

Every Engagement is the Beginning of a Long-term Relationship

Business plus speaks with directors **Michael Byrne, Paul Doran and Dermot Brennan** about the recent restructure of DBASS, the company culture, why they value their customers so much and plans for the future

DBASS, The Accountancy and Tax Advisory Firm based in Meath and Dublin, was founded by Dermot Brennan in 1988. The company's ethos, from day one, has been about building partnerships and excellent customer service.

I met with Directors Michael Byrne, Paul Doran and Dermot Brennan to talk about the value of client referrals and how they see themselves as the Harry Diamond to their clients' Rory McIlroy.

Michael Byrne, who has been with the company for over thirty years, as has Paul Doran, says some of their clients have racked up a similar tenure.

"We work with clients from across a wide variety of sectors including construction, agri-business and transport. There are a number of them that have been with us for over thirty years too. That spans multiple generations."

Asked what brings about this kind of client loyalty and longevity, Byrne says it's easy.

"It's instilled in everyone here that our culture is all about response. Nothing is beyond our remit in terms of trying to help somebody out. We want to enjoy what we're doing and we bring clients along with that."

"The biggest motivation for me is that we see so many clients recommend us to others. The overwhelming majority

of new business are referrals. That's the true testament of the success of our strategy and culture," Byrne adds.

Paul Doran remarks, "We trust our clients and they trust us and we really enjoy working with these firms. They are human, they come in and apologise for their boots being dirty but they're making serious money."

Company Restructure

Recent restructuring of the company and new senior appointments have reinvigorated the company. Byrne says they're entering an exciting new chapter.

"Our founding partner, Dermot Brennan Snr, established DBASS on integrity, personal connection and genuine care for clients. As he steps into a well earned retirement, our focus is on ensuring a succession that honours that legacy while positioning the firm for the future. We're very proud to welcome Dermot Brennan to the leadership team. His background with PwC, Focus Capital Partners and Interpath Advisory, particularly in Corporate Finance, brings fresh perspective and forward thinking energy to the firm."

The thinking behind the new structure is rooted in their people just as much as in the process behind it. Their aim has been to protect the high touch, responsive service their clients rely on, while building a leadership platform

equipped to navigate an increasingly complex regulatory and business environment.

By bringing Dermot Brennan into the leadership team alongside Paul and Michael, they are combining decades of experience with a modern, solutions focused approach to advisory.

They believe there is real strength in having leaders who have grown within the firm, ensuring that the personal, relationship driven service their clients value remains central to how they work, even as they adopt more data driven, agile methods across compliance and tax planning.

Doran says that the progression of long-standing team members, Melissa Phibbs and Daniel Blair, is a key part of the restructure.



DBASS Directors; Dermot Brennan (left), Paul Doran (centre) and Michael Byrne (right)

"Both began their careers with DBASS as trainees over twenty years ago. Their journey to senior roles is a testament to our commitment to developing talent from within and preserving the culture that makes the company what it is."

The company has a number of unique USPs with the longevity of both team members and clients as well as a well founded company ethos of enjoying the work they do. Asked what else sets DBASS apart from other mid-tier firms, Dermot Brennan references their extraordinary word-of-mouth culture whereby 97% of new clients are referrals.

"Because our business is built almost entirely on referrals, we never view a new client as a transaction. We see every engagement as the beginning of a long term relationship."

"We work closely with family business-

es and have considerable experience supporting succession planning, which is a key issue for many clients at the moment," Brennan adds.

The leadership team's emphasis on operational excellence really stands out. They believe that operational excellence is the link between meeting regulatory requirements and delivering the standard of quality and growth they expect of themselves. It means refusing to settle for "good enough".

Brennan says they believe in the power of small, steady improvements.

"The 1% refinements that, over time, create meaningful gains for our clients."

Talent

All companies are facing the same competitive challenges to attracting and retaining graduate talent but Byrne

views it through a particular lens.

"We don't just offer jobs; we offer a genuine partnership from day one. Being shortlisted for Employer of the Year at the Irish Accountancy Awards reaffirmed something we've always believed: our culture is our greatest strength. We have a team of 32 and here, work-life balance isn't a slogan, it's how we operate."

Doran adds, "We attract both top tier graduates and experienced professionals by making one clear promise: you will never be "lost" in a system."

Wealth Management

DBASS is focusing heavily on corporate finance and tax right now because that's where the market is focused. Brennan says their work follows their client's success.

"Our growth to date has been largely organic, driven by referrals. We're now seeing a generation of businesses reach key milestones, whether that's scaling through acquisition, attracting investment, planning succession or preparing for sale. In response, we've strengthened our focus on Corporate Finance and Tax to help clients protect their wealth and plan for the future."

For us, sharing expertise is an act of partnership, not self promotion.

Economic Landscape

In today's geopolitical landscape, SMEs can face specific challenges. The company's strategy is to adapt to this uncertainty.

"Our strategy is built on a simple truth: business owners shouldn't have to carry the weight alone. In many ways, we see ourselves as the Harry Diamond to our clients' Rory McIlroy. They're the ones with the world class swing and the ambition to go for the green; our role is to be the person right beside them, carrying the heavy bag and keeping a cool head when the wind picks up!" says Doran.

Byrne adds that in practice, this means more proactive, advisory led support; practical, safe adoption of AI; managing rising costs and margin pressure; navigating increased regulation and improving access to finance.

"Modernisation isn't about replacing the human element; it's about liberating it. We are investing heavily in our technology, but not so we can sit behind screens, we're doing it so we can get out from behind the desk and spend more time at the table with our clients."

It's exactly what their clients would expect.