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Name:

Ryan Wilkes

Job title:

Tender Specialist

Company:

Kuehne+Nagel

Pathway:

Apprenticeship

What advice would you give a young person considering an apprenticeship?

Consider all options and your current circumstances, whether you're a school or college leaver or considering university/full-time employment. When I was a school leaver, I had no idea what apprenticeship opportunities were available to me, so I'd highly recommend young people to be proactive with looking for open opportunities. There are many sources of information available.

Why would you encourage young people to consider a career in freight forwarding or logistics?

Despite it not being many people's first career choice, the industry has so many opportunities and different roles available.

It's a very exciting industry and different to most others; not many people can say that they supported the transportation of life-saving pharmaceuticals or food for feeding the nation.

How did you get into the industry?

I worked full time at Costa Coffee as an Assistant Manager. Part of my role involved booking and receiving orders with Kuehne+Nagel, as well as conducting stock takes. I studied a BTEC in Business at college where I studied Supply Chain Management/Logistics modules, I later applied for an apprenticeship and noticed a 'Business Apprenticeship' at Kuehne+Nagel (K+N). I didn't know what the role was specifically, but I applied for the apprenticeship and after three interviews and two assessment centres I started the first-ever Bid Management Apprenticeship.



What does your current role entail on a day-to-day basis?

I coordinate and project manage the tender process from dealing with overseas offices to preparing pricing for different modes of transport to supporting our overall customer response for hopefully a long-term contract. Day-to-day, this could include, working with UK and overseas colleagues completing pricing requests and supporting senior managers with other projects.

Tell us about the best parts of the job.

Every day is different as I have a broad exposure to all parts of the business, working daily with various functional areas and teams. Before the pandemic, I travelled most weeks to our main offices and customer sites around the country, something which I really enjoyed.

What is the most interesting product that you have shipped?

At K+N, we ship anything and everything from flowers and fresh fruit to pharmaceuticals. In 2020, I visited our customer, Airbus, in North Wales, who only produce aeroplane wings for various commercial aircraft. I found it interesting that such a large site of 6,000 staff are responsible for such a limited amount of commodities.

What advice would you give to young people when they first get into a role?

Be open-minded and get involved as much as possible. If you don't get out of your comfort zone much and rise to new challenges, now is the time to do so. It may be hard to believe but being helpful to others does get noticed. My confidence since starting my apprenticeship has improved since coming out of my shell. Networking is key; you'll never know when the power of networking will come in useful.

How important is support from your colleagues?

Everything. Without the colleagues that I have had support from, my apprenticeship experience wouldn't have been what it was. I had a mentor, who taught me everything relating to logistics, freight forwarding and bid management, I'll be thankful for this for the rest of my career.

What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement is when I received two awards in 2020; the Multimodal 30Under30 and the BIFA Apprentice of the Year. I still remember jumping up and down watching the virtual BIFA Awards ceremony in disbelief. I still can't believe that I won these awards whilst working from home. I was halfway through my apprenticeship at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, so it was undecided how I was going to complete it virtually.

Finally, can you remember what you spent your first pay-check on?

I spent my first apprenticeship wage on a weekend away.

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