



Workshops & Exhibitions Organiser

Jan Copeland

In my current role I am part of the team that is responsible for the co-ordination of logistics for the EBI training programme, both in-house and overseas. This involves managing use of the IT training room, organising travel, finances, equipment maintenance, accommodation for course delegates and catering. I also handle our participation in around four – six exhibitions a year, making sure that our exhibition equipment is ordered and that our display material arrives on time. Co-ordinating the organisation of our training courses and exhibition events also includes highlighting opportunities, negotiating with potential hosts and working closely with my colleagues involved in scientific training and outreach.

Length of time in the post

Two years (with a previous six years as Group Administrator/Outreach Co-ordinator).

Education and other qualifications

Good school examination results. I also have an AMSPAR (The Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists) Diploma, BTEC (Business And Technology Education Council) National Certificate in Business and a BTEC Advanced Certificate in Hospitality Management.

An overview of your career path before joining the EBI

I spent six years working for the Protein Structure (now PDBe) group at the EBI where I managed the group administration and began working on outreach activities by developing our original Roadshow programme. Prior to this I worked for Ciba Specialty Chemicals as PA (personal assistant) to the worldwide Head of Sales & Marketing. Earlier in my career I worked as a PA for a company who provided specialist communication tools to the offshore oil and gas industry, and as a PA in the medical-legal department of a healthcare company in London. My first job was at St Bartholomew's Hospital, Smithfield, London as a secretary for a consultant and his senior registrars.

What attracted you to this role?

I saw it as an opportunity to continue developing my skills and experience.

Describe a 'typical' working day

There isn't a typical day as such but I see my daily function as supporting each training or exhibition event as it develops from a proposal to a successful event. This involves resolving any problems that may arise, responding to both EBI staff and customer concerns to make sure that everything runs smoothly for everyone involved.

What is the best thing about your job?

The role is so varied I never know what's coming next, which is why I enjoy it so much. I thrive on challenge and unpredictability.

Why do you enjoy working at the EBI?

The EBI is international and the working environment is relaxed but focused. The campus has a lot to offer in term of sport and leisure facilities.

Describe the most challenging tasks that you face in your job?

During my time at the EBI, the institute has grown and evolved. This has presented many positive opportunities including having to adapt to different requirements and roles. The challenge that I am enjoying at the moment is moving forward to build on the foundation that has been laid down over the last two years as our training programme has become established and setting up a robust system to support in the future.

What advice would you give to someone applying to a similar role?

An ability to deal with many tasks simultaneously is a must, as is the ability to accept growth and new developments in a field of continuously shifting priorities. A steady, responsible personality and the ability to think on your feet all play a part in handling my role effectively. ●

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