

## SCIENCE IN A BOX

### PFIZER CASE STUDY

'Science in a Box' was developed by Pfizer in 2017 as an engaging science education programme, which aims to demystify the making of a medicine. Pfizer colleagues who have enrolled as Science Industry Partnership (SIP) ambassadors or Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) ambassadors are trained on the programme and deliver this to schools across the UK. The programme is made up of two editions: **Medicine and Me** and **Molecule to Medicine**. **Medicine and Me** is for Key Stage 2 primary school children, aged 7 to 8, and consists of 5 interactive modules which aim to spark the children's interest in science and provide an overview of what medicines are and how they are developed. **Molecule to Medicine** is for secondary school children aged 13 to 14. This edition is made up of 8 comprehensive modules which take the students through the process of medicine development, from pre-discovery through to access and supply.

#### Why has it been put in place?

The programme was created to inspire young people to take an interest in our branch of science – medicine and vaccine development, to aid learning about the role of the pharmaceutical industry and to demonstrate the range of career options available.

#### What impact has it had on the organisation and employees?

Since the launch of the programme in 2017, Science in a Box has seen a huge uptake and has had a great impact on teachers, students and our ambassadors alike. There are now over 450 Pfizer UK colleagues who are engaged in the programme and have been trained as SIP/STEM ambassadors. The feedback we have received from colleagues who take part in the programme has been excellent, with many of them saying that this is a reason that they feel proud to work for Pfizer. Our ambassadors are extremely passionate about sharing their love for science, emphasising the wide range of careers available within the pharmaceutical industry and breaking down gender perceptions from a young age. The programme is a rewarding way for Pfizer employees to use their five volunteering days which are allocated to them each year.

The programme has received national recognition and several awards including the Inspiration and Industry Awards 2019 from the Royal Society of Chemistry and the STEM Inspirational Employer Award 2019. These awards recognise Pfizer's outstanding commitment to inspire young people to pursue science subjects throughout school and to demonstrate the value of the pharmaceutical industry. The success of the programme is testament to all of the SIP/STEM ambassadors who dedicate their time to volunteer at events. We are immensely proud of what we have achieved.

#### How do you see the initiative evolving in the future?

The outbreak of COVID-19 shed a new light on Pfizer's schools programme. Children across the UK adapted to virtual learning and home-schooling activities and our ambassadors were no longer able to deliver the programmes in schools. There was a pressing need to continue to share our messages and to support parents and teachers across the country in home-schooling. Despite the many challenges that COVID-19 brought, it provided the opportunity to re-develop some of our classroom materials to suit a digital format. Within just four weeks, we redeveloped aspects of our classroom modules into digital e-learning modules which could be accessed by students, parents and teachers. We are delighted with the feedback that we have received and in just three weeks from launch 13,779 unique users had viewed the Science in a Box e-learning resources.

The new digital materials are a great resource to compliment the traditional classroom-based delivery and provide the opportunity to increase the reach of the programme. We are extremely excited to watch Science in a Box grow as we move into 2021.



## Interview with Rebecca Jackson, Team Leader in the International Labelling Group at Pfizer UK



### What is your role in the ED&I initiative?

I'm one of a group of Pfizer colleagues which takes 'Science in a Box' out to secondary schools. I've delivered the materials to hundreds of pupils and they teach me as much as I hope I teach them! I'm also proud to be one of the early members of the team who created the programme.

### Why did you get involved? Why are you passionate about achieving ED&I?

As with most opportunities, timing was a big factor in why I got involved. People I respect invited me to join them in creating something new, at a turning point in my career. The project gave me chance to consolidate years of learning into resources which would disseminate that knowledge to others. Initially, I became a SIP/STEM ambassador because I felt a responsibility to stand up and be visible as a female scientist and leader. I want every young, potential scientist to be able to explore all options open to them, to see beyond perceived stereotypes and fulfil their potential.

### How do you feel it has had an impact on your work / your colleagues and/or your organisation?

My role as a SIP/STEM ambassador and Science in a Box facilitator has made me look at my work from a different perspective. It's helped me gain a more rounded understanding of what we do as a company, and I see such exciting potential for the industry. I hope I bring some of that enthusiasm back to the workplace. Going out to schools is a great energiser. I look forward to delivering the workshops, and I come away exhausted, full of admiration for teachers and enthused by the thought that I might have inspired a teenager to consider studying science to GCSE level. It's a small, but important step towards a career which changes lives.

### What do you hope this initiative achieves in the future, in terms of ED&I?

The pharmaceutical industry has achieved remarkable things but there is so much more to do – new diseases to treat, new medicines to discover and bring to patients. It's critical that we inspire new generations of scientist to join us in meeting these challenges, whether that's in academia, the charitable sector, small or large pharmaceutical companies. Pupils need to understand that our work offers equal opportunities to future employees, irrespective of gender identity, sexuality, ability or social economic status. I'm passionate about our work, but increasingly driven to overcome bias and inequality.

Thank you to our contributor



Rebecca Jackson,  
Team Leader in the International  
Labelling Group at Pfizer UK

