20/10/2016

To whom it may concern,

I would be eager to apply for a trainee position at Byrne Wallace.

This letter will address why I desire to pursue a career in law in general and more specifically, why Byrne Wallace is my firm of choice. Additionally, I will outline why I would be ideally suited for the trainee position by highlighting my relevant skills and abilities.

**Ambition to Excel**

I am familiar with and have excelled in challenging environments having studied history in Ireland's top university, Trinity College, in addition to having undertaken postgraduate studies at the University of Edinburgh, recently placed 21st in the QS world university rankings. Similarly, I would like to develop a career in an exceptional environment that will be both challenging and intellectually stimulating on a daily basis. The study and practice of law will undoubtedly lead to both the new challenges and intellectual stimulation I desire, whilst Byrne Wallace, considering its place as one of Ireland's premier law firms, would be an ideal work environment for me to develop and excel in a career in law.

**Communication and Teamwork**

I am really eager to develop a career in an area where I can work with people. Byrne Wallace’s emphasis on teamwork as well as its goal to provide exceptional service to clients, would enable me to work in a people driven environment on a daily basis.

I am familiar with working as a member of a team having been involved in several rewarding team activities, one of which was during my time as Chairperson of the Trinity College Yoga Society (2013/14). The committee worked exceptionally well because all members were dedicated to collaborating with one another in order to achieve our common goal of creating a highly successful year for the society. As well as leading the organisation of five yoga classes a week and an annual retreat, we also collaborated with a number of other societies to create one-off events. I learned that organisation and delegation is key to the creation of an excellent team as is ensuring that all team members feel their voices are heard.

Of course working with people means that excellent communication skills are required. I believe my academic background has provided me with exceptional abilities in this area. My position as archival intern in the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh (2015/16) may demonstrate these skills. My role was to research and compile an online catalogue of over 700 nineteenth and twentieth century medical objects from the College collection. Intricate historical medical concepts were associated with these objects. When writing catalogue entries, it was necessary to fully comprehend these myself, then glean the most important aspects of this information and finally, write a succinct and concise catalogue entry so a non-specialist audience could understand the role and historical context of each object. This experience is relevant to Byrne Wallace because it is essential to have the ability to relate complex concepts to non-specialists within a legal context.

**Commercial Awareness and Analytical Skills**

I would like to work in a field that engages with topical issues by working with businesses that are impacted by economic, political and societal fluctuations. Considering that Byrne Wallace deals with corporate clients undoubtedly impacted by such developments, it would be an ideal place of work for me.

During my time as an intern in the law, marketing and communications departments of Ulster Bank (summer 2013), I learnt the importance of understanding how external economic and societal factors impact financial organisations and how it is necessary for them to react and take into consideration this external environment. This experience could be applied at Byrne Wallace because anticipating and understanding client needs and how external factors impact their business is essential when striving to provide exceptional service to corporate clients.

The ability to understand the impact and results of a development or event are linked with analytical skills. The study of history has led to my development of excellent analytical skills. These skills were used to great success when researching and writing both my undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations. It was necessary to analyse the gaps in existing secondary literature in order to ensure my research was making a unique contribution to the field. In addition, my analytical skills were also put to use when addressing primary sources. It was essential to analyse what was being said and what may not have been said within these sources in order for them to aid in backing up the arguments in my theses.

**Leadership**

I desire a career which ultimately leads to a position of responsibility and leadership.

I have excellent leadership skills in general as is evident from my election to the position of Chairperson of the Trinity College Yoga Society (2013/14). One of my decisions as Chairperson was to lead a society re-branding initiative. Working with the executive committee, we concluded that the potential of the society had not been met by previous committees. We focused on promoting yoga as an excellent form of physical activity that is a great way to manage study, anxiety and stress. As a result, under my leadership, membership rose by 60%.

In addition, this year I lead the organisation of a student exhibition for the Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh. This went on display from May-June 2016. This involved leading committee meetings, obtaining loans of works of art from the University of Edinburgh art collection and liaising with the head curator of the gallery. My curatorial group and I chose to present several works of art from a gender perspective. Our goal was to highlight the historical context of each piece but also consider how historical concepts of gender may be problematic to the modern viewer. In relation to this, we aimed to create an exhibition where historical pieces could lead to a questioning of today's gender issues.

Leading my first group exhibition in such a respected institution within the Edinburgh art world in addition to choosing and successfully displaying such a challenging topic is undoubtedly a leadership achievement of which I am proud.

Pursuing the traineeship programme at Byrne Wallace will aid in developing and enhancing my leadership skills within the area of law.

To conclude, I believe I have a number of skills and abilities, developed through my academic experience in the field of history in addition to my varied work experiences, which would make me an ideal candidate for a traineeship at Byrne Wallace. I am interested in pursuing a career in law at Byrne Wallace because I believe working in the firm will be a challenging and stimulating experience within an environment of excellence. In addition, working in Byrne Wallace will enable me to use my exceptional communication and analytical skills as well as my ability to be commercially aware. Finally, Byrne Wallace is a place where I believe my leadership skills can be utilised and developed.

Thank you for considering my application.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Bergin