

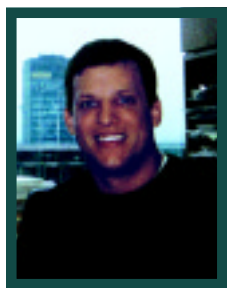
Taking a Bite Out of the

BIG
APPLE

Matt Belcher (McDonald Class, 1998) has arrived. At 28, he's in a six-figure job with a top accounting firm in glittering New York City, transacting multi-million dollar deals, and dispensing savvy advice to Fortune 500 companies.

Not bad for a small-town kid who walked into Cooley Law School hating numbers.

Belcher, who grew up in quiet Milford, Mich., is a National Tax Manager in the Washington National Tax Subchapter K Group of Deloitte & Touche.



MATT BELCHER

When Belcher arrived at Cooley in 1995, it was with the intention of becoming a trial lawyer. He had no background in accounting, actually hated numbers, and figured he was destined for life in the courtroom. Then he took Kim Colgate's tax class at Cooley. Life changed.

Belcher found the subject of tax challenging, but fascinating.

"Everyone was having a hard time, but for me it was easy," he recalled. As he sought out related classes, he noticed something significant. "This was an opportunity that other people were passing up. This was a niche."

From Cooley he moved on to Georgetown Law School in Washington, D.C., to participate in one of the top-rated tax LL.M. programs in the country. The LL.M. program was intense — as was the pace of job offers that went with it. Within three weeks of starting the program, Belcher accepted a job with KPMG LLP. He worked out a deal to work in the firm's national tax office in Washington, D.C., while he was pursuing his degree. When he completed his LL.M., Belcher moved to Los Angeles, Calif., to work for KPMG as a Senior Associate, International Corporate Tax Services.

California was great, Belcher recalled, and the weather was wonderful. But Belcher and his wife, Michelle, missed their families and wanted to come back east. In addition, while

Belcher enjoyed the international tax work he was doing, he wanted to expand his horizons and get into partnership tax.

All these ideas fit in with Belcher's plan to pursue a career with accounting firms. Belcher said he explored the idea of working in a law firm, but found that the complex work he could do with accounting firms suited him better.

One day when he was back in D.C. for a visit, Belcher pursued a lead with a national tax group that a colleague had told him about. The position had already been filled, but Belcher knew he'd be looking for a post later, so he sent his résumé anyway. Three days later, the firm flew him to New York and an offer was extended to him that evening.

Welcome to the lights of Broadway. Belcher was hired as a manager by Deloitte & Touche and works at 50th and Broadway. This is the national tax group of a top-notch accounting firm. Like most of the top accounting firms, it is based in Washington, D.C., but uniquely, Deloitte & Touche's Subchapter K national tax group operates primarily out of the New York City office because it's close to the firm's clients, many of them on the Fortune 500 list.

The glitter of Midtown was another adjustment for Belcher. His leased car sits in another state at the home of his wife's relatives because it's too expensive to garage it in the city. He's recovered from the distance traveling in California and has now adjusted to the pattern of cab, trains, and subways of the New Yorker.

The cost of living is shocking, and the sheer numbers of people surprising, but perhaps not as surprising as finding himself living in New York City.

"I never thought in a million years that I'd be in New York, I said 'anywhere but New York.'" he recalled, "but I find myself here and I love it."

Belcher is thrilled with the job also, working with others from his LL.M. class and thriving on the challenging job, which involves sophisticated tax issues, mergers and acquisitions, "tons of writing," a wide variety of transactions, and researching questions for the firm's practice offices.

"Sometimes you tap yourself, 'Is it really happening?' I found a home," he said. ■