A member's view: Connor Whelan

Briefings



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This month’s member spotlight is on Connor Whelan, Tax Manager for Mercedes-Benz UK and member of ATT, who tells us what ‘drives’ him in tax.

How did you find out about a career in tax?

Like many tax professionals, by accident! I had completed my AAT qualification and had my first ‘proper’ accounts role at a small local airport, but an entry level tax role arose at a local Big4 office. I was successful in my application and the rest is history.

Why is the ATT qualification important?

The world of taxation can be complex, and it is crucial that any tax professional is adept with the complexities that the industry may present. The ATT qualification offers an excellent foundation in taxation, covering a broad range of disciplines, and consequently demonstrates your level of professional knowledge and standards to your peers, employers and client alike.

Why did you pursue a career in tax?

Money, business and the government has always been of interest to me, and so exploring the tax profession was a natural choice. Tax has a knock on effect to all levels of the economy, whether it's how much revenue HMRC collects for the government to spend on public services; how much profit a business can spend on development, investment and their employees; or how much money a person has to see them through the month. This makes our work both meaningful and relatable, perhaps more so than many other roles and industries.

Furthermore, a career in tax allows me to use and build a variety of skills within a highly regarded and reputable profession. The profession offers huge opportunities for development and progression, which are also very important to me. The tax profession is, and always will be, highly sought after, and so the job security that comes with a career in tax is an added bonus.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Approachable, ambitious and conscientious.

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

I have been very fortunate to have worked with a number of different managers and peers in my career and it would be a disservice to name just one. Each and every one of them has taught me something, whether it's the development of my tax technical knowledge, or the building and enhancing my softer skills.

What advice would you give to someone thinking of doing the ATT qualification?

If you are looking to pursue a career in tax, then the ATT qualification is a great starting point as no prior knowledge or experience is required (though it may be useful). Be sure to put the time and effort into studying – it will pay off.

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

I think it’s fair to say that further digitisation is to be expected in all aspects of our lives, and this will surely translate into changes being made to the tax systems in place both in the UK and globally. The extent to which artificial intelligence has a role in the tax profession is yet to be seen, but I have no doubt that all roles (both in and out of tax) will alter in some way.

What advice would you give to your future self?

If only I had a crystal ball to predict the future and where I might be, or to at least share some winning lottery numbers! In any case, keep going, and trust yourself.