

## Hey! What's New? 2025-48

### It's Getting Harder to Become a Partner at EY, Deloitte, PwC or KPMG

Here's an article that caught my attention this morning. Polly Thompson writes in today's edition of the *Business Insider* that "making it to partner at one of the Big Four professional services firms — Deloitte, EY, PwC and KPMG — is the pinnacle of success for many consultants and accountants. Partners are the firms' most senior employees. Those who hold equity in the business traditionally get a vote in strategic matters and a share of annual profits. That meant each of Deloitte's equity partners in the UK received the equivalent of \$1.3 million last year."

But becoming a partner is notoriously difficult, she wrote, "and is only getting more competitive as structural shake-ups and slowing growth have reduced partner numbers and annual payouts."

Business Insider asked two recruiters who place partners at the Big Four firms and a former PwC partner who recently left the firm for the advice they'd give early-career employees who want the coveted role.

James O'Dowd, founder of the global executive recruiter Patrick Morgan, which specializes in senior partner hiring and industry analysis, told *BI* that two key traits were needed to become a Big Four partner: a "commercial nature" and an understanding of "the politics within the business."

"A lot of your success is about the support and encouragement you get from senior individuals and the individuals around you as much as it is your competence," he said, adding that "you can be technically good, but unless you invest time building those internal networks, you won't progress as quickly"

Mohamed Kande, who became PwC's global chairman last year, wrote in a 2021 LinkedIn post that several executives in the firm helped him "learn the many areas of our business" and "helped me grow and provided me with tremendous opportunities to advance my career."

Thompson quotes Dowd as saying that, "as a junior, you should start putting your hand up to do the tasks other people don't want to do. Over your career, that will build you a reputation as someone who can get stuff done."

Paul Webster, a former EY employee who's now a managing partner at Page Executive, a senior talent recruitment firm, advises employees to start incorporating more networking and client events into their schedules, and "be good at schmoozing."

"Ultimately, a partner in a Big Four is a sales role," O'Dowd told *BI*. "Your sole focus is on winning and nurturing client relationships." He said a Big Four career meant transitioning from doer to revenue generator to seller. "As you progress through those levels, you're increasingly managing people and then eventually the onus is on not only managing but bringing in money," so developing those skills from an early point will help to set you apart, O'Dowd said.

Working your way up the ranks internally isn't the only way to a Big Four partnership, Thompson wrote.

Alan Paton joined PwC as an equity partner from Google. He worked in AI cloud capabilities in its financial services division before leaving the Big Four firm this year. Paton told *BI* that “every hiring decision is based on the business case, so to become a partner from an external company, you have to have specific skills the firm is lacking.”

O'Dowd said Big Four employees should be thinking carefully about positioning themselves and their skill sets. "Think strategically about your progression and the area you're filling versus who else is in the organization," he said. "If I'm smart and I'm still developing my capability, I might position myself into an area where I know there's a gap."

In response to a request for comment, KPMG US's vice chair of talent and culture, Sandy Torchia, said the firm aimed to empower partners with three essential mindsets.

"These mindsets — referred to as 'owner, operator, steward' — are vital to the partnership's strength and provide our partners with meaningful connections to KPMG throughout their careers and beyond," she said, adding that “we also recognize that career aspirations evolve. By fostering a multi-disciplinary firm with diverse career pathways, we not only better support our clients but also offer our professionals layered opportunities throughout their journey."

Get the whole story at [It's getting harder to become a partner at EY, Deloitte, PwC, or KPMG. Here's what you'll need to make it.](#)