



**leonid**

# **GUIDE TO THE US CORPORATE TAX TALENT LANDSCAPE**

**2026**





# CONTENTS

<b>01. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>02. MACROECONOMIC INFLUENCES ON THE TALENT MARKET</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>03. MARKET TRENDS IN 2026</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>04. KEY PROFILES IN DEMAND</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>05. WHAT CANDIDATES ARE LOOKING FOR IN 2026</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>06. SOURCING STRATEGIES</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>07. TALENT INSIGHTS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>08. SALARY BENCHMARKS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>09. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDIX. BUILDING A FUTURE-READY CORPORATE TAX TEAM WITH TALENT INTELLIGENCE</b>	<b>14</b>

# 01.

## INTRODUCTION

**Welcome to Leonid’s guide to the US corporate tax talent landscape, providing salary benchmarks and candidate insights to help you make more informed hiring decisions.**

The US corporate tax recruitment market remains competitive in 2026, with steady demand across both public accounting and in-house tax functions. This demand is being driven by a mix of regulatory complexity, evolving enforcement priorities, continued global tax reform readiness, and accelerating tax technology adoption.

As tax teams are asked to do more with leaner headcount, employers are prioritising professionals who can combine technical depth with commercial judgment; especially in provisions, federal compliance and planning and international tax (inbound/outbound).

In this guide, we explore the macro factors shaping the market, the most in-demand profiles, what candidates want in 2026, and best-practice sourcing strategies, along with US salary benchmarks and an appendix on how to build a future-ready tax team using Talent Intelligence.

### At a glance: 2026 market snapshot

				
<i>Very high hiring difficulty across US tax talent pools</i>	<i>15–22% average turnover in public accounting</i>	<i>Peak attrition at 3–7 years (Senior–Manager level)</i>	<i>Strong demand across provisions + international tax</i>	<i>Increasing importance of tax technology capability</i>



#### **Dean Dugas**

Principal consultant - Tax  
Leonid Group



## 02.

# MACROECONOMIC INFLUENCES ON THE TALENT MARKET

**Conversations with clients and candidates in the market tell us that these are the major issues they face right now:**

### 1. Cost discipline and headcount efficiency

Many organisations remain cautious on permanent headcount and are hiring more selectively; seeking multi-skilled professionals who can cover compliance, provision cycles and stakeholder support without adding multiple layers.

### 2. Regulatory scrutiny and enforcement volatility

Workforce shifts at the IRS and broader administrative changes have increased uncertainty around enforcement capacity and priorities, driving continued demand for strong documentation, audit readiness and controversy support skills.

### 3. Tax technology acceleration

Tax functions are continuing to modernise processes, integrate with finance systems, and automate recurring compliance work, thereby raising demand for candidates who can operate across tax and data/tooling environments.

### 4. Global tax reform and cross-border complexity

Multinationals continue to resource for international tax structuring, modelling and reporting, particularly where US inbound/outbound considerations interact with global minimum tax readiness and transfer pricing governance.

### 5. Transactions, restructuring and governance

Even with uneven deal flow, organisations continue to require tax capability for restructurings, integrations, and risk/governance workstreams, especially where tax has reputational or disclosure implications.



## 03.

# MARKET TRENDS IN 2026

**We are seeing several clear shifts in the US corporate tax hiring landscape:**

- **In-house growth remains strong**, with many companies bringing work closer to the business to improve control, responsiveness and governance.
- **Provisions capability is a major hiring priority**, particularly for organisations needing stronger forecasting, ETR management, and quarter-close resilience.
- **International tax hiring remains competitive**, with inbound/outbound specialists heavily sought after by multinationals and PE-backed businesses expanding globally.
- **Tax technology skills are differentiating candidates**, as employers look to streamline compliance and integrate systems and data more effectively.
- **Candidate-led dynamics persist**: demand remains high and hiring is “very hard” across tax talent pools in many locations, increasing offer competition and counter-offer risk.





