

Amanda Koontz

Bionical Emas

Project Director –
Early Access Programs



Can you tell us a little about your background?

I have built over 15 years' experience supporting and overseeing Global Project Management and Field Operations, focusing on cardiovascular, toxicology, oncology and vaccine projects. Since joining Bionical Emas, I have overseen US and global early access programs (EAPs) including single patient emergency access. Through my time working in physicians' offices I have witnessed firsthand the challenges staff and patients face daily. This experience has fostered my passion for continuous consideration of healthcare professional (HCP) and patient needs in Bionical Emas' day-to-day EAP operations.

What excites you about your field of work?

Being part of the Early Access Programs (EAP) team at Bionical Emas has opened my eyes to a whole different aspect of clinical research. I truly believe we are meant to serve others and helping to deliver potentially life-saving treatment to patients around the world who have exhausted all other options instills a passion in me that I have not found in previous positions throughout my career.

Which successes are you most proud of?

It is critical for me to begin my day with taking care of my body and mind through physical movement and setting intentions. I prefer to focus on small successes daily as they have proven to compound and lead to long-term overall success, both personally and professionally. Being able to end the day knowing I was there to help a colleague and friend with a challenge or deliverable, working side by side with my direct reports to get a shipment to a site/patient in less than 24 hours and knowing I provided our clients with the service that our company is committed to, reminds me to be grateful for where my path has led me.

What are the greatest challenges you've had to overcome?

Admitting when I need to ask for help and that asking for help is not a weakness. I was raised by a strong single mother and one main character trait I gained from that is ensuring I would know how to be independent and able take care of myself. When busy or stressed, I can sometimes forget I have a great support system and they are there to help with my success. When all else seems uncontrollable, just breathe.

What is the most valuable lesson you've learnt?

Listen to understand, not to reply.

Where do you want to be in ten years' time?

Continuing to serve others and making an impact. Smiling, laughing and dancing daily, and most definitely in the sunshine near a beach!



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Laura Frost

Bionical Emas

Senior Account Manager –
Clinical Trial Supply



Why the interest in clinical research?

Before working at Bionical Emas, I worked for a medical device manufacturer for almost ten years. This role gave me an introduction to the workings of the MHRA and the importance of regulation and the quality standards that drive the pharmaceutical industry. I learnt very quickly that for me the main driving force for my eagerness to be involved in this industry is the opportunity to have a positive impact on medical professionals and ultimately patients. When I saw a graduate role was available at Bionical Emas (back in 2014) it was evident that this was a company following the same message I felt so strongly about. It was exciting to talk to the team about the possibility of learning more about clinical trials and how together we could play a part in delivering potentially life-changing medicines to patients all over the world. The expectations of my career at Bionical Emas have been exceeded and over the past seven years my knowledge of this sector has grown massively along with my enthusiasm for my role – I'm part of an enormously passionate team and am extremely proud to be part of this industry.

What is your greatest professional achievement to date?

Following the journey of a new medicine, from early stage development to watching it be released onto the market for patients' use. Whilst we are only a tiny cog in the vast machine that results in the new drug being authorised, there is no better feeling than knowing that the work we have completed has had an impact on a patient's life now that they have access to a drug that was previously unavailable to them. This is a process that takes years of research and hard work from pharmaceutical manufacturers, meaning we don't see instant results, but the patient is always at the forefront of my mind as we work through the different projects, some of which take years. This way of working is echoed throughout the Bionical Emas team and I think this is evident in the services we offer.

What advice would you offer those thinking of a similar career?

In the ever-changing world of pharmaceuticals you can never know everything, so my advice would be keep researching, as continual learning is key. Ask as many questions as you can and don't be shy to ask something even if it feels a bit obscure to you, there is no such thing as a stupid question! Research as much as you are able to and get involved with other departments, so you have a true understanding of how the entire process works. I think working in pharma becomes more like a lifestyle rather than just a career and since being in this industry, my interest is often sparked by a relevant news article or a documentary that I can relate to which all adds to your knowledge base. This is certainly a rewarding job that I would recommend to all who are passionate about making a difference for patients.



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Amrit Bagha

Bionical Emas

Director of Project Management Office - Clinical Development



Why the interest in clinical research?

I stumbled across clinical research at a time that I was going through a career change. I quickly learned all things about the industry, and it was very apparent how impactful clinical research is. The cliché is that I have always wanted to help people, but I am far too squeamish to consider going into medicine, so this is now the next best thing. Like most in the industry, there is also a personal connection for me to research that makes me want to make real change and be part of the journey to bring medicines to help change patients' lives.

What is your greatest professional achievement to date?

Since joining the Bionical Emas family, this has been a whirlwind year or so and I am tremendously proud of establishing the Project Management Office (PMO) at Bionical Emas. The PMO consists of incredibly steadfast and bright professionals who inspire me daily to think about how we can seamlessly deliver projects to our clients. Being consistent and data driven is our gig and they manage to pull it off so effortlessly. My achievement means nothing without the people behind it.

What are the greatest challenges you've had to overcome?

Establishing a new department and entering a new role during a pandemic has been no easy feat. Adapting the way the team works together outside of an office setting and delivers clinical trials within COVID-19 has been a challenge you wouldn't have imagined this time last year. No challenge is overcome on your own and this past year the team has been determined to stay connected and show agility to anything thrown in their pathway.

What advice would you offer those thinking of a similar career?

The key attributes that will make you stand out in project leadership: be divergent, inquisitive, do not be afraid to challenge, get out of your comfort zone and be agile. Most of all, be yourself and bring some personality to the table! For any individuals contemplating their next career move into leadership, just remember that 'today's broken glass ceilings are tomorrow's stepping stones'.

What are your hopes for the future?

What else is there to do, apart from achieving world peace like Miss Congeniality?! In all seriousness, the PMO is just at the beginning of its new chapter. I can visualise how the PMO will grow into a diverse team, that we will change how to deliver projects outside of the conventional formula and become an integral group to our Clinical Development division which is an exciting prospect. I genuinely can't wait to see the team grow into their own and develop the next generation of industry project leaders!



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