

## A Pharmaceutical Sales Representative



Mr. David Knox  
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### **How would you describe the working atmosphere and the attitudes of people with whom you work?**

The work atmosphere is really pressured. It can be intimidating when starting out, because you are working with doctors who feel that their jobs are more important than yours. However, with time and persistence, you are able to gain the trust and confidence of the people in the field. You have to prove to the doctors that you are capable and know what you are talking about. The work atmosphere does allow for flexible hours. You can set your own appointments; however, the job is demanding and deadlines and commitments have to be met.

### **Is there any flexibility related to dress, work hours, vacations, schedules and places of residence?**

There is a lot of flexibility in the workplace. Your dress must be presentable and stylish. How you dress shows the office staff how you handle and project your product. Look good and make a sale. Whatever you put into the job that is what you will get out of it. Vacation time is also flexible. A request should be made a month in advance. Bonus trips can be obtained by participating in company contests and promotions for top sellers within the company. Routine schedules are made and should be checked on each week. Hours are flexible, but the more contact you make with clients, the better the chances of promoting your product and making a sale. Your place of residence is also flexible as long as it is within the territory that you are responsible for. It makes it easier to keep in contact with buyers. Also some traveling is necessary so being centrally located would be a big advantage to you.

### **How did you prepare for this work? If you were entering this career today, what steps would you take in preparation?**

You must have a four year degree. It really doesn't matter what your major is; however, taking classes in marketing and sales would be very helpful. The more experience you have in sales, the better. Also, communication and people skills are very important. Knowing how to talk and react in different situations is important in learning how to deal with people.

**Does your work relate to any studies or experiences you had in college?**

Unfortunately, no they do not. I had a different major and got an opportunity to try sales and found my niche. If I had to do it over, I would have put more emphasis on sales, marketing, speech, people skills and ways to communicate. I have learned through experience and hard work. However, my time at West Virginia State College gave me the confidence I needed to enter my line of work.

**What work related values are most important to you in sales?**

I really like meeting new people. I like the flexibility of hours and working at my own pace. You have to be a go-getter, because it is very competitive field of work.

**Are you optimistic about the company's future and your future with the company?**

Abbott Pharmaceuticals was just ranked as a top 10 company. They seem to be stable and secure. The company has not had a lay-off in 100 years. I feel that my future with the company is stable at this time with room for advancement.

**What are some of the advantages of a career in pharmaceutical sales?**

The advantages are; flexible hours, meeting new people, learning something new daily, travel with work and social events, good salary and perks such as participating in golf tournaments, tickets to sporting events, promotional gifts, bonuses etc.

**What are some of the disadvantages of a career in pharmaceutical sales?**

The disadvantages are; traveling from state to state and being away from your family, and the arrogance of some customers.

**What educational skills and training would you suggest for this line of work? Would part-time work experience help to prepare for a job in sales**

Anything that you could do to promote your communication skills and people skills would be beneficial in completing your degree and landing a job in this field. Get a four year degree and take as many business classes as you can, especially in sales and marketing. There are techniques that you can use that will help you project the image you will need to not only sell yourself, but sell the product you are promoting. Also, any outside sales work experiences will be helpful to let you practice good communication and people skills.

**What is the salary range for a job in pharmaceutical sales and related fields?**

Depending on work experiences and degrees, one could expect to start out at \$65,000. Some companies will have quarterly bonuses, as well as yearly bonuses. Pharmaceutical companies are able to give a company car to transport drugs and equipment needed for training and sales. A complete benefits package is offered with full coverage for the employee and family. Companies

will also offer an incentive for obtaining a master's degree. Salaries can vary from company to company; it is very competitive!

*Interviewed by Nate Lancaster for a College 101 assignment on 05/02.*