



CHECKLIST

CAREER PLAN

MOTIVATION

SUCCESS

# Career planning: A **complete guide** to designing your Medical Sales career



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# INTRODUCTION

Having a clear plan in place for achieving your medical sales career goals is one of the most important things you can do as a medical sales employee. Your career plan is the compass you'll use to guide you toward the best-suited roles for your skills and interests.

Working out how to design your medical sales career isn't just something you'll do when you're fresh out of college or finished with your education. The best industry leaders frequently refresh and update their strategies based on their changing priorities, deeper evaluations of the marketplace, and a growing understanding of their sector.

Indeed, many people have begun making changes to their career plans in recent years, inspired by the Great Resignation and the introduction of new employment opportunities in a range of medical sales fields.

Some employees are now actively seeking more flexible work schedules, while others are drawn to evolving job roles that weren't available when they first entered the market. So, how do you ensure you're designing an effective strategy for your future in the medical sales space?

Today, we will explore the benefits of having a solid career plan and how you can build the ultimate map toward success in your industry.

**Thanks,  
The Team at Advance Recruitment**

# What is a Career Plan?

The medical sales landscape is brimming with various opportunities for different professionals. How you experience this industry will depend on the skills you develop, your personal values, and your unique interests.

A career plan is how you ensure you're designing your step-by-step journey through the medical sales space according to your needs and your future personal and professional goals.

Career plans provide employees with steps to accomplish what they want while they excel professionally. For instance, if you're planning on becoming the leader of a medical sales team, you'll need to design how you will enter the industry, develop both functional and leadership skills, and pursue lateral moves or promotions to achieve what you want.

Used correctly, a career plan can effectively guide you through finding your first job, switching to new careers, and choosing the right employer to work for. These tools can also come in handy when you're working with a [specialist medical sales recruitment company](#) by giving them an insight into where you want your role to take you in the years ahead.

## Why Are Career Plans Critical?

Career plans keep us on track towards the professional outcomes we most want to achieve. According to a recent [article from Indeed](#), people spend around a third of their waking hours at work, yet over a third of people don't feel happy in their careers.

While there are various reasons you may be unsatisfied with your medical sales role, one of the most common is that you may have chosen a position which isn't pushing you towards your goals. Failing to plan what you want to accomplish in your career means you move into new jobs with no real direction, focus, or purpose. This could mean you end up "hopping" between jobs more frequently in search of the right experience.

Current studies suggest most people will have anywhere up to fifteen jobs during their lifetime. Having a career plan helps you identify the fields you most want to pursue in your industry and set long-term objectives so you can constantly progress towards success. The right plan will keep you organised and informed, so you can make intelligent decisions about which classes to take, what internships to consider, and ultimately, which positions to apply for next.

Career plans also boost your chances of effectively applying for and getting the roles you want. Not only do they provide useful guidance to your medical sales recruitment company, but they can also help you to answer questions in interviews about your goals and expectations.

## When Do You Need a Career Plan?

Designing your career is something you'll need to do consistently throughout your professional life. After you've achieved your qualifications, you'll need an initial plan to help you determine which roles you want to pursue first and where you want these jobs to take you.

At this early stage, it is useful to have an informal conversation with your specialist medical sales recruiter, who can guide you on your next steps.

When you update your career, you'll need your career plan to help you determine whether it's best to apply for a promotion, look for a new role, or change jobs completely.

Throughout your life, you'll regularly return to your career plan and refresh your strategy by reconsidering your current priorities, skills, and experiences.

## How to Start Planning Your Medical Sales Career Path

Designing your entire medical sales career can seem like a daunting prospect at first. The important thing to remember is that your current career plan isn't set in stone. You can always make changes in the future if you discover you're moving in the wrong direction.

In fact, one study in 2018 found that around a third of all Americans completely changed fields when moving from one role to the next after college, a similar pattern for many continents across the globe.

When starting your medical sales career plan, focus on where you stand and what you hope to achieve based on your current situation. Here are some steps to get you started. You can use the same guidance when creating new career plans in the future or updating your existing strategy.



## Step 1: List Your Current Skills

Where you start your career path will depend on your medical sales skills. Employers in the medical sales industry will look for different credentials, knowledge, and characteristics for each role they want to fill. Start by listing all of your talents that might benefit your career.

During this step, it's important to think about hard and soft skills. Your hard skills are the technical talents related to medical sales roles. They might include the ability to use certain software or a specific degree or qualification in a related topic.

