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The Trainee Programme Co-ordinator

Byrne Wallace

88 Harcourt Street

Dublin 2, D02 DK18

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**Re: Byrne Wallace Trainee Programme**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my interest in the Byrne Wallace Trainee Programme (the “Programme”) as advertised on your website. Please find attached a copy of my CV, in which I have outlined my work history, qualifications and interests. I have recently completed the FE-1 exams and I am seeking a position as a trainee solicitor with a top-tier commercial law firm in Dublin.

The path I have taken in getting to this point is not what one might call the traditional route. I joined ION Trading Ireland Limited (“ION”) in 2014 on a business graduate programme. That’s not to say that I had abandoned my underlying objective to become a corporate solicitor at that point. At that time, I was eager to jump straight into the business world, start getting some experience behind me and start earning some money. I remember my final interview at ION as clear as if it was yesterday. The interviewer (the head of sales management at ION), without raising his head from my CV, asked me whether I had abandoned my ambitions to pursue a career in law. Without hesitation, I told him that I had not and that for now, I was eager to get some professional experience and ION seemed like the place to do that. I also told him that, if I were to be successful in obtaining a place on the graduate programme at ION, I would fully immerse myself in the programme and my commitment to each role would never be in doubt. Maybe my honesty impressed him, as I was successful in securing a place on the programme. It certainly paid off when I seized the opportunity to complete the graduate programme in the legal team (a first at ION) and subsequently attain a promotion to the position of Senior Legal Analyst in the legal team.

Before continuing my discussion on why I believe that I am a suitable candidate for a position on the Programme, I’d like to address any concerns that you may have about my university results in first year and second year. In short, I didn’t apply myself to the necessary extent required at university level. At the time, I was young (not having undertaken transition year at secondary school) and naïve about the level of independent study and engagement required at university. Notwithstanding that, I continued to improve my grades throughout my second year and third year, I was awarded a 2:1 for my bachelor’s degree. I then went on to achieve a 2:1 LLM by the time I turned 21. My academic success continued into completing the FE-1 exams. While working full-time hours at ION, I studied before and after work every day, and at weekends, to complete the FE-1 exams in three sittings.

I am applying to Byrne Wallace as a potential trainee solicitor because my goal is to pursue a career in corporate law with a leading corporate law firm with a diverse practice. I don’t see the benefit of regurgitating the firm’s client base or its practice areas to you. That information is available on your website. My objective is to leave you with no doubt that you would like to meet me in person to discuss my application. Therefore, I will explain why I believe I am Byrne Wallace material.

I have the initiative and ambition required to succeed in the Programme. I have demonstrated these attributes throughout my professional career to date. In 2017, there was no dedicated Company Secretary at ION. I viewed this as a fantastic learning opportunity and took on some aspects of the role in addition to my responsibilities on the commercial side of the legal team. My duties related to Irish entities and entities in jurisdictions like Delaware, England and Wales, Austria, Singapore and Australia. My responsibilities included: drafting board minutes; filing annual returns with the relevant authorities; filing director appointments and resignations; managing hard-copy company files in the Dublin office; and arranging for Apostilling and notarial services for company documents. I was also involved in liaising with law firms in Dublin on the company incorporation procedure. My most significant achievement in this role occurred after a significant acquisition in 2017. As is natural in M&A, there was a large turnover of staff and leadership in the aftermath. I took on the responsibility for arranging for director appointments/resignations in numerous jurisdictions for the acquired group of companies. This was a difficult project because of the number of people involved firstly, and secondly because of my unfamiliarity with local company laws in each jurisdiction. I was able to gather external advice, appoint and resign the appropriate officers and prepare information packs for the new directors in each jurisdiction.

I am a dedicated team player, which is an important attribute for a trainee solicitor. At ION, I was involved in a company-wide LEAN initiative. The initiative involved examining a number of processes within the company and working on how to improve those processes. Our team worked on the customer licence termination process. We reduced the average termination processing time significantly and reduced critically-overdue debt for a particular division of the ION Group by over 30% in a period of four months. What worked well for our team was the transparency and accountability that came with having weekly meetings where objectives were set for each person to be completed by the next meeting. I worked on the Revenue Collections team at the time so I acted as the team’s direct link to the tangible results of the project – presenting cash-collection figures by way of short PowerPoints at weekly team meetings. I learned from this project that the key success-drivers in any team are: being clear and realistic in the team’s objectives, open and frequent communication by way of regular meetings and the presentation of information that shows the real results of the team’s work.

I have developed good leadership skills, where required, in my career to date. In my second rotation on the ION graduate programme, I was rewarded with being given responsibility for the sales management and sales prioritisation for a particular division of a newly acquired group. My work was overseen by my team manager but I was given a good degree of discretion in my workload and I worked closely with the division CEO daily to process new software and service sales opportunities for new and existing clients. I also facilitated client conference calls for both sales and legal negotiations (the latter involved working with a colleague from the in-house legal team). My ability to be a leader continued to gain recognition on my promotion to Senior Legal Analyst in the ION legal team in October 2016. I was given responsibility for creating and meeting SLAs for the production of new agreements, notices and redline responses by the legal team. I was also responsible for training new junior legal analysts, allocating work to them and reviewing their output. My ability to take a leading role has continued to be recognised at KPMG where I was hired at Senior level as a Commercial Contract Specialist and work in a team with two junior paralegals.

Byrne Wallace’s commitment to CSR is very impressive, with trainees at the firm being heavily involved in initiatives such as the Solas Project. I would love the opportunity to get involved in more initiatives like this myself. I organise a weekly 7-a-side football team myself. Previously, we played in a league organised by a charitable organisation where half of each team’s fees goes to local improvement projects in disadvantaged areas in Dublin. In 2017, we won a tournament where the prize was a trip to Madrid. The trip included the opportunity to play a football match against a team of prisoners within the walls of a medium-high security prison, outside Madrid. The prison-match was part of a social re-introduction programme for well-behaved prisoners. It was great to be able to take part in an event which was a milestone on the road to self-improvement for those prisoners’ lives. It was also great to get the opportunity to speak to some of the prisoners about what they intended to do upon their release and about their families.

I am confident that my academic achievements, accomplishments in my career to date and my personality make me a strong candidate for a place on the Programme. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my application further. Please don’t hesitate to contact me on 087 9486112 or by email at shiggins91@gmail.com.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours Faithfully,

Shane Higgins