

Trade compliance is “recession resistant”. This may seem like a cliché but in an economic downturn, companies can’t risk downsizing their import/export compliance departments. Non-compliance not only puts the U.S. national security at risk, it puts the financial viability of trade compliance violators at risk as well in terms of penalties and trade sanctions. The national security of the United States together with knowledge gained through networking with industry professionals has motivated me to pursue a career in the trade compliance arena. I feel I can do my share to protect the national security of my country while helping my company to be faithful to its obligation as well.

My first involvement with international trade was in Brazil working as the marketing coordinator/co-owner of a small internet based business, AraceBrazil, figuring out the logistics of exporting jewelry to U.S. markets. This experience inspired me to pursue a career in Trade Compliance.

Currently, I am studying for my M.B.A. with a concentration in International Trade at the Monterey Institute of International Studies (“MIIS”). My interest in the Compliance Industry was inspired by MIIS Alum Eva Galfi, who gave a thought-provoking compliance presentation at a Trade Club meeting on campus. Her presentation highlighted the specific areas of expertise useful in attaining a position in a trade compliance department, including knowledge of the ITAR.

I took Eva’s inspiring presentation to heart and soon thereafter applied for an internship at Vision Systems International (“VSI”), a San Jose based aerospace/defense company, where I still work today. VSI, a joint venture between Rockwell Collins and Elbit of Israel, is the industry leader in helmet mounted displays for fixed-wing aircraft. I report directly to the Trade Compliance Manager. Working at a small company (less than 50 persons) definitely has its advantages, as I routinely interact with various departments on a host of licensing and compliance issues. Some of my duties include audits of export licenses, HTS classification, and implementing import/export procedures to adhere to internal requirements and comply with the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (“ITAR”). I also assist the Empowered Official in gathering crucial information for the development of Technical Assistance Agreement (“TAA”) applications and prepare DSP-

5, DSP-73, DSP-61, and DSP-119 license applications. Although this work can be quite demanding, it is rewarding at the same time.

My expected graduation date is this coming December. Until then, I plan on gaining as much experience in the trade compliance field as possible, continuing to volunteer at WIT-NC and PAEI events, and networking with compliance professionals. I'm striving to gain relevant credentials as well. My plan is that after graduation prospective employers will hopefully see me as an eclectic blend of education, formal compliance training, and work experience.

I'm very grateful that WIT-NC offers a scholarship to students in the Trade Compliance field. This scholarship would help me to establish contacts within WIT-NC who, from time to time, can provide me with judicious advice on a variety of compliance issues. I truly appreciate the opportunity to apply for this scholarship.