Your soft skills are the more versatile, transferrable skills that can apply to various jobs. For instance, you might be an excellent communicator, brilliant at organising your time or have experience leading other teams.



## Step 2: Consider Your Industry Experience

Experience and skills often go hand-in-hand when planning the next move in your medical sales career. If you're fresh out of university or college or haven't had any roles related to your chosen industry before, you will likely need to start with an entry-level position.

Search for job opportunities for people who are just beginning to grow in the medical sales space, and focus on finding employers who can help to enhance your knowledge with training.

If you've already started your medical sales career and are ready to take the next step, your existing experience will determine what kinds of roles you can apply for. If you already have experience leading a medical sales team, then you might be able to apply for a manager role or more senior positions.

Consider looking at the job descriptions posted by companies in your industry to determine what kind of experience and skills you'll need to apply effectively for each role.

## Step 3: Assess Your Personal Values

Once you've got a clear view of your skills and the opportunities they match, you can start to think about the other factors influencing how satisfied you might feel in a role. If you haven't determined a specific "long-term goal" for your career yet, consider looking at the market and asking yourself what kind of roles most appeal to you.

Ask yourself what you like doing, what fields of the medical sales space you're most interested in, and which directions offer the most benefits. Outline the key values you will focus on when searching for roles. For instance, 58% of employees say professional development contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction. Other points to consider include:

- **Work/life balance:** How important is it for you to have a job that contributes to a good work/life balance? Do you need to look into flexible, remote, or hybrid roles?
- **Purpose and meaning:** Which role will give you a deeper sense of purpose? How will you ensure you feel proud of what you're doing?
- **Company culture:** Is there any particular culture you want to pursue when looking into new roles? Do you want a company to show high diversity, ethics, and inclusion?

## Step 4: Think Long-Term

While you can always consider changing your career path in the future, it's important to take a long-term approach when deciding which roles you want to pursue. The medical sales landscape is extremely short on skills at this time, which has prompted a lot of employers to offer higher remuneration and benefits to attract more candidates.

For some medical sales employees, it might be tempting to jump rapidly from one career to the next in search of more money. However, investing in a short-term cash injection now might not be as beneficial as planning what you can achieve in the long term.

Take the time to plan out what you really want to accomplish, and evaluate how each job opportunity will help you progress towards your end goal. For instance, taking a lower-paid role or a lateral move at the same salary right now with a host of learning opportunities could make it easier to move into a high-end position later in your career.

# Designing your Medical Sales Career with SMART Goals

A big part of effectively designing and planning your medical sales career is setting the right goals. Your goals will help you map your career journey and measure your progress over time. They're also an important tool for maintaining high levels of motivation.

Remember, getting the perfect medical sales job can take several years with multiple steps. You can't jump straight from a college education to a role on the C-Suite of your favourite company.

SMART goals will help you see how each step you take in your journey is closer to the correct outcomes. A SMART goal should be:

- **Specific:** Be detailed about what each step in your career path should look like. For instance, you might want to ensure you're working for a specific medical sales company with a strong focus on training, education, and innovation.
- **Measurable:** Choosing a goal you can quantify makes it easier to track your progress. For instance, if you want to pursue a position as a manager, you might want to ensure you've proven your leadership skills in 5 scenarios before asking for a promotion.
- **Attainable:** Set goals you can reasonably achieve. For instance, if you're in an entry-level medical sales position today, it's not reasonable to assume you can apply for a managerial role tomorrow. You'll need to develop your soft and hard skills first and prove your abilities to any potential employer.
- **Relevant:** Think about how each of your goals will benefit you. For example, if your ultimate goal is to have a high-paying job in a specific medical sales field, you would start with other roles related to the same space.
- **Time-based:** Applying certain deadlines to when you want to accomplish various things in your career path will help to keep you on track. For instance, you might challenge yourself to get your degree within a certain number of years and ask for a promotion so many years after you start your new role.



## 2. Allow for Independence and Autonomy

Gen Zers are ambitious individuals who like having their own independence. Although they appreciate feedback and guidance from leaders, they also want the room to explore their own strategies and work how they feel most comfortable. This means medical device leaders will need to give their Gen Z employees ownership over their projects.

Allowing team members to choose their schedules or suggest their methods of tackling projects will make them feel more respected and engaged in their work. Gen Z should have access to plenty of tools for independent research and opportunities to share their thoughts and insights with leadership and other team members regularly.

