

Top 5 Fundamental Questions to Ask When Interviewing with a Foreign-Owned Company

I have found over years of working with Foreign parent companies with U.S. operations that there is obviously a different culture and set of goals dependent on many factors. The primary factors consist of the country of origin and the global footprint of the company. Where and how the U.S. operations factor in global priorities is essential when considering a position in the U.S. with a foreign-owned company. Below is a list of the top 5 fundamental questions you need to ask when interviewing with a foreign-owned company. These questions are not in priority order and will lead to follow-up questions during an interview.

1. **What percentage of the revenue and profit comes from the U.S. versus other countries:**
This is important because it may drive decision making for the company as a whole. The bigger presence and profit that comes from the U.S., the more you will be at the table on major decisions the company will make. If the foreign parent is publicly traded, you should be able to find quite a bit of this information on-line and will want to do your homework before the interview.
 - If the U.S. is profitable, you will have more money to work within tax planning, implementation, and resources.
2. **What is the size of the foreign parent tax team and reporting structure in the U.S. and overseas?**
 - Understanding the size of the foreign parent tax team as it relates to the U.S. tax team as well as the global reporting structure of that team will tell you a lot as to how involved the U.S. will be in the tax decisions.
3. **Risk Tolerance for the company from a tax perspective:**
 - This is extremely helpful to understand because it will often determine if the tax department as a whole and in the U.S. is more tax compliance or tax planning focused.
4. **Growth mode and how acquisitive the company is:**
 - This ties into #3 because typically, if the company is in a growth mode and very acquisitive, they might tend to be more planning focused. This is not always the case, but these two questions tie into each other. What environment are you used to and feel most comfortable in? This will be imperative to understand before accepting a position
5. **Autonomy – How much autonomy does the U.S. have? What decisions are made in the U.S. versus overseas?**
 - This is so important to understand and to decide which environment is better suited to your needs and personality. Back to #1, if the U.S. is profitable and makes a higher percentage of the revenue, you will probably have more autonomy. If not, you might have less. Not in every situation because many foreign companies rely heavily on the U.S. for their primary technical expertise, which could put you in a favorable position within the company globally.

