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SELECTION CRITERIA

Associate, The County Court of Victoria

1. Well-developed interpersonal and communication skills

A confident and experienced communicator, I possess high level oral and written communication skills which can be demonstrated throughout my employment history spanning 20+ years in Australia, the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka where I have communicated with internal and external stakeholders both verbally and in writing on a daily basis including clients/customers, suppliers, colleagues, employees, contractors, government and community organisations in my capacity as: Administrative Officer, Legal Assistant, Attorney at Law, Head of Security, 2nd Lieutenant and Lieutenant Colonel. Having lived and worked overseas, I possess the ability to work with people from diverse cultural different backgrounds both as a team member, leader and motivator.

Previously as a Legal Assistant at D&M Lawyers, Ballarat and at The Wyndham Legal Service, Werribee, I prepared reports and attended to various other correspondences with internal and external stakeholders. During these roles, I interviewed and liaised with clients, also involved in the preparation of draft correspondence and other legal documentation required for the Department of Immigration, Tribunal and Courts.

My written and verbal communication skills can be further demonstrated whilst undertaking the following duties and responsibilities:

- As a Barrister, I communicated with and legally advised people from all walks of life (individuals and corporate clients) including my experience in representing clients in various courts from the Magistrate Court to the High Court which involved confident public speaking, case management and preparation, preparation of case notes and legal documentation whilst using influential, negotiation and interpersonal skills.
- Handled and resolved a broad range of sensitive matters in legal roles related to employees of my previous employers within company's guidelines. Often I effectively achieved a win/win outcome for both company and the employee through effective written and verbal communication.
- As an Attorney-at-Law I demonstrated high level interpretation, research, communication, interpersonal skills and the ability to analyse, interpret data, write reports and make sound judgment and decisions. I acquired these skills during my under-graduate studies and further legal training that were further enhanced in the workplace.
- Currently as an Administrative Assistant at FTL Judge Papaleo, I am involved in managing 3000+ clients' pursuant in the Guardianship and Administration Act 1986 that can be classed as one of the most challenging positions. In this capacity, I have developed and enhanced strong communication skills to suit different contexts and achieve desired outcomes. In this instance, I utilise a wealth of patience as communicating with clients requires extensive listening skills and the need to repeat their requests to gaining greater understanding of their needs and situation.
- Additionally at FTL, I am also involved in the interpretation of statutes and communicating issues of policy and law reform regarding deeds or circumstances to non-legal audience of our clients. Due to my strong legal training and background, I gained an excellent understanding of relevant legislation within a short period of time which has also contributed to my ability to attend to general ledger and balance sheet reconciliations of Accounts by Administrator (ABA) forms of 'represented persons' which are to be submitted to VCAT. When scrutinising the documents, I verify the assets, liabilities, income and expenditure of 'represented person' during the year under review. From this experience I have gained a good understanding and ability in conducting audits and investigations and to write and submit reports succinctly, demonstrating advanced written communication skills.

2. Excellent computer literacy and administration skills

Throughout my professional career to date spanning 20+ years in Australia and overseas, I have undertaken numerous office administration roles, including Administrative Officer, Legal Assistant, Attorney at Law and Head of Security specialising in the local and international legal industry. In the above mentioned roles, high level administration and computer literacy was a requirement to perform all required duties and responsibilities in fast paced legal environments, including: case management and preparation of legal files and documents whilst adhering to the Privacy Act; computer operation - data entry, database management, typing, financial reporting and spreadsheet preparation for billing and record keeping purposes; succinct wording and editing of letters and correspondence; maintenance and archiving of computerised and paper-based files and records; faxing; photocopying; report writing including auditing and financial reports; accounts payable and receivable; cash management and internet banking; processing of invoices and client billing; consulting and communicating with clients including legal representation; conduct internet and paper-based legal research; keep up to date with relevant policies, procedures and legislation; office management and set-up of administration and human resources systems and procedures.

I have acquired a strong understanding of various information technology applications required to undertake office duties having completed extensive formal training to gain an up to date working knowledge of relevant software applications including Microsoft office applications and in-house legal systems. In my present role at FTL Judge & Papelo as an Administrative Officer together with my previous roles at D&M Lawyers as a Legal Assistant and at The Wyndham Legal Service, I used various computer office systems and applications available to undertake day to day tasks including the above mentioned duties.

My fast and accurate keyboard skills and ability to use relevant software applications including Microsoft Office Lotus Notes and the internet can be demonstrated through the various duties I perform using the following systems:

- **MS Word:** Type letters and correspondence, reports, monthly summaries and feedback sheets.
- **MS Excel:** Create spreadsheets for client files.
- **MS PowerPoint:** Design and presentation of presentation to the top management/board of Directors.
- **Lotus Notes:** Type letters and correspondence, memos, agendas and other documents.
- **Internet:** Internet research including keeping up to date with legislation, policies and procedures.
- **Email:** Send and receive emails, corresponding with internal and external clients.
- **Databases:** Input and retrieve information from various computerised databases.

In my present role at FTL Judge & Papelo as an Administrative Officer, I am involved in advising clients and providing assistance to 'represented persons' and their close relatives. I also regularly attend VCAT proceedings to assist Counsels and carry out all paralegal work and administrative functions pertaining to VCAT proceedings.

Additionally, I completed a work experience placement at VCAT where I gained knowledge regarding the jurisdiction, legislation and procedures of VCAT, observing hearings before senior members Mr. Robert Scott and Ms. Jaqueline Preuss, listening to counter and customer inquires and performing general office work including filing and photocopying. This work placement helped me immensely to enhance my knowledge of VCAT legislation and legal procedures.