Start by defining a long-term goal for your career. Picture where you want to be when you reach retirement age and what you'd like to have accomplished. Ask yourself what the "ideal" job would be for you, then consider the steps you'll need to take to move from where you are now to where you'd most like to be.



Write down your goals, followed by specific actions outlining your next moves. For instance, your plan might look like this:

- Finish degree within three years
- Apply for entry-level medical sales role with a specific medical device company or in a specific field
- Consider applying for a promotion within two years
- Look into medical sales management positions within four years

One study found 76% of the participants who wrote down their goals, made regular progress reports, and shared their ambitions with a friend achieved their desired outcomes.



# Making Progress in your Career Plan: Skill Development

Once you have a map of steps leading towards your desired career goal, it's time to start thinking about how you can accelerate towards the right roles. Typically, this will involve working on your current skill set and expanding your education in the medical sales landscape.

For each new role, you want to pursue, examine the job description and responsibilities of an employee in that position. This will give you a clear view of which technical and soft skills you need to develop and any experience you might need to gain along the way.

For instance, if you want to become a CTO for your medical device company, you may need to develop your existing industry knowledge while also learning how to use certain digital tools. Remember, your soft skills will be essential in determining how likely you are to get a new job. As you progress through each position, dedicate time to developing the following skills:

- **Communication:** Strong communication skills are a must-have for any industry and position. You'll need to be able to interpret and relay information clearly and succinctly across various channels, from email to voice and instant message.
- **Collaboration:** Learning to work effectively with other team members is crucial to success in any career. Not only will the ability to work as part of a team make you more appealing to an employer, but it can also help you make connections that open the door to new opportunities.
- **Problem-solving:** Every medical sales company can encounter challenges from time to time. To prove yourself as a valuable employee, learn how to respond to issues with creative problem-solving techniques. Practice looking at issues from different angles and know when and how to take the initiative when handling a problem.
- **Organisation:** Good organisational skills will ensure you can manage your schedule effectively in any role and stay on top of deadlines. This will show employers that you're reliable, trustworthy, and capable of taking on new responsibilities. Learn how to use your time, plan projects, and keep track of your to-do list.
- **Work ethic:** When designing your medical sales career, it's important to make sure you're constantly committed to demonstrating a good work ethic. Employers will always value determination, dedication, and commitment from their staff. Treat it with passion and respect, even if a job is just a step toward your desired role.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Learning to connect with others effectively is important as you work towards your ideal medical sales role. It will improve your relationships with employers and team members and also play a crucial role in building your network. The people you connect with throughout your industry will help you discover new opportunities that might help you reach your goals.
- **Business acumen:** The further you progress through your medical sales career, the more your employers expect you to know about the industry and how it works. Make sure you understand how each business you work for operates, and align yourself with your employer's values.

# The Value of Developing Transferrable Skills

The path to your perfect career won't always be straightforward. As you move towards your ideal medical sales role, you may need to make lateral moves throughout your industry to develop other transferrable skills. These abilities will also come in handy if you decide later in your career that you want to make a more significant change to your career.

Transferrable skills are hard and soft professional capabilities that can be applied to multiple industries, jobs, and opportunities. One survey on Jobsite found that "general professional skills" are one of the top things 41% of recruiters look for in a candidate.

If you feel like you're not making enough progress in your current role, consider looking into other positions which will help you to develop the following skills:

- **Project Management:** Project management skills are a must-have in many high-level medical sales roles. It involves being able to plan, control, and execute work related to a specific project in alignment with various stakeholders. Suppose your current position doesn't allow you to take charge of many projects. In that case, it might be difficult to develop these skills so you can move into a managerial or leadership position. Try looking for ways to take charge in other jobs.
- **Customer service skills:** Even if your ideal role is unlikely to bring you face-to-face with customers and clients frequently, it's important to know how to interact with the ideal customer of your chosen business. Gaining customer service experience, even in an entry-level role unrelated to your industry, can make you more appealing to hiring managers in search of a candidate with a strong focus on customer experience.
- **Leadership:** Often, progressing in a medical sales career will mean taking on more responsibilities. Higher-paying and more demanding jobs come with a need for exceptional leadership skills. Consider volunteering for projects which allow you to develop your leadership abilities, such as managing a specific team or taking the lead on a task. You could even look into volunteer positions outside your current role to help you build leadership skills.
- **Research and analysis:** Companies need to make intelligent decisions about evolving and progressing based on the information they gather about their industry. Knowing how to research relevant topics and present them to shareholders in your business makes you a more valuable employee. Research and analysis can also help you better understand your industry, making more intelligent decisions as a leader.
- **Writing:** Writing might not seem like an important skill at first, but it's likely to apply to virtually every medical sales job you pursue. Whether you're crafting email correspondence, creating a report for a stakeholder, or designing a project plan, you'll need to know how to convey your thoughts.

