

By Michael Cohn
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BDO merges in MBAF

BDO USA is expanding in Florida by adding Morrison, Brown, Argiz & Farra LLC, a Top 50 Firm in Miami, effective Jan. 16.

The M&A deal will be BDO's eighth in the past year. The Top 10 Firm's fiscal year 2020 revenue totaled \$1.8 billion, up 11 percent year-over-year. The firm hopes to reach \$2 billion in FY21 by expanding its existing market in places like South Florida while investing in new services.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. MBAF CPAs ranked No. 36 on *Accounting Today's* 2020 list of the Top 100 Firms. MBAF's annual revenue was \$135 million as of June 30, 2020. The firm has over 60 partners and more than 500 employees. BDO USA ranked No. 7 on *Accounting Today's* 2020 list of the Top 100 Firms, and over 600 partners and 8,000 employees.

"With BDO and MBAF combining, our respective strengths create an unmatched opportunity for two like-minded firms to become a sum much greater than their parts," said BDO USA CEO Wayne Berson in a statement Friday. "Together, as the leading accounting and advisory firm in Florida, we will maintain our unparalleled dedication to client service and continue to champion the middle market across the country. Like BDO, MBAF has remained committed to excellence, stability and longevity, all while leading with purpose."

MBAF is the biggest accounting and professional services firm based in Florida, and one of the largest Hispanic-owned businesses in the region. The firm dates back to 1969 and provides assurance, tax, accounting, advisory, technology consulting and private wealth management services, MBAF was named a 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017 *South Florida Business Journal* Best Places to Work finalist and a 2020, 2018 and 2017 *Accounting Today* Best Accounting Firm to Work For.

Besides offices across Florida, MBAF also has locations in New York, Maryland, Colorado, Nevada and India. As a part of the deal, MBAF affiliates WhiteOwl and Fiscal Management Associates LLC will also join BDO, with WhiteOwl becoming part of BDO Digital. FMA will become BDO-FMA LLC, adding a complementary nonprofit practice to BDO's own. FMA serves more than 400 nonprofit organizations and funders. MBAF itself is the ninth-largest corporate philanthropist in South Florida, supporting over 100 charities.

“As a Florida market leader, MBAF’s talent, resources and geographic influence will bolster BDO’s presence in the region, and our like-minded approach to philanthropy will allow us to continue to make an impact in the communities we serve,” said MBAF chairman and CEO Tony Argiz in a statement. “Recently, as we celebrated MBAF’s 50th anniversary, I reflected on the incredible success our firm has realized serving our clients by continually evolving with the dramatic shifts in our industry. Our decision to join BDO comes from a position of strength to enhance service to our clients, provide opportunities for our people and continue our strong path of growth in Florida and beyond.”



BDO New York offices Photo: Richard Falco

Koltin Consulting Group CEO Allan Koltin advised both firms on the deal. “MBAF is viewed by many as one of the most successful independent firms in the country, and their joining BDO marks a significant change in the landscape of the profession,” Koltin said in a statement. “This combination is the deal of the century, continuing BDO’s stunning growth trajectory and bringing together two powerhouse firms that share common philosophies around fostering people-first cultures, giving back to local communities and focusing on technology and innovation as the future of the profession.”

The firm plans to continue serving its clients under the BDO brand. “Continuity for our clients and our people remains our top priority as we join forces with BDO,” said Miguel Farra, chairman of tax and accounting at MBAF, in a statement. “Our clients will still see the same names and faces they’ve come to trust over the years, only now with greater resources and capabilities available to all of our practice areas. Joining BDO creates new opportunities for our people, our clients and our communities.”

Last month, BDO expanded in Colorado by adding Cosyntris Advisory Network in Denver. In October, it added Hertzbach & Company in Owings Mills, Maryland, and Quantum Global Advisors in Chicago. In July, it expanded in Colorado and Wyoming by adding ACM LLP, formerly known as Anton Collins Mitchell. In June, BDO added Piercy Bowler Taylor & Kern CPAs, a firm based in Las Vegas, expanding its presence in Nevada and Utah.