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Justin M. Hannan

Playing Small Role in Changing the World

Massachusetts native Justin Hannan has always been fascinated by the entrepreneur's journey. "The fact that people have the ability to come up with ideas out of thin air and turn those ideas into functional businesses that have an impact on the world, their communities, their employees and their families—I just find it all very compelling," he says. An undergraduate major in entrepreneurship led him to law school, and early practice experience clarified the value of advanced knowledge of tax law.

"Taxes will always be an ongoing concern for business owners," says Justin. "Whether you are running your business, selling your business or trying to transfer wealth to your children, taxes are often the biggest expense. It doesn't help that the tax rules are extremely complicated and constantly changing. I enjoy helping business owners understand the rules so that they can make informed decisions in the most tax-efficient manner possible."

Prior to joining Day Pitney, Justin represented startup companies at a boutique law firm in Boston before narrowing his focus to tax as a senior associate at a large tax compliance firm. He is focused on helping clients navigate federal, state and international tax planning and compliance matters. He advises on the structure and formation of business ventures, including private investment funds, family offices and tax-exempt organizations. Justin works with buyers and sellers of both private and public companies to manage the tax aspects of mergers and acquisitions, and he speaks frequently on the topic of qualified opportunity funds.

Justin sees his role as not only helping people move their dreams forward, but providing guidance that can protect them from some of the downside risks they face as entrepreneurs. He believes informed advice can provide a sense of relief and give a business owner breathing room to focus on growth and other key priorities.

On the estate planning side, Justin welcomes the opportunity to help people plan for the next generation. He has always preferred working with closely held businesses because he enjoys helping in all phases—not just with the business itself, but with the individuals involved and their families.

Justin observes that tax matters and associated case law can be highly academic. The rules are complicated, so sometimes it is easy to get drawn into the weeds without resolving anything. He tries to spot issues and solve problems as practically as possible. Justin understands that clients do not necessarily care to have an academic discussion about a tax issue—they just want to achieve their intended outcome as efficiently as possible while staying within the lines.

Molly Merluzzi, CEO and managing director of Wayside Trailers, found Justin's ability to distill a complicated situation transformative when he worked out a solution for her family's business. "Justin wrapped his arms around parallel business entities and sorted through complex intercompany relationships to present a key scenario outline for the future," she says. "His risk assessment analysis allowed us to make important decisions for our future."

Justin takes pride in knowing that he has played a small part in helping clients create businesses that have changed the world.

TAX

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