

Ogilvy Health Account Co-op

As a company, Ogilvy has five different areas of operation: public relations, consulting, advertising, health, and experience. My position was as a paid account co-op within Ogilvy Health. While occupying this position, I drafted media content for different clients, performed media monitoring and prepared monitoring reports, conducted research on potential clients, maintained and updated different trackers, and more. All of these tasks, as well as the skills needed to complete the tasks, were listed in the NUworks job description. The NUworks listing provided a clear understanding of the job's basics. As I continued at Ogilvy, I found that the majority of my tasks fit the expectations I had formed from NUworks.

I found that my education at Northeastern had also prepared me for my time at Ogilvy. Two classes in particular, Research Methods in Sociology and Foundations of Biostatistics, taught me about the importance of proper communication in healthcare. In both of these classes, I learned how imperative it is for scientific research to be discussed in a way that is easy for the general public to understand. Since the research is intended for the public's benefit, they must be able to understand the results of ongoing research without any complicated scientific jargon. That same principle applied to my work at Ogilvy, where I practiced how to effectively spread the word about the results of client work to the general public. The type of coursework that would have been useful for me prior to this co-op would have been a class more focused on communications or media relations, as these were areas where I was lacking knowledge. This experience will be extremely beneficial in next semester's courses. I will be taking classes that emphasize presentations, and through this experience, I learned to effectively communicate my thoughts and ideas to both larger and smaller audiences.

During this co-op, I spent the majority of my time on the National Institute of Aging (NIA) account. More specifically, Ogilvy worked with the NIA Small Business Programs (NIA SBIR). I drafted media content, provided backup on webinars hosted by Ogilvy and NIA staff, and attended weekly team meetings. The main Ogilvy team working with NIA SBIR was an account executive, a department vice president, and a branch executive president. I was very nervous joining this team, as the other team members were much higher up within the Ogilvy hierarchy. However, as time passed, I had more responsibilities and began to feel like an integral part of the team. My team members had explained the account thoroughly to me and made sure to answer any of my questions. I was addressed more during team meetings, and my co-workers would message me more often for support on different tasks. My work evolved from editing and proof-reading documents to drafting and selecting important media content on my own.

As I spent my time on accounts like NIA SBIR, I hoped to learn about the healthcare industry on a broader scale and the process of development for new innovations. I wanted to see how health information is conveyed to the general public and what role agencies like Ogilvy play in the process. On a more interpersonal level, I hoped to learn how to conduct myself in the

office environment, especially in terms of connecting with my co-workers, as it would be a different dynamic compared to a classroom setting.

What surprised me the most about this co-op was the broad spectrum of tasks that fell under the healthcare communications realm. While working on different accounts, I completed expected assignments, like media monitoring and filling in awards trackers. However, I also saw that Ogilvy drafted and distributed outreach materials for client events. My team members even moderated events like webinars. I helped prepare promotional materials for different significant events, gained insight into the pitching process to science news publications, and even helped organize outreach data following the webinars. I think this was so unexpected because of the little experience I had with healthcare communications. My impression of the industry previously was mainly of drafting content for media like Twitter and LinkedIn. After my time at Ogilvy, I learned just how expansive this field is, and how valuable media navigation skills are for healthcare clients.

The most challenging activity I engaged in during the course of my co-op was preparing for a virtual ceremony hosted by NIA SBIR to celebrate the end of a biotech entrepreneurial program. Ogilvy's work on this specific project within the account had been ongoing since I joined, so there were many different moving parts. There were multiple email chains active with different social cards, certificates, and video reels that needed multiple rounds of edits. I had never been a part of a project with that many different aspects to it, so it was hard to keep track of everything that had to be done as the ceremony date drew closer. However, my team members often provided direction and helped me keep track of not only what I had to do, but the larger scope of the project as well. In particular, one of the account executives, who had also previously been a Northeastern co-op at Ogilvy, was especially conscious of me, most likely because she had been in a similar position. She would reach out after I had received an assignment, often talking it through on short audio calls to make sure I fully understood what I had to do and how my task fit into the whole project. With her help, I learned to navigate my way through the overwhelming mass of communication that came with such a project. I learned how to identify exactly what I needed to do, as well as the importance of clarification when completing a task to make sure no information got lost in translation.

The most exciting part of my co-op was the social media project I completed with my fellow co-op in the creative design department, Tessa. The task included generating content for all the social media channels of the branch we worked at, Ogilvy Cambridge. Our managers designed the project as something we could take charge of to learn about media generation and to breathe new life into the channels. Tessa and I worked together in deciding what content should be posted, the content's format, when it should be posted, and what channel fit that specific post the best. Our managers provided guidance by sharing examples of previous posts and talking through what categories of posts would be best for Ogilvy Cambridge media. The guidelines laid out by our managers prepared us well for starting this project, as it broke down the calendar into smaller chunks and made it feel much more manageable.

After we created a draft calendar of scheduled posts, we would review it with our managers in a small core team meeting. Our managers provided edits and suggestions to make the calendar as cohesive and manageable as possible. We would then present the calendar each month to the larger team at Ogilvy Cambridge, the members of which all worked on different accounts. The larger team would also provide edits and suggestions for any client work that could be promoted on the channels. The core team continued to check in with each other throughout the week, adding edits to generated posts, making sure the posts were going live when scheduled, and making any scheduling adjustments as needed. It was a wonderful experience to be able to be at the forefront of this creative project, which required close collaboration and communication, and it was very rewarding seeing the posts that had required a lot of time and effort going live.

This co-op helped me learn much more about myself beyond the field and interpersonal growth I was originally seeking. I learned that in a work environment, I enjoy having the managerial style of reporting to one main supervisor with multiple indirect managers on the different accounts I joined. This style allowed me to build a personal connection with my direct supervisor while also being able to interact with multiple people and accounts throughout the organization. Not only was I able to network within Ogilvy, but I found that building a relationship I can depend on for assistance built a strong foundation for me to efficiently complete my work.

Additionally, I learned how to ask for help. In order to perform my tasks to the best of my ability, asking questions was important in order to gain a full understanding of what I needed to do. I found myself consistently asking questions, and my co-workers were extremely open and answered with no hesitation. Ogilvy also significantly improved my project management skills. As an account co-op, I was assigned to three busy accounts. I learned how to delegate my time effectively between the three accounts in order to complete the work by the assigned deadlines. Managing these different tasks and accounts greatly improved my organizational skills as well, as I needed to sort emails, documents, and other files sent to me based on the different accounts to avoid confusion.

Overall, my experience at Ogilvy has allowed me to view our society, and my sense of self, with a more optimistic lens. Personally, being around peers who were passionate about the work they were doing helped me realize the importance of media as a tool for change. I was able to see firsthand how the content I helped generate allowed client work to reach a wider audience. On a broader scale, I witnessed how media channels can support different forms of communication, and how extensive media networks truly are. Online media has become embedded in society. Organizations like Ogilvy help navigate the deeply entangled social networks to amplify and propagate the impact of new innovations within the health field to the broader public.