

# Creative Careers

## Susanne Morrell

**Senior communications manager**  
in the pharmaceutical industry



I've worked in communications my entire career, but I didn't always plan to. After studying English Literature at university, I knew I wanted to work with words, but I had no clear path in mind. I took an entry-level editorial assistant role in the oil industry, and from there, my journey began.

Since then, I've worked in multiple sectors and countries, following my husband's career around the world and finding challenging, fulfilling work wherever we were based – from insurance companies to great ape conservation to the United Nations. I'm now a senior communications manager in the pharmaceutical industry. Though I never saw myself as a 'science person' at school, I've grown to deeply appreciate the fascinating science behind drug discovery and how to communicate it effectively.

### **Creative skills at work and at home**

In my role, creative skills like imagination and flexible thinking are vital. Whether adapting campaigns, creating engaging events, crafting innovative messaging, or managing crisis responses, working in communications often means responding to changing circumstances, generating new ideas quickly, and collaborating across teams and cultures. I've learned that the best ideas often come from bouncing thoughts around with people who have completely different backgrounds and expertise.

At school, I enjoyed art and jewellery design, not because I was a gifted artist (I really wasn't!), but because I loved creating something from nothing. Those experiences taught me about colour, perspective, the importance of white space and visual impact, which have been surprisingly useful in my communications career. These creative foundations continue to influence my work: from designing a layout, choosing the right image, or making a campaign visually compelling.

Outside of work, I use my creative skills in all sorts of ways. I love interior design: visualising and transforming spaces, and I am also often asked to help friends and family with their writing – from speeches to essays. Perhaps most importantly, though, has been my ability to adapt. The differences between living in Tanzania and Switzerland, or New Zealand and Zambia, are vast, and being able to adjust to each country quickly has been hugely useful in our various moves around the world.

## In defence of creative subjects

I understand why some students – and their parents or carers – steer away from ‘creative’ subjects. There’s a perception that studying something creative means you’ll end up as a starving artist or an unemployed actor. But that’s not what creative education is really about.

For me, it’s about learning how people relate to each other, how attention is drawn, and how to express ideas in ways that connect. Those skills are incredibly valuable in any corporate career or as an entrepreneur – and they make life richer, too.

“When I’m stuck, I step away. A walk in nature or even cooking a meal can unlock ideas that wouldn’t come while staring at a screen. Shifting into a different mindset often sparks the best solutions.”

**Susanne’s top tip for creative thinking**

A broad education, with a mix of creative and academic subjects, can make you more adaptable, more interesting, and more capable. If you know a little about art, theatre, history or archaeology and can bring that perspective into your work and conversations, you’ll stand out for the right reasons. The broader your experiences, the better.

## Why creativity matters

There is so much more to life and to the way we shape the world than facts alone. Science and engineering are hugely important, but knowing how to apply them, how to ensure they’re a force for good, and how to bring their benefits to the widest number of people all require creative thinking.

If we lose creativity – if we start to dismiss the value of understanding how to write a story, create an image, or make something tangible – we risk throwing away a large part of the human experience. We would all be much poorer for it.

That's why I believe it would be catastrophic to lose our emphasis on the arts and creativity. They're not a luxury: they're a vital part of what makes us human. Supporting creative education isn't just about nurturing artists: it's about equipping every student with skills that will help them adapt, innovate, and thrive in any career or life path.

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