

Moving with the times

One thing Dominic Murphy MIPA is not afraid of is change – his career to date has led him in many directions and has taught him to always be ready for the next challenge.

Photography by Jarrod Barnes

Name: Dominic Murphy
Position: Managing Director
Organisation: TJD Accounting Services
Age: 48
Location: Essendon, Melbourne
IPA status: MIPA

Q You've had a long and varied career in accounting and financial services. How did you progress to your current role?

My first job was with a bank, while I was studying for my accounting degree. It was a good job at the time, but I realised it was not for me, so, after attaining my degree, I worked in a variety of public practice roles. I was involved in audit, tax and business advice, and, for a short period, in insolvency.

In the mid-'90s, and, with a growing interest in the financial services industry, I decided I needed a change and spent some time as a financial consultant – once again in a bank – in country Victoria before deciding to return to Melbourne. I had a solitary year with an outer-suburban firm and then decided, as all men do when nearing 30, that I could do it better. As a result, I set up a small firm in Craigieburn without a client to my name. One year later and on the back of some concentrated marketing, I had 500 clients and a small but

developing business. In 1997, I went back into financial planning and, for the next five years, ran both businesses, with forays into a variety of other opportunities.

In 2002, and after many years of hard work, my wife and I decided to move to the UK for a while. The business was sold and I obtained a role with one of the UK's wealthier families, dealing with corporate governance on one of the largest property deals of the time. I also worked as a financial accountant with London's largest private hospital and was able to use my business acumen to make a big impact on their profitability. It was probably the most rewarding role of my working life.

Unfortunately, due to a family illness, we returned home in 2004 and began rebuilding our lives in Australia. After a few years with a Melbourne-based trustee company, I realised my great desire to have my own business again. As such, I decided to buy into a practice, in the role of financial adviser, business adviser and managing partner. It was July 2008, two



months before the crash of 2008, which created a whole new set of challenges for the accounting industry – so my role changed and has become so much more.

Q Which accomplishment are you most proud of?

I'm proud of having built a business from nothing; of starting a life in a new country; then returning to Australia to begin again. I'm also proud of attaining all the necessary education with no financial or employer support.

Q What do you believe are the key challenges facing the accounting industry today?

Due to SMSFs being the quickest growth sector in the superannuation market, I see the encroachment on the SMSF market by financial planners and financial services companies as a challenge. Both are lowering the cost of compliance to get control of investment funds.

The reliance by many firms on compliance work is a problem that needs addressing. It has been 12 years since the introduction of the GST and business owners now have a greater understanding of their reporting requirements. We also now have BAS agents, simpler accounting packages and offshore accounting



Dominic Murphy, managing director at TJD Accounting Services, which has incorporated the IPA's new My Public Accountant branding into its signage.

suppliers. All these factors combined are drying up compliance work or simply lowering the price point to make it uneconomical.

Other challenges are the increased risk of litigation for advisory firms – primarily due to the 'no win no fee' strategy of larger law firms – and the lack of new graduates coming into the profession, preferring to use their qualification to enter other roles.

Q Cost cutting is on the minds of many business people during tough economic times. Your tips?

We are four years on from the GFC and most businesses have de-leveraged, addressed costs,

improved their collection periods and put in place better client engagement processes.

Rather than cost cutting, I prefer to look at ways to improve efficiencies in delivering our services. We have introduced BankLink into the practice and use information downloads extensively in our SMSF area. We have just gone through a rather painful introduction to a new tax and accounting system, which we believe will eventually bring us some time savings.

Q What's the skill you would most encourage public accountants to master?

Accountants are solution providers and, according

to many surveys, are still considered the most trusted advisers. Yet other professions are encroaching on business.

I think it's important to acquire the skills to sell your services and engage your clients. Use these skills to discover what your clients' current and future needs are and provide a solution – explaining clearly the advantage of the solution you have provided.

Most importantly, you need to express the benefit to the client in clear, non-jargon terms. This strategy gives the client what they are looking for and is a simple and clear approach for you and your team.

Q What's the biggest lesson you've learned during your career?

Life never stands still. If you decide to sit and smell the roses, don't stay too long because the next challenge will come around pretty quickly.

I've also learned that persistence and the ability to adapt to our ever-changing industry as well as high ethical standards are paramount.

Q What's one of your business mottos?

It's my firm belief that it's our role as accountants to ensure that our clients are financially able to secure the future they desire. ○