## 04.

# KEY PROFILES IN DEMAND

**Below are the profiles we consistently see in highest demand across the US market.**

### 1. Tax provisions

Employers are prioritising provision strength to support close cycles and governance. Typical requirements include:

- ASC 740 expertise (quarterly and annual provision)
- ETR forecasting and variance analysis
- Audit support and documentation discipline
- Ability to partner with finance on close cadence and controls

### 2. Federal tax compliance & planning

Core hiring remains strong in both practice and industry for professionals who can deliver compliance while advising on planning opportunities:

- Federal return preparation/review and compliance management
- Exposure to credits and incentives, deductions, and entity structuring
- IRS audit readiness and correspondence support

### 3. International tax (US outbound/inbound)

International profiles remain highly competitive; especially those who can operate across planning, governance and practical execution:

- US inbound structuring and withholding considerations
- US outbound planning, repatriation, and cross-border governance
- Strong collaboration with transfer pricing and local market advisors

### 4. Corporate tax managers & senior managers

Mid-senior hires remain the “pinch point” of the market, often expected to lead compliance calendars, manage stakeholder demands, and supervise delivery teams.



### 5. Tax technology & transformation

Demand continues to rise for candidates who can improve processes and tooling, often bridging tax and finance systems. Employers value:

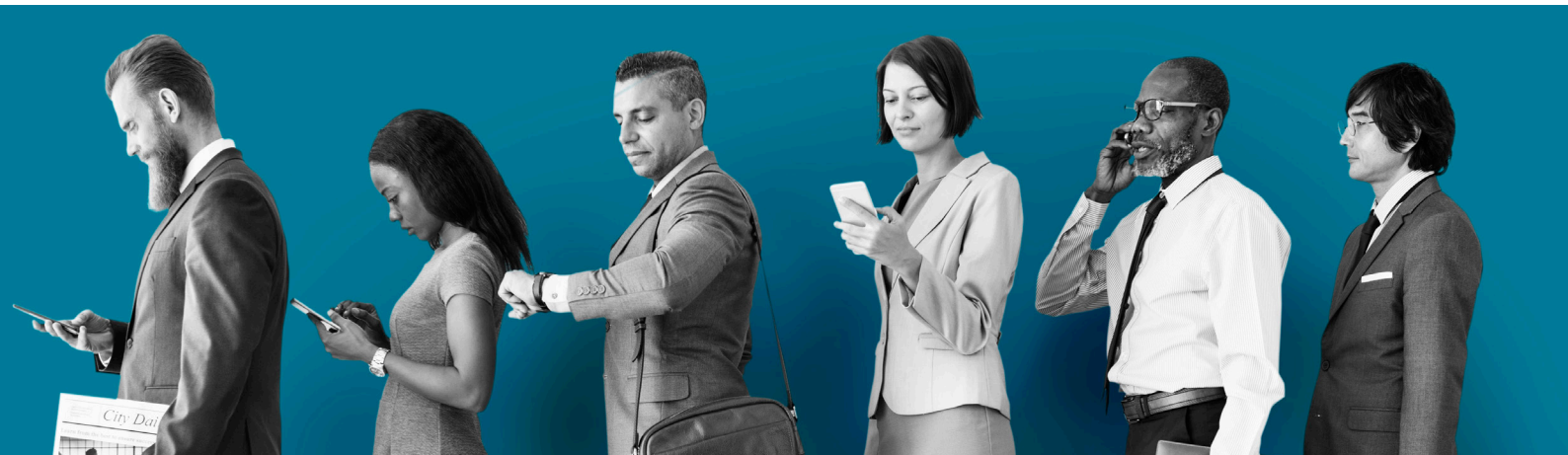
- Tax engine / compliance tools and workflow automation exposure
- Data fluency and reporting discipline
- Change management and process re-design capability

### 6. Heads of tax / tax directors

Leadership roles require a broader strategic lens:

- Governance, risk and controls ownership
- Executive stakeholder management and board-level communication
- Oversight of provision, compliance, planning and external advisor relationships

### Tax Talent Demand





## 05.

# WHAT CANDIDATES ARE LOOKING FOR IN 2026

**Our conversations with US corporate tax candidates consistently surface the following priorities:**

- **Flexible working models:** hybrid remains the baseline expectation in many markets.
- **Clear progression routes:** especially at Senior—Manager levels, where competition and counter-offers are common.
- **Competitive compensation and benefits:** salary alignment and transparency are increasingly central in decision-making.
- **Meaningful, commercially relevant work:** candidates want exposure beyond “pure compliance,” including partnering with the business and shaping decisions.
- **Modern tooling and upskilling:** candidates increasingly favour organisations investing in systems, automation and capability development.
- **Sustainable workloads:** turnover patterns indicate continued sensitivity to burnout—particularly around peak cycles.





