

KANSAS CITY BUSINESS JOURNAL

MIZE CHANGES NAME

Shifting mission, new brand

CLIENT PRACTICE, SURGE IN RESTAURANT WORK DRIVE MOVE

Mize Houser & Co. has been experiencing rapid national growth in its restaurant franchise services, so it's shortening its brand name to Mize CPAs.

The firm, founded in 1956, has grown to about 225 employees, with 190 in its headquarters in Topeka and an additional 35 in its Overland Park office.

"For about 45 years, we were just a local CPA firm that was well known in Topeka and Overland Park, but in the last 15 years the quick-service restaurant piece of the practice has grown rapidly," Chairman James Hilbert said. "We've become a national firm now. The internet allowed us to branch out of Topeka and Kansas City to create a brand that really is unmatched when it comes to providing services to McDonald's franchisees. We serve more McDonald's restaurants than any other CPA firm in the United States. That's allowed us to expand to other franchises. The ticket to our growth has been technology and an ability to serve these clients remotely."

Hilbert said most franchisee clients already were calling the firm "Mize," so it made sense to change the brand and make it easier to find online.

Mize has spent millions on technology in the past 20 years, building bill pay and payroll systems, and adding highly experienced partners who understand the special aspects of franchises.

The firm continues to invest in technology. It's working on systems that automate many processes previously done manually, allowing more data analytics



James Hilbert is chairman of Mize CPAs Inc.

to be done. It saves money for Mize, which saves clients money while providing a higher level of service.

The investments have been working. Mize serves about 2,000 McDonald's locations. Hilbert set a goal to hit 3,000 in three to five years.

"We still offer traditional audit, tax and accounting services to local clients," he said. "That will always be a constant, but it probably won't grow as fast as our restaurant group. We've got solid people on our audit side and provide great service, but it's just harder to create differentiation and grow that practice. There are 75 auditing firms in Kansas City and five in Topeka doing the same thing we're doing with auditing. But we can stand out on restaurant franchising."