



Q&A with Jon Croxford

Jon Croxford is Meridian's managing partner. With over 30 years' professional experience, he has been with the firm for almost eight years during which time the firm has grown from 12 to 36 people.

What's your area of specialism and professional background?

I specialise in tax advice for business owners and high net worth individuals with international interests. A Chartered Tax Advisor and member of STEP, most of my career up until joining Meridian was spent in the large international accountancy practices. Although I'm not a solicitor, the firm has approval from the SRA for non-solicitors to act as partners.

I studied Geology and Geophysics at University, so a career in tax seemed the obvious choice! When I graduated, a dip in the oil industry meant that job opportunities in geology were limited and a life purely in academia was not for me. I was looking for an intellectual challenge with scope for development and a career in tax seemed to fit the bill.

What are the biggest changes you've seen in the last few years?

The biggest change we have seen in our industry in recent years is the level of compliance required to run the firm and manage our clients' affairs. From a firm's perspective, this is vital as we deal with a huge amount of client information as well as client monies and must comply with data protection and anti-money laundering regulations, among other things. From a client perspective, legislation, such as FATCA, forces taxpayers and their advisers to declare information to governments worldwide.

How do you switch off from the day job?

I'm an avid climber although my climbing interests have moved away from big mountains in the Himalaya and the Andes towards adventures on a smaller scale on the cliffs and crags of the UK, Europe and the USA.

I've had my fair share of close shaves climbing. I once took a fall from almost the top of a crag in the Peak District, hitting the ground as the rope went tight. I hobbled away from that, counting myself lucky! Being caught out on a long route in the Alps in a bad storm with my climbing partner was also memorable, necessitating numerous long abseils to escape off the route whilst carrying a lot of climbing gear. We made it off in one piece by keeping clear heads and good teamwork. Climbing teaches you a lot about risk management.

What has been your most challenging piece of work?

In recent years I worked on a large, cross-border, estate with difficult tax and legal issues. Apart from being a technical challenge, it showed me the strengths of our practice when specialists in tax, legal and litigation work together for the benefit of our clients. Very few practices in the Midlands would have had the capability to deal with this under one roof.

If you could choose anyone, who would be your mentor?

Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon. How did he cope with such extraordinary pressure and risk; getting to the moon and back (half a million miles) in such a basic vehicle with less computing power than a current day washing machine?

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