A member's view: Gurdeep Singh Dhanjal

Briefings



24 January 2024

This month’s member spotlight is on Gurdeep Singh Dhanjal CTA, ATT, Tax Manager (Sports and Entertainment), HW Fisher

How did you find out about a career in tax?

I’d be disingenuous if I said it was always the plan. I was broadly open to a career in tax. I found an intriguing opportunity within the sports and entertainment sector and haven’t looked back since!

Why is the CIOT qualification important?

It’s very much the gold standard and a well-respected qualification. The qualification covers the depth and breadth of tax and is geared to equip you to make sound advisory decisions for your clients. Working in the profession is certainly more meaningful and rewarding once you have a high level of technical understanding.

Why did you pursue a career in tax?

It was a new challenge. After having studied biology at University, I wanted a chance to try something different. I wanted a career that could stimulate me intellectually and provide longevity. There will always be a need for tax advisors and as Benjamin Franklin said, ‘Nothing is certain except death and taxes.’ I was initially drawn to tax by the interplay between accounting and law and it seemed to be a sensible choice. The interaction of tax with politics was also particularly interesting.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Hardworking, tenacious and sometimes far too competitive for my own good!

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

Although I’ve been privileged to work with leading experts in the industry, I would say no single person. However, a mentor in my early days gave me advice which stuck with me. ‘Be a sponge,’ he said. ‘Soak up what you can from those around you and craft your own unique style.’

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

Tax plays a large part in society and will undoubtably be ever-present. Don’t be afraid of the challenge that further study entails but be prepared to make sacrifices. It’s a step up from other qualifications and will require sustained commitment. Put in the time now and you’ll soon reap the rewards of your hard toil – you will get as much as you put into it.

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

‘The only constant in life is change’ and what from I’ve seen working in the profession, the same can certainly be said of tax. Technology has a ubiquitous presence and is therefore hard to ignore, as are the numerous growing opportunities to automate processes. Notwithstanding this, the human element will remain vital and so professional judgement, communication and connection will be even more

invaluable. Further embracing technology will enable us to both streamline and add value to our role in the business world.

What advice would you give to your future self?

Keep your finger on the pulse. As you progress in your career, complacency can creep in and it’s easy to rest on your laurels.

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

I trained in karate from the age of four and have competed in numerous local and national competitions. I would relish the chance to train in other styles at some point! I particularly enjoy the discipline and self-development aspects of martial arts and it has very much shaped me to who I am today.