

A First Mover

An Interview with Kevin Jackson, National Managing Partner-Tax, KPMG US

EDITORS' NOTE Kevin Jackson is the National Managing Partner – Tax at KPMG US. Together with the Vice Chair – Tax, he oversees a team of more than 10,000 partners and professionals across all tax disciplines, including federal, international, state, and local, as well as specialty practices such as mergers and acquisitions, economic and valuation services and global mobility services. Prior to this role, Jackson served as the Tax Practice Leader for Markets, overseeing 11 tax business units and working with local



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leadership to drive the firm's tax strategy and go-to-market efforts across service lines and geographies. He also led the national Tax Operations team and the onshore and offshore Shared Service Centers, improving operational efficiency. As lead partner to several high-profile financial service companies, Jackson has more than 25 years of experience structuring transactions for companies of all sizes and providing tax due diligence and other compliance services. A majority of his career has been focused on multinational and domestic alternative investment funds. Jackson previously served as co-leader of the KPMG Passthrough Services group and as partner-in-charge of the Asset Management Tax Technology team and the Dallas-Denver business unit. He holds a bachelor's and master's degree in accounting from Texas Tech University.

FIRM BRIEF KPMG LLP (kpmg.com) is the U.S. firm of the KPMG global organization of independent professional services firms providing audit, tax, and advisory services. The KPMG global organization operates in 143 countries and territories and has more than 265,000 people working in member firms around the world. Each KPMG firm is a legally distinct and separate entity and describes itself as such. KPMG International Limited is a private English company limited by guarantee. KPMG International

Limited and its related entities do not provide services to clients. KPMG is widely recognized for being a great place to work and build a career. The firm's people share a sense of purpose in the work they do, and a strong commitment to community service, inclusion and diversity, and eradicating childhood illiteracy.

How do you describe KPMG's culture and values?

I define our culture with four critical words: integrity, quality, collaboration, and inclusion. We are committed to these values in our interactions with our colleagues, clients, and communities alike. Within KPMG Tax specifically, we're driven by a shared sense of purpose that enables us to continuously grow

and provide an excellent, differentiated experience to our people.

What have been the keys to KPMG's leadership in the profession?

Our global network has played a big role in our success. It allows us to seamlessly deliver exceptional services and tailored solutions to our clients across the world. Because of the global network, we're able to provide deep industry knowledge and comprehensive insights to our clients across multiple sectors, assembling teams with the right skills for the engagement no matter where they reside in the world. This client-centric approach extends to our functions and cross-functional collaborations so the mindset of doing what makes sense for our clients leads the way. Another point worth noting is our always-on commitment to and investment in advanced technology. The U.S. firm recently established the AI and Digital Innovation Group, which aims to accelerate innovation at the firm, and reimagine the way we work and the services we offer our clients. As an organization, we've long recognized the importance of investing and doubling down on innovation to unlock the next phase of growth for KPMG and our clients.

What has made KPMG so effective at building client loyalty and long-standing client relationships?

Simply put, our clients are at the core of everything we do. From the earliest conversations

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with prospective clients to the ongoing strategic counsel and value we provide our long-standing ones, we are continually putting their needs first and leveraging our tools and technologies – which are unparalleled in the profession – to provide them best-in-class service. I firmly believe it’s this mindset that not only sets us apart from our competition, but also drives our client loyalty. Being truly client-centric means we’re thinking cross-functionally to anticipate client needs and to offer customized strategies and solutions. Clients recognize this, and they value this way of working across KPMG.

How critical is innovation to KPMG’s continued success?

For any business, innovation is perhaps the most critical element to success today. At KPMG, we not only make it a priority to adapt and keep pace with the rapidly evolving landscape, but we also make a concerted effort to be a first mover – and it’s safe to say we have been a first mover when it comes to AI and generative AI. Last summer, KPMG announced a \$2 billion investment in Microsoft Cloud and AI services over the next five years, underscoring our commitment to innovation and our continued goal to help our people succeed. Because of this commitment, we’re looking to unlock a potential incremental growth opportunity of over \$12 billion for the firm. In Tax, as part of this investment, we’ve layered generative AI on top of our

cloud-based Digital Gateway platform to give our clients better access to their data in a more transparent, digestible way, so they can take more of a holistic approach to their tax function.

Where is innovation taking place at the firm?

The answer is simple – everywhere. There’s not a corner of the firm that’s being left behind as we move forward and focus on accelerating innovation. As a tangible example, we’re rolling out our own Tax GPT tool to select clients. It’s already available internally across our Tax practice but by bringing clients under the tent, they’ll be able to experiment and co-innovate alongside KPMG in our safe and secure cloud environment as they kickstart their use of generative AI.

We’re also using Azure OpenAI Service to infuse AI into the ESG space and help companies realize significant efficiencies in their Tax ESG initiatives. The custom solution, built on KPMG Digital Gateway, is helping us assess data relationships to pull and predict the right tax data and type, reducing risk factors and increasing confidence in making tax contributions publicly. It’s all about helping clients make data-driven, forward-looking decisions that add tremendous value to their overall organizations.

What impact is new technology and AI having on the tax profession?

I don’t think we can underemphasize the impact that new technology and AI will have

across the tax profession. In a recent KPMG survey with 500 C-suite respondents – primarily CFOs, chief tax officers and CEOs – at companies with an annual revenue of \$1 billion+, we found that almost all (99 percent) of C-suite leaders agreed AI was the “next frontier” for corporate tax departments. And they were willing to bet big. Nearly three quarters (70 percent) said they planned to invest \$1 million or more in AI capabilities for their tax function in the next 12 months. Included in this majority were 40 percent that said they planned to invest \$10 million or more. These are pretty significant numbers when we’re talking about technology specific to a tax function, indicating confidence in the technology and its future.

What is one thing you would tell someone pursuing a career in accounting?

I would counsel them to continuously develop and enhance their technology, data and analytical skills. Accounting will always involve analyzing data, identifying anomalies, and making informed decisions based on the information available – and this is true even with AI in the picture. Leveraging technology to your advantage, and using it to work smarter, will also be crucial to remaining competitive in our field. By honing these skills, new Tax professionals can excel in their careers and contribute to the success of their organizations. ●

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