# How to Take the Next Step in your Career Path

Once you've established your short-term and long-term medical sales career goals, developed the skills necessary to progress in your industry, and assessed the market, you can consider taking the next step in your career path. However, before you jump into applying for a new job or requesting a promotion, there are a few things you can do to improve your chances of success:

## 1. Work on Your Personal Brand

Many employers are beginning to take personal branding more seriously when considering which candidates they should add to their teams. Around 91% of all employers already use social media as part of their hiring process. Many recruiters and potential hiring managers will research you online before deciding whether to offer you an interview.

As you work on your career journey, ensure you're building an eye-catching and impressive brand. This means listing your experiences and accomplishments on LinkedIn, ensuring you have a professional image on all public social platforms, and networking with the right people. You may even want to create a personal website or portfolio to showcase your skills, background, and previous experiences.

## 2. Update Your CV/Resume and Cover Letter

As you add new skills and experiences to your repertoire, make sure you draw attention to them in your CV/Resume and cover letter. Your CV/Resume should always include the most relevant information about your education and previous roles for the job you will be applying for.



Customise your CV/Resume and cover letter whenever you're looking to move roles to ensure they highlight the most important talents and accomplishments to your potential employer. Use your previous experiences as examples of how you can deliver each business's desired results.

In the cover letter, make sure you specifically discuss what makes you the right candidate for this specific role. Use the job description posted by your intended medical sales employer to guide you.

### 3. Work With a Professional Medical Sales Recruitment Team

One of the easiest ways to ensure you can achieve your medical sales career goals is to work with a recruitment expert. A specialist medical sales recruitment company can help you to find the right roles for each goal you set for your professional future. They'll help you track down job opportunities you might not be able to find on your own and provide insights on how you can impress each potential employer.

A professional recruitment team will ensure you don't have to "settle" for roles which don't adhere to the career journey you've designed. You can even share your career plan with your medical sales recruitment company and ask for their insights on which next steps you need to take.

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#### About Advance Recruitment

Advance Recruitment is a specialist medtech recruitment agency with a focus on filling commercial positions such as sales, marketing and clinical training. Founded in 1997, we are the longest established recruitment agency in our sector. Based in Manchester, our in depth knowledge of the medtech sector allows us to help our clients attract the brightest talent and enables our candidates to build exciting and fulfilling careers. We work with everyone from large, blue-chip multinational companies to SMEs and start up organisations.

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# TESTIMONIALS



I first came across Karen from Advance Recruitment some years ago when I was building a sales team, but since that time she has remained in touch and has shown interest in my own personal career journey. Therefore, when approached to consider a new position, my prior knowledge and relationship with her were the key factors in me investing the time to listen to her.

Karen truly understood my drivers and only put opportunities forward that matched these, thus finding me an exciting new role that I didn't even know I was looking for!

Karen takes a personal interest without being intrusive, she also takes a very honest and direct feedback approach which is much appreciated from a recruitment partner - Shona

Advance Recruitment was so helpful and efficient with finding my current role and assisting me through my interview/employment process. Kept me up to date throughout the whole process and I always felt like they acted as my advocate. Highly recommend, I am now in a job that I love with a much better work life balance - Sophie

After deciding on a change of career Advance Recruitment was instrumental in helping me achieve my aims. Liv was extremely friendly and helpful during my search for the perfect job in medical device sales.

Liv provided me with a wealth of opportunities with a variety of exciting companies in the medical field and gave me great tips and advice prior to each interview. Without a doubt it would have been much more difficult to make the jump into medical sales without her help! - Samuel

Liv was extremely supportive throughout the whole process I worked with her and I couldn't fault anything at all. She was very supportive from the initial phone call and went above and beyond until I secured my current role. I couldn't recommend Liv enough for anyone wanting to advance their career in medical sales! - Harinder

