A member's view: Henry Smith-Langridge

Briefings



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Founder, SHE Tax Advisers

This month we are excited to shine the spotlight on Henry Smith-Langridge, and ask him how he came to work in the world of tax.

How did you find out about a career in tax?

I found out about a career in tax by pure happenstance. When I was 18 years old, I had just finished Sixth Form College and was undecided about what I wanted to do with my life. I saw a job opening for a local boutique tax firm and decided to immediately apply. I had no backup plan and no job prospects, so thought I would take a gap-year to figure things out before making any serious career decisions. Eventually, a gap-year became two and then three, and so on. Before I knew it, I was studying for my ATT exams to become a qualified Tax Technician. I decided that actually a lot of my analytical thinking and skills aligned themselves well with a career in tax, so I decided to stay!

Why is the ATT qualification important?

For me, the ATT qualification is an excellent, well-rounded qualification to give tax technicians a high level of tax understanding on a wide range of tax topics that, as professionals, we are bound to come across at some point or another. Therefore, it is essential for anybody looking to develop their tax knowledge to embark on the ATT qualification.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Caring, emphatic, ambitious.

Who has influenced you in your career?

My two greatest influencers on my career are my soon-to-be wife, Shriya, and my first boss and mentor, Simon.

What advice would you give to someone starting their career?

My greatest advice to any professionals starting out is to give it time. All good things take time to develop or achieve, and a career in tax is no different. In my first job in tax, I started by scanning documents and making cups of tea for the directors of the firm. These types of tasks are not what dreams are made of, but it was a necessary learning experience for me that I have taken with me for the rest of my life.

What are your predictions for tax advisers and the tax industry in the future?

Tax, in some shape or another, has been around for over 5,000 years: so it is safe to say it’s not going anywhere anytime soon. My predictions for the future are that tax compliance will become increasingly automated and a tax adviser’s role will increasingly become more advisory based – which is a great thing.

Tax advice, particularly with individuals, requires a lot of relationship building and big-picture thinking, which (for now) seems quite difficult to automate. Automating tax compliance will certainly do away with the ‘robotic’ parts of our jobs and make our jobs more human.

What advice would you give to your future self?

Everything happens for a reason, even if that reason is not obvious at the time. Give it enough time and the reasons may become obvious.

Tell me something about yourself that others may not know about you.

I absolutely love cats. My partner and I have an adorable Siamese cat that we adopted from our Animal Rescue, where we volunteer. We fell in love with her when we were rehabilitating her.