

# In the **Spotlight**

**An interview with Ronald Taylor, Head of  
Diversity and Inclusion, Mizuho Americas**



ARMSTRONG WOLFE



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## What does your career journey look like?

My career journey has been anything but linear. I actually started off working with children in Residential Treatment Facilities (RTF) and truly enjoyed the work, although at times it was emotionally draining. I felt I was making a real impact in the lives of the 10-14-year-old boys I worked with.

They'd been removed from their homes because of challenges either they or their parents were having. I often served as one of the few male role models for many of them. I still describe this work as the most challenging I've ever done.

Unfortunately, it did not pay very well and I decided to go back to school later in life to get an undergrad in Business Management with a focus on accounting. Why accounting? At the time, Big 6 public accounting paid well (relatively) and while I didn't have a complete understanding of what I was getting into, I went for it anyway.

I was fortunate to land an internship with KPMG in their

Boston office and upon completion was offered a position on the Audit team. I declined, as the next year I was moving to New York and getting married. To my surprise KPMG amended the offer to include New York and my professional career started. While doing financial service audit, I was very involved in KPMG's diversity and inclusion initiatives. After receiving my CPA and making manager I went to the partners and informed them I was going to leave accounting to pursue diversity & inclusion work full-time.

Again to my surprise, about two weeks later there was an offer to join the newly created Workplace Solutions team where I focused on diversity, work-life and community. I knew then that diversity and inclusion would be my life work. Following KPMG I worked for several firms: EisnerAmper, Deutsche Bank, The Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and my current position as Head of Diversity & Inclusion for Mizuho Americas.

## What are the skills that have led you to be such an expert and renowned voice

## in the D&I world?

There is no real "command and control" with D&I. Many of the skills I incorporate into my work center around influence, patience, and helping leaders and employees see a vision for a more robust, engaged, and profitable organization by ensuring D&I is at the center of everything they do. I also spend time cultivating and leveraging a robust network of other D&I practitioners. I'm a LinkedIn groupie and find many valuable articles and insights to help inform Mizuho's D&I initiatives.

## What do you think are the main challenges faced by D&I professionals at the moment?

Prior to the horrific and tragic events of 2020, I think the challenges were greater. Right now I feel there is a window of empathy and opportunity to make significant strides in moving D&I forward. I feel that many who were unmoved regarding issues of racial injustice are engaging. A lot of organizations, including Mizuho, have established diversity



dialogues and listening sessions acknowledging the need for employees to truly let their voices be heard and fulfilling the desire of many who want to hear it. I have seen leaders doubling down on their diversity commitment by becoming more actively engaged in the efforts.

## How does the Mizuho D&I strategy differ between regions?

I really enjoy the D&I conversations relating to D&I across the regions. In Tokyo, where Mizuho's head office is, they've established a Diversity Committee to address challenges in Japan which are specific to the region. I coordinate with the Committee to hear about challenges and opportunities, as well as share on focus areas in the Americas. EMEA is another region I'm able to collaborate with, helping them to launch different initiatives, i.e – a Reverse Mentoring Initiative, where the senior employee is mentored by a younger one to bring new perspectives. I've also had the opportunity to participate on a global panel in support of Diversity Month.

## How does Mizuho measure progress and success relating to D&I?

It is important to analyze metrics as they relate to gender and ethnic representation however it is equally important to ensure a culture of inclusivity and engagement. Many companies focus on the numbers without putting equal efforts into managing the culture. Mizuho is intentional in making sure the diversity work isn't just a numbers game and spends a good deal of time addressing the culture and sense of belonging of all its employees.

## Who is the Ronald 'outside of work'? What are your own interests and what other roles and positions do you hold?

Golf, golf, and more golf. I only play on days that end in the letter "Y". My wife got me lessons 16 years

ago and I'm sure she's regretted it ever since. I've recently joined the Board of Advisors for Genesys Works NYC, an organization that provides high school age young professionals with internships with financial service firms. I also serve on the Bronx Community College Business and Technology Board of Advisors. My family loves to travel. Our last trip before the pandemic was an incredible cruise to Alaska. We're looking forward to being able to travel again soon.

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