HOW TO... PROMOTE BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

Dan Nimmo, IBMS Communications Manager, reflects on the successes of the past year, highlights some of the plans for 2019 and discusses how members play the biggest part in promoting biomedical science.

One of the key themes of the IBMS's current strategy is to raise the profile of biomedical science. We're pleased with the progress that has been made, but recognise there is much more work for us to do. With your help we're aiming for 2019 to be our busiest and most successful year yet.

Over the past 12 months we have been working with you to promote your work and research, public engagement activities and events, and award nominations and success stories, all the while highlighting the vital role you play in healthcare. You often make this easy for us, winning awards and honours that are featured on TV and radio, and in local and national news – so thanks for all you already do.

We've also reached a wider audience through our social media channels, with followers and engagement increasing month on month. Our largest impact was made through our second annual Biomedical Science Day, with posts using the hashtags #BiomedicalScienceDay and #AtTheHeartOfHealthcare receiving more than 5 million impressions and our short animated video gaining over 200,000 views.

In 2019 we will be releasing a series of animated sample journey videos with accompanying leaflets and posters for the public explaining what happens to their blood, urine and tissue samples; creating engaging and fun activities and resources for children in primary and secondary schools focused on biomedical science and its role in healthcare; and running our 3rd Biomedical Science Day celebrations with more resources that will enable more members to get involved.

We're sponsoring Biomedical Scientist of the Year at the Advancing Healthcare Awards and the early-career research scientists' poster competition for STEM for Britain, as well as introducing Champion of Biomedical Science awards to our region and branches network (alongside our current awards, bursaries and prizes). Also, we'll continue to reach out to other healthcare organisations and charities to help promote their awareness events and to highlight where biomedical science is involved in the issues at hand.

This year, in order to continue to increase public awareness of the profession, we're asking you to help and get involved. There are lots of ways of supporting us: engaging with our campaigns on social media, taking part in public engagement, keeping us informed of news stories and events, or contacting the media to generate interest in biomedical science.

Share and engage online

Our social media accounts – Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube – continue to grow. If you are not following us already, please give us a follow and help us to promote our posts by commenting, liking and sharing. Twice a day, we create positive and engaging content, highlight relevant news stories and IBMS comment, and promote the profession and our members' news.

We also hold fun monthly competitions for people to get involved in and, on the first Wednesday of every month, we run #IBMSChat on Twitter to encourage and guide other members, trainees and students with any questions they have about the profession or our services. We are very grateful to all our members who take part in the conversation on Twitter or share fun pictures through the competitions.

Share your news and events

Every day, the IBMS communications team is looking for the newest and most relevant biomedical science content to promote to our members, while also generating stories and press releases to gain media and public attention for the profession.

The part our members play in creating our news stories is vital. If you have a story to tell, are involved in an important piece of work or research, have taken part in a public engagement event, won an award or seen a news story in the media that relates to biomedical science and you have an opinion or comment to make, we want to hear from you. Email us at communications@ibms.org and we'll get back to you to create a news story or press release. In most cases, we'll ask you to fill in our short news pro forma, asking for a few pieces of information, a photo and quotes, and then we do the rest. Before publication you will be sent the write-up for your sign-off and agreement.

Work with us

We also work with journalists from local and national publications to create news stories. These tend to be based on healthcare awareness events but can also be reactive articles aimed at setting the record straight, or telling the story of how biomedical science is involved in healthcare. In these instances, we rely on our members' expertise and knowledge for comment. Members are chosen by their specialism and area of work and we only contact those who have given us an indication they are happy to speak to us.

When we ask members to provide comment or speak to a journalist, we ask that they speak as an IBMS representative and not as an employee of their trust or hospital. Your place of employment will not be mentioned unless you ask for it to be included. Once agreed, we pass on your details to a journalist to contact you at a convenient time. News changes fast so we have to react as quickly as possible to ensure our message is heard. If you are unable to help with a comment, let us know as soon as you can so that we can find another member who can.

Promote the profession

We are always seeking opportunities to promote the profession and have various methods for checking the news, nationally and locally, but we sometimes rely on members to bring stories and issues to our attention. It also helps us when members contact the media themselves when they see the opportunity. Remember that news outlets want "stories" not "events" – we can help you think of a way to turn your press release into a story if you need us to: communications@ibms.org

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