# 06. SOURCING STRATEGIES

## Work with a specialist recruiter

Partnering with a tax specialist helps you access the most relevant talent, including passive candidates who are not actively applying but will move for the right opportunity.

At Leonid, we operate with a search-led approach designed to deliver pace and quality; supporting clients with market mapping, referral-driven sourcing, and high-calibre shortlists.

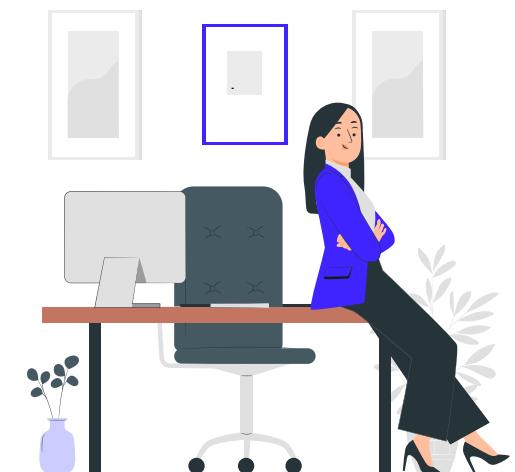
## Move quickly in your recruitment

In a candidate-led market, speed matters. Protracted processes increase the risk of losing finalists to competing offers or counter-offers, particularly at Manager and Senior Manager levels.

## Employer branding is key

Tax candidates increasingly assess culture, leadership, flexibility and development. A clear EVP (and a recruiter who can represent it well) can be the difference between securing a first-choice hire and finishing second.

Traditional Recruitment	Leonid Approach
Reactive hiring	<b>Proactive market mapping</b>
CV-led shortlists	<b>Search-led talent identification</b>
Slow processes	<b>Magic Month (30-day delivery)</b>
Limited insight	<b>Talent Intelligence data-led hiring</b>





## 07

# TALENT INSIGHTS

**Let's take a look at some key hiring stats from the US corporate tax recruitment market, and what they mean for hiring in 2026.**

### Hiring pressure and talent availability

- LinkedIn-based analysis shows tax and accounting talent pools remain “**very hard to hire**” nationally, reflecting sustained competition for experienced candidates.
- In one LinkedIn-based market snapshot, the US tax talent pool was estimated at **~124,000 tax professionals** on the platform—highlighting the finite nature of the experienced candidate market.

### Turnover and mobility signals

- Public accounting firms are experiencing **15%–22% average turnover** in 2025 data, with churn highest at early-career levels.
- First-year accountant turnover is estimated at **25%–35%**, reinforcing why Senior and early Manager hiring remains so contested.
- Survey-based pipeline research suggests turnover is commonly highest **after 3–5 years**, aligning with the Senior-to-Manager promotion window where many professionals exit to industry.

### Big 4 recalibration

- PwC cut **~1,500 roles (~2% of its US workforce)** in 2025, citing “historically low” attrition and the need to realign capacity—illustrating how even large employers are actively reshaping talent models.





### IRS workforce and compliance impact

- The IRS reported **90,516 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in FY 2025**, reflecting a materially scaled workforce compared with earlier years.
- A GAO report covering the 2025 filing season found **17,047 employees (around 17% of the IRS workforce) left** via deferred resignation and early retirement programs in 2025, highlighting significant workforce change.
- A TIGTA snapshot reported that **more than 11,000 IRS employees (about 11% of the workforce) were impacted by deferred resignation or probationary terminations** as of March 2025, including disproportionate impacts in certain job series.

### What this means for employers

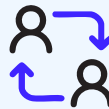
- Expect continued **compression at mid-levels** (Senior—Manager), with higher counter-offer risk and faster hiring cycles required.
- Provision and international profiles will continue to attract premiums due to scarcity and complexity.
- Audit readiness and documentation skills remain valuable as enforcement priorities and capacity evolve.



