

My Journey as a Design Intern: Exploring the Impact of Visual Communication in Pharma at Boehringer Ingelheim's opnMe Program.

As a family-owned business founded in 1885, Boehringer Ingelheim has grown to become one of the top 20 pharmaceutical companies globally. With over 130 markets worldwide in countries such as US, Germany, China, Dubai, and Amman among others, focusing on research, development, manufacturing, and marketing of innovative products in human medicine and animal health.

I had the opportunity to work as an opnMe intern for design and visual communications at Boehringer Ingelheim's Discovery Research Department in Ingelheim, Germany. opnMe.com is an open innovation digital portal providing scientists globally access to a wide range of high-quality molecules for preclinical research. The primary objective of the portal is to accelerate research innovations and foster the development of new networks with creative minds in the scientific community.

Opting for my design internship at Boehringer Ingelheim came with a multitude of distinct advantages that I believe significantly influenced my development. Firstly, being a part of an innovative research and development company offered me a unique opportunity to apply my design skills to real-world challenges. The projects I worked on were not only implemented but also showcased at various scientific conferences in the UK, Austria, and Germany.

Working in a pharmaceutical environment also allowed me to explore different facets, from social media to printed materials and exhibition stand design. They all play a crucial role in communicating the importance of design in the pharmaceutical industry and the important information that comes with it to end consumers.

Collaborating with professionals from diverse backgrounds, including scientists, engineers, and marketing experts at Boehringer Ingelheim, provided me with the chance to demonstrate how design can effectively contribute to the success of pharmaceutical services across different platforms.

Additionally, I worked on communication content, developed new and coordinated with external service providers (e. g. marketing companies, digital IT partners) for the design of communication materials, impacting scientists' future careers, and aligning seamlessly with my dedication to utilizing design for fostering positive societal change.

Throughout my 6-month internship, my mentor Dr. Markus Koester provided invaluable support and has assisted me every step of the way, while offering valuable insights, sharing his expertise, and helping me navigate the challenges and opportunities that emerged during my internship while providing constructive feedback. With his unwavering support, you can begin this internship with the confidence that you have a mentor who is committed to your professional development and success.

Overall, pursuing my internship at Boehringer Ingelheim provided me with a diverse and enriching experience, helping me grow academically, professionally, and personally that fostered a sense of purpose and responsibility in my design future career.

Written by: Yasmeeen Steitieh, former trainee at Boehringer Ingelheim (March till August 2023)