

# Insight into the world of a European Director of Tax

**Kevin Turland, Director of Taxes – Quintiles Europe – talks with Simon Godley**

It was a stormy, rather overcast August morning when I pulled into the car park of Bracknell British Rail station. I had noticed the bright red Quintiles logo as I passed the station entrance, and, looking up, I could see a large reflective glass building perched directly above the station platform: the Quintiles European HQ. I am here to meet Kevin Turland, who is six weeks into his new role as European Director of Tax.

We meet in the lobby, and he takes me up to his recently refurbished office on the 6th floor. I have met Kevin a couple of times before, so we have an established rapport, but he is instantly likeable – highly sociable, good wit, and with a ‘no messing’ honesty. There is no surprise that he was the first choice candidate for Quintiles’ European CFO.

## ***Global business going places***

Quintiles is a leading medical services group; its clients are pharmaceutical and biotech companies. Quintiles helps them to get through the various trial phases for both drugs and medical devices, and consults with them about the commercial viability of their products. This is, therefore, a global business, and with a rapidly growing European operation.

This is one of the aspects that attracted Kevin to the European tax job. ‘This is an acquisitive business. It is young and vibrant, and is growing fast. My role will be to help Quintiles to achieve this growth from a tax-efficient perspective,’ he says.

## ***Globetrotting***

He is currently European Tax Director, so he also has the overview for UK and European tax compliance and reporting, as well as devising and implementing proposed tax planning. The tax compliance preparation is outsourced to one of the Big Four.

‘Part of my role,’ he goes on, ‘is to co-ordinate the financial reporting across Europe, so I am spending time talking to finance executives across Europe, trying to get us all in phase for reporting our pre-tax figures. During September and October, I’ve got trips to visit operations in the EU and parts of Eastern Europe.’

## ***Parental influence***

From a working class family in Northampton, Kevin went to the local comprehensive school, followed by a degree in Accountancy and Finance from Humberside Poly.

In fact, his father had a big influence over the choice of degree subject. Kevin reflects, 'He would only support us (me and my sister) financially through university if we did a degree that would lead onto a job in that area.'

Following graduation, Kevin's degree took him straight into an ACA contract with Dove Naish, an eleven-partner firm in Northamptonshire. He qualified in 1993 and moved to Chantrey Vellacott, a Top-20 firm, to specialise in tax.

After two years with them, he made his first move into industry and joined Como Holdings Ltd. In December 1997, he took a Tax Accountant role with EDS, the IT consultancy, where he started to gain EMEA-type tax and transfer pricing experience. After five years with EDS, he moved up to European Tax Manager level with Dun & Bradstreet in 2003. Three years on from there, he was in prime position to be a leading contender for the Quintiles tax role.

### ***Future aspirations***

He has planned and managed his career very well so far, and he seems to have made job moves at the right time. But at 37, he has plenty of career left before retirement, so I quiz him about future aspirations. Kevin is quick to respond: 'I am actually very happy with my recent move to Quintiles, and could see myself staying here for a long time. This is a young, growing group, and I feel highly motivated to grow with them in this role.'

Finally, we move on to the wider subject of corporate tax, and I was keen to get his insight on the tax environment as it affects large multinational groups. He comments: 'When I moved into tax over 10 years ago, companies seemed to be doing a lot of creative tax planning. Since then, we have been through enormous regulatory change, and areas such as transfer pricing and Sarbanes-Oxley have swung the "pendulum" very much across to compliance and accounting. We now seem to be getting over this, and perhaps the pendulum is swinging back into the favour of tax planning again.'

### ***Daily routine***

Kevin rises at 6.30am, and after a short drive from his home in Camberley, Surrey, he is at his desk by 7.30am.

The first two hours is spent fielding emails both from colleagues in the US and from external advisers. As Kevin is still fairly new in the role, he is on a mission to gather key information from executives in the UK and Europe.

The rest of the morning is on the phone to operational and finance managers across Europe, providing guidance on tax audits, tax planning and other projects. He is also in close contact with the shared service centre in Scotland.

The afternoon is spent looking at the more strategic overview tax planning for the group, such as looking at the legal structure, and how it is matched to the business operations, and other tax-led holding structure issues.

Kevin is usually on his way home at 5.30-6.00pm, keen to spend time with his six-year-old twins before their bedtime.

**Kevin Turland – Fact File**

Age	37 years old
Marital Status	Married with twins (aged 6)
Home	Camberley, Surrey
First Job	ACA articles with 11-partner firm in Northampton
Car	Land Rover Freelander
Favourite Book	Anything by Robert Goddard (crime fiction)
Favourite Music	80s pop
Favourite Film	Comedies
Favourite Gadget	Projector TV at home
Last holiday	CenterParcs, Longleat