MSc Biomedicine, Bioscience and Society

2002 – 2005 University of Oxford: MA Human Sciences

1990 – 2002 International School of Hamburg: International Baccalaureate

Why did I decide to leave academia and work in industry for a while?

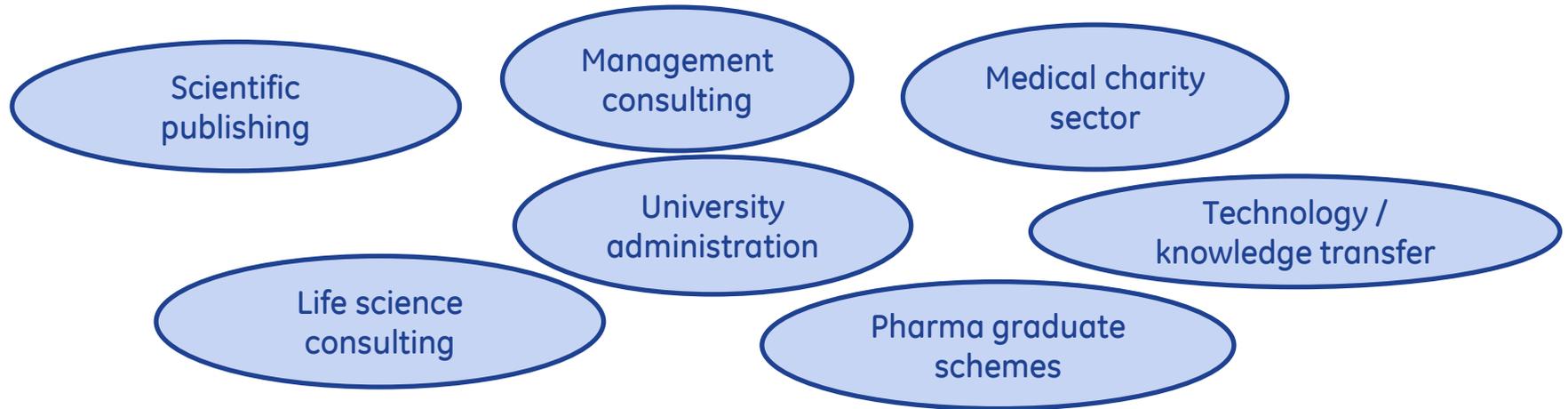
The transition into a career within the bioscience – and now medical devices – industry was a deliberate next step to complete the picture. Throughout, I have learnt not to be intimidated by changes in direction, discrepancies in knowledge and experience or institutional boundaries, because all of these are already intrinsic to the practices of the biosciences.

- Much of the interesting research, innovation and development happens in industry. To really understand the life sciences meant making myself familiar with this world.
- Industry often works very closely with academia anyhow

Go for it!

Even if you feel outside of your comfort zone

Huge range of jobs I have been rejected from (partly) because not a bench scientist:



There is the perception in industry that science skills are very transferable into other roles because they make you :

- ✓ A valuable expert
- ✓ A gatekeeper
- ✓ A good emissary to the scientific community

So consider not just science jobs but also jobs where one needs to deal with scientists

