A member’s view: Valerie Leung

Briefings



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This month’s ATT member spotlight is on Valerie Leung, Indirect Tax Assistant Manager, Grant Thornton UK Tax & Advisory LLP.

How did you find out about a career in tax?

I first discovered tax during my accounting degree at university. While most students dreaded the taxation modules, I found them oddly fascinating. It wasn’t just about calculations; it was about understanding how laws apply in practice. That curiosity led me to explore the profession further, and the more I learned, the more I realised how dynamic and rewarding tax could be.

Why is the ATT qualification important?

It provides a strong foundation in technical tax knowledge and a wider understanding of the business environment. The CBEs sharpened my commercial awareness and practical thinking, while Papers 1, 2, and 6 laid a solid base in essential tax principles and trained me to approach tax problems confidently. These

skills are now part of my everyday work.

Why did you pursue a career in tax?

Tax felt like a good fit for me. With my background in accounting and a Master's degree in data, I was drawn to the analytical nature of the work – solving problems, interpreting legislation and applying logic in a structured way. It's a field that constantly evolves, which keeps things interesting. Plus, there's real satisfaction in helping clients to navigate the maze of tax rules and seeing the impact of your advice.

Describe yourself in three words

Curious, adaptable and motivated.

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

Basically, everyone in my firm has influenced me. From the day I joined, I've received guidance and encouragement from senior colleagues who helped me build a strong foundation. Their support and kindness have shaped how I approach challenges and continue to grow. I've also been inspired by my peers – through countless days (and nights!) of revision and shared learning, we've explored the beauty of VAT together and supported each other in building meaningful careers.

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

Go for it! ATT gives you a strong foundation in tax and a broad understanding of the UK tax system. It sets you up to become a well-rounded adviser, ready to tackle real-world tax issues with the confidence to thrive in the area you choose to specialise in later.

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

Technology will play a major role in shaping the future of tax. With the rise of AI tools, advisers will need to adapt – using tech to work more efficiently while applying human judgement to ensure accuracy.

What advice would you give to your future self?

Don’t stop learning. Tax is constantly evolving. Even after years in the industry, I know I’ll never stop adapting. Staying curious and open to change will keep me growing into a better adviser every day.

Tell me something that others may not know about you.

I’m originally from Hong Kong – one of the few places without a VAT system. Starting my VAT career in the UK felt like stepping into a whole new world. Learning how the system works, especially from an international perspective, was challenging and exciting. It sparked a genuine interest in an area I never expected to enjoy.