15—22%  
average  
turnover  
in public  
accounting



25—35%  
attrition in  
early careers



~20%+  
turnover at  
mid-levels  
(Senior—  
Manager)



Peak  
resignations  
post busy  
season  
(Apr—Jun)



~124,000 tax  
professionals  
active on  
LinkedIn



# 08.

## SALARY BENCHMARKS (2026)

	Base salary range (USD)
Senior	\$70,000 — \$100,000 (up to \$110k—\$115k in NYC / LA / SF)
Manager	\$100,000 — \$150,000
Senior manager	\$150,000 — \$180,000 (up to \$200k in top markets)
Director	\$180,000 — \$250,000
Partner / head of tax	\$300,000 — \$400,000+

Please note: industry, company size, technical complexity, and location can materially influence compensation. Premiums are most pronounced in NYC / LA / SF and in specialist provisions and international profiles.





## 09.

# CONCLUSION

**The US corporate tax recruitment market remains highly active in 2026. Demand is being sustained by regulatory complexity, ongoing modernisation of tax functions, and persistent scarcity in the experienced talent pool, particularly at Manager and Senior Manager levels.**

In this environment, employers that succeed will be those that combine clear role definition, compelling EVP messaging, and decisive hiring processes, supported by data-led market understanding.

To find out more about Leonid's approach - including our search-led methodology, Magic Month pace, and LeonidLive video shortlisting - please get in touch with [Dean Dugas](#), Principal Consultant - Tax



**Dean Dugas**

Principal consultant - Tax

**Leonid Group**

[dean@leonid-group.com](mailto:dean@leonid-group.com)



# APPENDIX.

## BUILDING A FUTURE-READY CORPORATE TAX TEAM WITH TALENT INTELLIGENCE

### Why traditional hiring approaches are no longer enough?






With tax talent pools classified as “very hard to hire” in many US markets, and turnover/tenure patterns reinforcing high mobility in key experience bands, reactive hiring alone is increasingly risky.

To build resilience, corporate tax leaders need a forward-looking approach that identifies capability gaps early, supports retention, and ensures the team structure is aligned to the organisation’s future demands.

### Introducing Leonid’s talent intelligence

Leonid’s *Talent Intelligence* helps organisations **benchmark, map, and future-proof** their corporate tax teams – combining market data, talent mapping, and specialist insight to support better workforce decisions.

### How talent intelligence supports corporate tax leaders

<p><b>Workforce benchmarking</b></p>  <p><i>Understand how your team compares to relevant peers across:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team structure and seniority mix</li> <li>• Compensation competitiveness by location</li> <li>• Span of control and operating model choices</li> <li>• Diversity composition and progression pathways</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skills and capability mapping</b></p>  <p><i>Move beyond job titles to assess real coverage across:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax provisions (ASC 740)</li> <li>• Federal compliance &amp; planning</li> <li>• International tax (US inbound/outbound)</li> <li>• Tax technology and transformation readiness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Talent market intelligence</b></p>  <p><i>Make faster, better hiring decisions with real-time market visibility:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talent availability by geography and specialism</li> <li>• Demand intensity and hiring competition indicators</li> <li>• Candidate motivators (comp, flexibility, progression)</li> <li>• Risk areas for attrition and counter-offers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Location and operating model strategy</b></p>  <p><i>With demand rising in both primary hubs and select secondary markets, Talent Intelligence supports decisions on where to hire for best access-to-talent and cost balance.</i></p>	<p><b>Succession and leadership planning</b></p>  <p><i>Identify succession gaps early—reducing key-person risk and improving continuity across Director and Head of Tax levels.</i></p>
--	--	---	---	---

### Outcome: A future-ready tax function

By applying *Talent Intelligence*, organisations can build tax teams that are:

- Structured for resilience and scalability
- Equipped for increasing technical complexity
- Competitive in a tight, high-mobility talent market



# leonid



## Ready to get in touch with us?

You can reach out via the following methods:

**T** [+44 20 3958 7484](tel:+442039587484)

**E** [dean@leonid-group.com](mailto:dean@leonid-group.com)

**W** [www.leonid-group.com](http://www.leonid-group.com)

## GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS

Tintagel House, 92 Albert Embankment,  
London SE1 7TY