

Get to Know Corporate Associate Colby Trace

By RIW on February 27, 2024



Colby Trace recently joined RIW's Corporate, Mergers and Acquisitions, and Banking Groups as an associate. He guides private businesses through complex change of control transactions, representing buyers and sellers in both strategic and financial transactions. Learn more about him and his career path in this Q&A.

Why did you become a lawyer?

I became a lawyer because it seemed like a job where I could utilize the skills I had developed and honed through my previous experience while also learning and applying new skills that were both appealing to me and useful both in my career and in life more generally.

Tell us about your career path.

After finishing university, I was determined to spend as much time in the mountains as possible, so I was a professional ski bum for a while and then spent a year working as a mechanic in my good friend's bike shop and riding mountain bikes in the Blue Ridge Mountains. During this time I debated going to law school and eventually decided to take the plunge. I was also missing living in New England so I was very lucky to have the opportunity to attend Boston University School of Law and received my JD in May 2022. During the summer between my second and third years of law school I worked as a summer associate at RIW and had a great experience despite the inherent limitations imposed by the COVID pandemic. In September 2022 I began working for RIW again as a law clerk while I waited to find out that I had passed the MA Bar Exam, I was officially sworn in as a licensed attorney in November 2022 and have practiced at RIW ever since.

Tell us about your practice.

My practice is primarily transactional corporate work, with a focus on mergers and acquisitions. I also serve as outside general counsel to businesses, managing the spectrum of legal matters that companies deal with on a day-to-day basis.

What do you love most about what you do?

The aspect of my practice that I enjoy most is the constant problem-solving. Whether doing day-to-day legal work as outside general counsel or working on a sophisticated transaction selling a business to a financial or strategic acquiror, my job revolves around identifying and solving potential and existing problems. If it was possible to use google or chatGPT to find answers to complex legal questions, my job wouldn't exist. But nearly every matter I

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deal with requires a high degree of flexible thinking, nuance, and the ability draw from a diverse spectrum of knowledge and experience to find an effective answer and craft an effective mechanism for operationalizing that answer.

Working with bright colleagues to craft solutions to unique and challenging questions keeps my work interesting through a constant cycle of learning, synthesis of concepts, and application. A bonus is that devising and implementing a creative and effective solution often leads to a better deal for both my client and the party on the other side, the magical “growing of the pie” we heard so much about in law school.

Why did you choose the firm?

I chose RIW because the firm inhabits a unique space. RIW is small enough that there is a collegial environment where I can know everybody and not feel like just a cog in the machine, but also large and sophisticated enough that we can “punch above our weight” and effectively advise clients on large, complex transactions, often with your typical “biglaw” firm on the other side. This “goldilocks” space we inhabit also keeps my work interesting and fresh because of the diversity of legal matters we can handle.

Tell us a fun fact about you.

I skied, mountain biked, and played golf all in the same day.

What do you do in your free time?

I love to read, go for runs around the esplanade, and explore the city. When I have time to get out of Boston, I love to adventure around New England with my friends skiing, mountain biking, hiking, and rock climbing. I also love finding a good brewery or coffee roaster.

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