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# Careers in the Pharmaceutical Industry

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**“The big secret in life is that there is no big secret. Whatever your goal, you can get there if you’re willing to work.”**

*Oprah Winfrey*

**Can you name some key job responsibilities of a Drug Information professional?**

# Role of Drug Information in the Pharma Industry

- **Voice** of company (handle all medical related inquiries for the organization)
- Is the only area within the company able to handle inquiries that are “**off label**” in nature if they are received in an “**unsolicited**” means (ie. customer asks the question of their own “free” will) – **regulated industry**
- Regardless of size the company, Drug Information operates using the principles of a **call centre** (ie. very process driven through use of call flow algorithms)
- In Canada required to offer services in both **English** and **French** at a medical, scientific level
- Considered part of **core infrastructure** to support various functions of the business (medical and scientific support)
- Provides a **balanced service** that takes into account both the needs of the external customer and the priorities of the business (ie. level of service targeted)

# Typical career backgrounds in Drug Information

- Pharmacists (Bachelor degree and Pharm D)
- Bachelor degree in nursing
- Bachelor degree in pharmacology
- PhD (Science based)

# Drug Information professionals

- Answer **medical inquiries** from health care professionals and members of the public on marketed or investigational products
- Create and maintain **standard medical information responses** to frequently asked questions on targeted marketed products
  - Conduct medical literature searches
  - Interpret the results and summarize the relevant articles using an “evidenced based medicine” approach
  - Extract when appropriate available internal data to include in the medical response
- Provide **medical expertise** and **scientific support** to the “business”
  - Review selected promotional material for scientific accuracy and from a “health care professionals” perspective
  - Review competitor product literature
  - Review and provide input on the product monograph for regulatory filings
  - Create and deliver messaging to external health care professionals when medical/supply/media related issues arise

# So then what does the manager do?

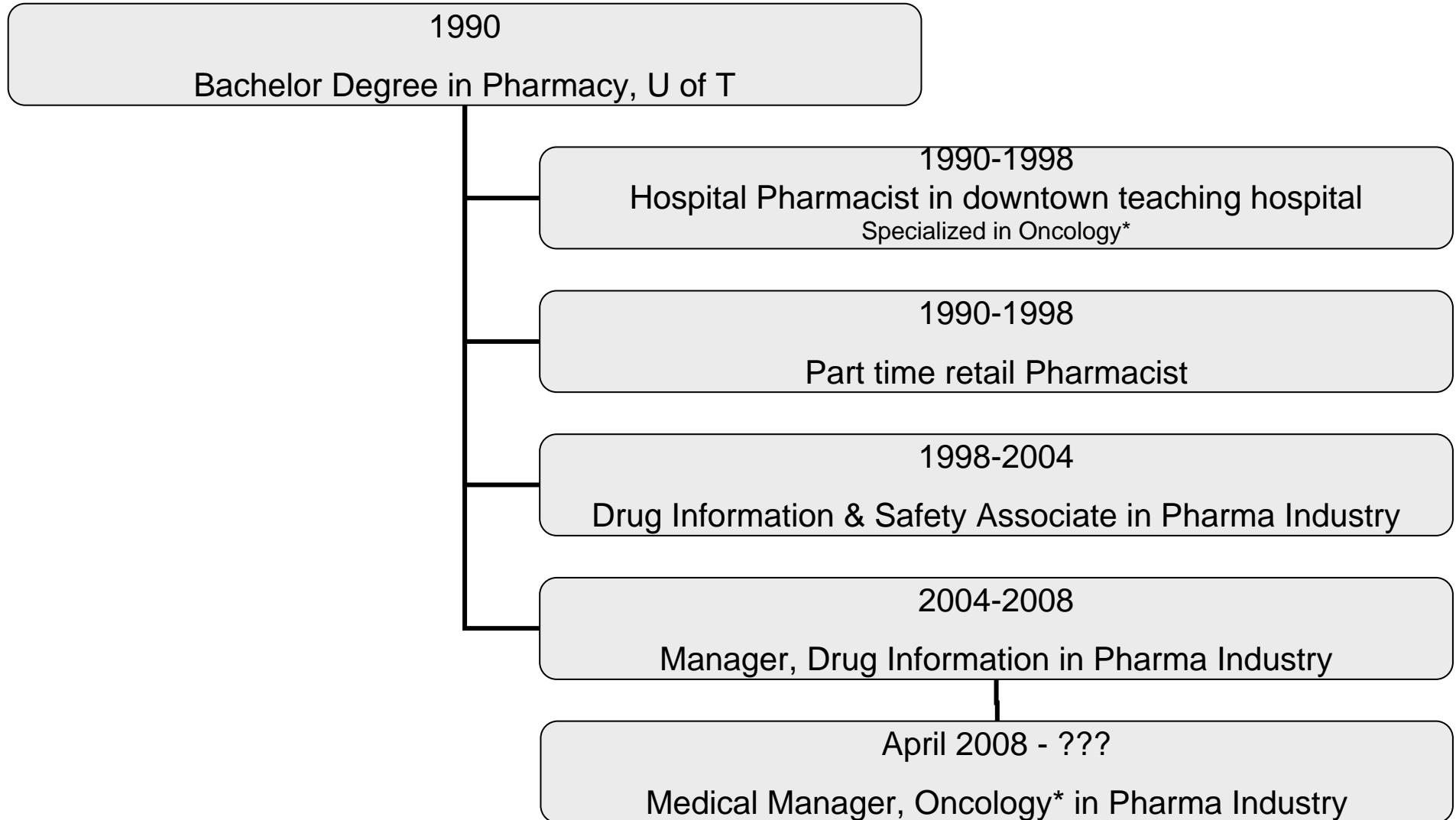
- Ongoing **coaching** and **mentoring** of staff of 5 Drug Information Associates and 2 Administrative support staff
- Accountable for mid year and annual **performance reviews**
  - monthly one-one meetings
  - establishment of personal goals and objectives
  - establishment of personal career development plans (short term and long term)
- Represent the department **corporately** through participation in corporate initiatives, taskforces, projects, ongoing networking and interface with the local organization and relevant functional areas globally
- Stay informed on the **changing industry trends** that will impact the team. Embrace new opportunities (eg. Ongoing challenge to attract bilingual scientific professionals to Ontario based companies) and continually planning for the future
- Accountable for the **operational** activities of the department (ie. budgeting, resource allocation, contracts, etc.)

# Challenging Opportunities in my role

- Both “routine” and “non routine” elements to the job (brings variety)
- Exposure to elements of the business side while still able to work in a “medically” thriving environment
- Cross functional projects and corporate initiatives
- Management of people allows the opportunity to grow and develop yourself and others (not for everyone)
- Continued learning translates to improving personal and company performance
- Always challenging the status quo
- Work life balance (don't confuse with working 9-5)



# Career Path 1990 and beyond.....



# Don't underestimate the soft skills.....



# What can make you stand out?

- Academics gets your resume **CONSIDERED**
- Work experience, volunteer work, extracurricular activities gets you an **INTERVIEW**
- Making an impression amongst many gets you in the **DOOR** with a job
  - Do **research** on the company
  - Demonstrate **eagerness**
  - Communication
    - Be well spoken – answer with **professionalism**
    - **Body language**
  - Be prepared to **ask questions**
  - “**Sell**” yourself
- Follow up with a **thank you letter** to the interviewers

**In closing.....**

**“My philosophy is that not only are you responsible for your life, but doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment.”**

***Oprah Winfrey***

**“No matter how good you get you can always get better and that’s the exciting part.”**

***Tiger Woods***

**BELIEVE and you will ACHIEVE**