

Baker Tilly Retail and Leisure team

In today's competitive retail market, the challenges retailers face have never been more complex. With an ever-changing commercial landscape, it has become a constant challenge to achieve strategic advantage in the retail market.

Our Retail and Leisure Team understand these challenges and have a track record of delivering relevant, focused and practical advice to our retail clients. We provide tailored business solutions to retailers in the following areas:

- Corporate governance
- Corporate tax
- Financial management and control
- Financing growth and succession
- Fraud detection and prevention
- IT systems
- Managing regulation and legislation
- Property / real estate
- Recruitment, retention and motivation
- Shareholder issues
- Strategic planning
- VAT

Industry knowledge

We are continually investing in the sector, developing intellectual capital and driving thought leadership. We have a network of experienced, retail focused professionals who meet regularly to discuss new regulations, identify emerging issues and develop client services.

Sub-sector specialism and coverage

An in-depth understanding of key industry and sector specific issues is central to the delivery of our services. Our Retail and Leisure Team have experience working with clients across a full range of retail market sectors including restaurants, hotels, clothing, pharmacies and personal care.

International network

Baker Tilly is an independent member of Baker Tilly International, the 8th largest network in the world represented by 128 firms in 93 countries. Our London and other UK offices can call upon member firms around the world to provide our clients with local expertise in any overseas market place. Our ability to 'think local, act global' is essential for our multi-national and expanding retail clients.

Our retail network expands much further than within our own firm and international member firms. We also have a close network of trusted legal, property and private equity professionals who specialise in the retail sector.

Client service

Our partner led approach to client service is rooted in the belief that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to retail businesses. We have found that our clients want to work

with a firm that understands their individual business issues and challenges, while providing excellent client service and an independent view point. Developing strong, personal relationships with our clients is at the forefront of our service. We believe that a strong working relationship based on honesty, respect and integrity, is the best foundation for success.

Developing solutions requires excellent technical knowledge and a thorough understanding of the market. Our Retail and Leisure Team work closely with researchers, clients and industry opinion leaders to make sure we are up to date on the latest market developments. This enables us to offer advice and solutions on the real issues impacting retailers today, including:

- Financial planning and modelling
- Systems improvement and integration
- Pricing and costing support
- Capital allowance and corporate tax planning
- Employee retention and motivation
- Acquisitions and disposals
- VAT and supply chain management
- Audit and accounting
- Real estate/ property

Team profiles

Mark Harwood

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Mark, an audit partner specialising in advising AIM and full list companies, leads our Retail and Leisure Team. He has worked with a number of significant retail and providing audit, business process improvement reviews and corporate finance transaction support services.

Mark also previously worked as CFO of a UK retail services group which owned and operated 460 stores in the UK and Europe. He grew the group three-fold through a number of successful acquisitions, where it became the largest operator and consolidator in its market.

Anna McLaren

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Anna McLaren, Head of VAT in our London office, specialises in VAT and duty advice. Particular areas of expertise and experience include retail reviews, identifying duty savings opportunities, customer loyalty schemes and property compliance issues. Anna regularly works with retailers to identify and implement indirect tax planning opportunities to deliver tax savings and cash flow benefits.

Howard Freedman

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Howard is an audit partner specialising in the retail and property sectors. Howard has a wealth of experience advising several mid-sized retailers, restaurant chains and property companies, both listed and unlisted, on strategic and financial matters. In addition to advising a large number of retail and commerce related businesses, Howard is also Chairman of Baker Tilly's Property and Construction Group.

Robert Donaldson

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Robert Donaldson is a partner in our M&A and Private Equity team where he advises on business disposals, acquisitions and all forms of fund raising from both debt and equity providers.

His role on transactions is to find and negotiate the best deal possible for our clients whether selling a business for a vendor, acquiring a business for a buyer, or raising debt and equity funding for growth or a partial realisation of value. Rob and our M&A and Private Equity practice are always happy to spend time talking to good quality retail businesses about how they achieve their ambitions.

Kevin Phillips

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Kevin is a corporate tax partner with particular expertise in advising small-cap listed companies on the effective management of their tax affairs, both in the UK and internationally. He is especially familiar with the UK/US cross-border issues that retailers often encounter and spent 18 months in New York advising US companies with UK operations.

Kevin has advised on the tax-efficient structuring of numerous retail based acquisitions, disposals, IPOs and reorganisations. He is experienced in the particular issues arising on US catalogue acquisitions by UK groups, including the tax-efficient structuring and financing of such acquisitions, US federal, state and withholding taxes, and obtaining tax relief for intellectual property.

Paul Newman

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Paul specialises in the provision of audit and advisory services to larger privately owned and listed retail businesses. He has extensive experience of successfully guiding businesses through to IPO on the AIM market where Baker Tilly are recognised as one of the UK's leading advisers. He provides clients with strategic advice on acquisitions, disposals and Private Equity funding and has a particular interest in fraud detection and prevention within the retail sector