A member's view: Tessa Brown

Briefings

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This month’s ATT member spotlight is on Tessa Brown, Employment Tax Manager at Larking Gowen LLP.

How did you find out about a career in tax?

I was offered a short secondment within the Larking Gowen Business Tax Advisory Team while working in a general practice team. I enjoyed it so much that I made a permanent move.

Why is the ATT qualification important?

I had worked for Larking Gowen for nearly 20 years and had not studied for many of those before I started studying towards my tax qualifications. The ATT qualification gave me the foundation to rebuild my study skills, approach tax queries effectively and broaden my technical knowledge.

Why did you pursue a career in tax?

While I have enjoyed all the experiences I have had in my career, I enjoy the variety of work in tax. As well as meeting new clients and contacts, working in tax provides an opportunity to continually learn, as we need to understand and consider the impact of changes to legislation and case law.

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Determined, inquisitive, creative.

Who has influenced you in your career so far?

I have had a huge number of influences in my career. I have worked, and continue to work, with managers who have been integral in passing on their technical knowledge and experience, and newer members of the team challenge me to look at things differently. I also cannot downplay the influence my family has had on my career. That support circle was invaluable in giving me the confidence to start taking exams again in my mid-30s, while also running a home.

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

This is tricky, as everyone learns differently. Perhaps that is the key point: work out how you learn and focus on that. For me, it was question practice and associating technical areas with real life case studies.

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

My prediction is that AI will have the most immediate impact on the tax profession. Our professional judgement, experience and the personal relationships we build will always remain central, but AI can support us by transforming research, improving accessibility and helping us plan more effectively.

What advice would you give to your future self?

To keep being curious. When we are busy it is easy to forget how important it is to take the time to read and learn, to ask questions and understand what is happening around you. As well as the rules changing, so do working practices and HMRC policies. Taking the time to understand how all these changes interact makes for much better advice for your clients.

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

I spend most of my spare time creating, whether that is textile work, painting or collage – anything to keep my hands busy. It is another way of working within set parameters, so it fosters problem solving and thinking about the bigger picture.