Keen to learn, I have the ability to adapt to new technology quickly and easily. In my previous roles, I have been required to learn and adapt to new computer systems and applications. I understand the importance of work environments changing with new technologies available and I am a firm believer that staff can acquire new technical knowledge if provided with sufficient training and support. In my current role at FTL Judge & Papaleo Pty Ltd as an Administrative Assistance, there numerous changes including restructuring, introduction of new computer systems and software packages. My own adaptation to these changes included training in the use of new software. My change in type of work environments clearly demonstrates my ability and willingness to quickly adapt to changes in work practices to suit new technology.

3. Good organisational and problem solving skills

Having acquired team leadership experience spanning 20+ years, I support organisational objectives and recognise how my work contributes to the achievement of goals, contributing to organisational purpose and direction, demonstrated as an employee and Business Owner/Attorney at Law. Dedicated to ongoing continuous improvement, I believe it is important to challenge procedures and ways of working on a regular basis to determine if there is a better, more efficient way of performing tasks, maximising organisation and productivity. It is by way of this ongoing assessment that the quality of the service I deliver and the quality of work I prepare is of the highest standard achievable. I believe the key to being organised is having a plan, and being prepared to re-prioritise as needed. I can manage my time and workloads and I become more efficient, and can handle greater amounts of work. In order to optimise my organisation and time management, I prioritise my workload in order to meet deadlines by creating a "to do" list each morning, re-prioritising throughout the busy work day as needed.

Having made a career transition from a Practising Solicitor/Legal Assistant to my current position as an Administrative Assistant when migrating to Australia, has required me to adapt to a whole different work environment.

In my present role at FTL Judge & Papelo as an Administrative Officer, I act as a trustee for clients, I strictly work within a legal framework in call centre environment. I maintain client accounts and attend to all requests received over the phone in an organised and efficient manner, handling approximately 30-40 calls daily whilst undertaking other administrative tasks. I quickly acquired professional and effective telephone skills and worked efficiently in a team environment demonstrating a high level of organisation and time management, whilst undertaking the following tasks:

- Maintain and update accurate records of files and records
- Draft, type and attend to correspondence of numerous clients
- Take necessary action to ensure completed files are retained by the centre for 7 years
- Provide accurate and professional legal advice to clients on Guardianship and Administrative matters
- Input and retrieve information from computerised database and the manual filing system

At FTL Judge & Papelo, I actively contribute in a team environment, taking responsibility for individual cases I undertake and manage through all stages. I was required to learn new computer systems and procedures in a short period of time to be an effective team member. I have always shared my knowledge with other colleagues and received the same support from others. I believe that staff development is the most essential and crucial factor for performance and have benefited by undertaking all relevant formal and informal training together with participation in job training that was a major part of my upskilling process.

On a particular occasion a client called and complained that their gas supplier called and informed her that the gas supply would be terminated the following day, expressing anxiety as it was Winter and she required heating. I assured the client that I would promptly attend to her request as soon as possible and contacted the gas supplier to verify the claim. According to their records, there was an outstanding bill payment and the supplier was unable to provide an extension until the dispute was settled. I escalated the query to the Victorian Water and Energy Ombudsman and obtained an extension. On further scrutiny of her account, it was revealed that the outstanding payment was not related to this client, therefore I achieved a payment saving of approximately \$1500 for the client. The client commended me for resolutions achieved in this matter and the positive outcome attained within a short period of time, avoiding the disconnection of her gas services.

4. Ability to work efficiently

Efficient, organised, motivated and results-driven, I practice sound judgement and decision making with an awareness of implications and contribute to solutions and future strategies. I have gained a thorough understanding of situations where deadlines need to be strictly observed, gaining advanced skills in delegating, planning work tasks according to importance with the ability to work productively in a high pressure, fast paced environment.

In my current role as Administrative Assistant at FTL Judge & Papelo, I handle 30 to 40+ calls daily where I am involved in the efficient and professional management of problems, queries and issues concerning financial and legal affairs of clients. These matters are of a personal nature and are often unexpected and different from the previous requests, requiring effective listening skills and attention to detail. I handle a broad range of requests range from utility supplies, payments for accommodation and disbursements. To curtail any errors when actioning these request I listen and document the nature of the request while speaking with the client and ask questions to verify details. Having documented the request, I always repeat it to the client to ensure it is correct. Once terminating the call, I check with individual Case Manager and/or utility supplier to ensure the validity of the request made as these clients are elderly and disable before actioning.

I strive for excellence in all tasks and projects I participate in and believe that this exciting opportunity at the County Court of Victoria would suit my career goals whilst utilising my ability to provide accurate service and support within a strategic, legal environment. With a desire to make a positive contribution in the Australian Public Service I have researched and understand the importance of adhering to the Australian Public Service values and Code of Conduct that shape we think, react and behave as a dedicated team member with a strong community focus.

5. A strong sense of confidentiality

Throughout my career to date in legal, office administration and business management roles, I have consistently demonstrated empathy for individual circumstances with the ability to respond quickly, accurately and sensitively to client queries and concerns, keeping all client and legal information confidential. I handle files and records outgoing and incoming on a daily basis, ensuring information is kept private and confidential, following correct records management procedures at all times, with an understanding of the *Privacy Act 1988*.

As a Volunteer at the Wyndham Legal Service - Werribee, I assisted the Youth Solicitor on day to day small matters such as drafting letters and interviewing clients. This experience has been both rewarding and useful in developing my practical legal skills while at the same time making a small contribution to the community. Furthermore, I wish to emphasise that I have the ability to handle a wide range of tasks and to maintain a high level of confidentiality.

6. A current Victorian Drivers Licence

I hold a current Victorian Drivers Licence and reliable vehicle, willing to travel as required with a flexible approach.