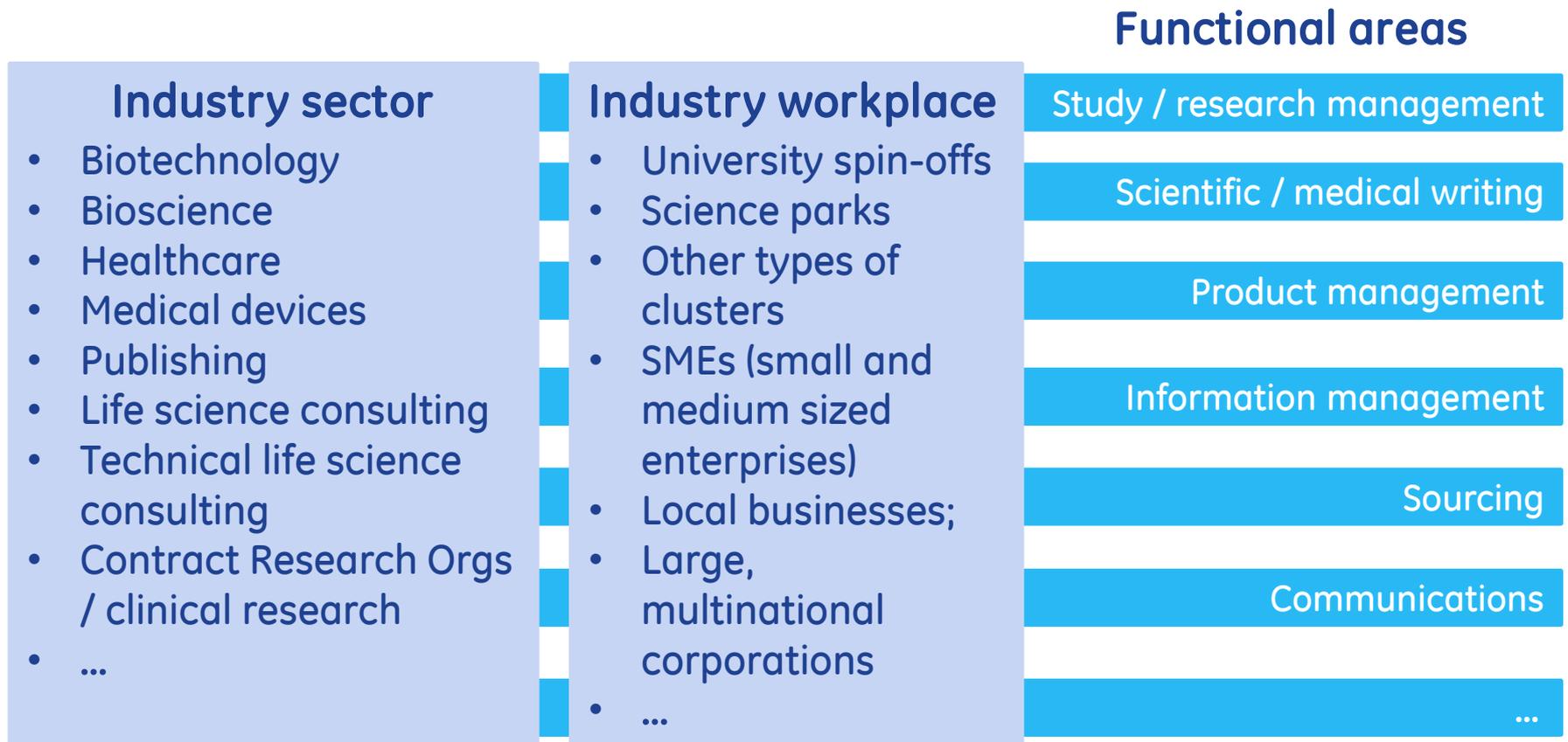
You can take small, incremental steps

My example

1. PhD on the practices of biobanking through ethnographic interviews with a diverse range of bioscientists
2. First job in a young SME renowned for its tumour tissue bank and its preclinical research services in translational, targeted cancer medicine (www.indivumed.com)
3. Second job (since 2015): GE Healthcare, one of the largest and most important medical technology company

The science industry is diverse!

Find your place in the ecosystem...



Skills from academia: What to take on and what to ditch

Skills you can transfer

- Reaching out and forging your own network
- Being open minded

In a large company like GE:

- Finding your niche: where can you contribute and what really drives you?

New attitudes to adopt

- Stop questioning yourself all the time, especially in formal meetings!
- Learn to deal with plurality! Be prepared for diversity that you might not have been exposed to in a research lab.

A little bit about GE Healthcare

- \$18 billion: global business unit of General Electric
- 46,000 employees worldwide
- Core strengths in medical imaging, biosciences and information technologies

The good thing is that GE Healthcare reflects aforementioned diversity: a decision to apply to GE does not mean ring-fencing yourself forever!

<http://www.ge.com/careers/opportunities>

→ The GE Job portal lets you look for jobs across ALL of GE businesses (not just GE Healthcare), globally.

From the GE Healthcare Careers Pages

www.ge.com/careers

Find Your Fit with a Career at GE Healthcare

We actively recruit for positions in all job functions. While we feel all our jobs can lead to rewarding careers, we have a few areas that set us apart; where we do it *differently*, not just better, at GE Healthcare:

Engineering and Software Engineering

Life Sciences

Quality, Regulatory and Medical

Sales

Services

- Biomedical Technician

- Field Services Engineering

Other

GE Healthcare Career Guide: www.ge.com/careers/career-guide

Don't be discouraged by job hunting: It's a fine line!

Less than a year ago, I came into the KCL Careers Service as a job hunter seeking to change jobs and move back to London. This was right after an unsuccessful interview for a job that I was hugely disappointed not to have landed. Your fortunes, and how you are perceived, can change quickly! It can depend a lot about the situation, and meeting the right person.

Don't give up!

I am happy to talk to you personally
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- Experience of working in a large versus a small company
- Experience of changing from the first job after a PhD into a second job, the “next step”
- Particulars about GE Healthcare
- Other questions you may have about this hand-out