



Employer in the spotlight –

Winson Chiu *Surviving keen competition with a recognized qualification*

by Tony Chau

Winson Chiu, financial controller of Dunamis International Limited, a mobile phone trading company in Hong Kong, sees vast opportunities in this competitive mobile phone industry. He also believes that market-driven competition does not only exist in mobile phone trading but also in the job market for accounting personnel.

While there is growing demand for accountants in both Hong Kong and across the border, as an employer who regularly meets job applicants, Chiu asserts that the bar has been raised for quality of talent in the market. In view of that, he is convinced continuous learning and attaining qualifications are essential for those who are keen to stay in the game. He adds that as much as it is for employer's recognition, studying for a qualification is about acquiring knowledge expected of your role.

Chiu chiefs a three-person accounting team that manages the company's daily accounting and financial operations. The company, with a total of 30 members of staff, trades mobile phones and parts globally, especially to the US, Europe and Canada. The overseas market accounts up to 60 percent of the overall trades.

Be adaptable to changes

Survival of the fittest means that you have to be quickly adaptable to changes. Kevin, a senior

accountant under Mr. Chiu's supervision, proves how critical it is to possess such a quality.

“Before joining the accounting team, Kevin had been an internet application manager in our company for a few years. He was engaged in the programming and application of most in-house accounting software and the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. His sensitivity towards numbers and ability to give clear presentation of complex data using strong analytical powers impressed me thoroughly. Also, he is competent in designing user-friendly report formats that provide management with the information they need to understand the business trend,” Chiu says.

Kevin's main role is to ensure smooth financial and accounting operations. “Kevin is responsible for managing the junior staff and he is involved in performing daily accounting duties such as handling invoices, purchase orders, etc. He has to prepare up-to-date reports with key business performance indicators for my review”, says Chiu. Chiu says that there were times when the company needed more sophisticated comparisons of cost, sales and inventory figures in order to come up with new business development strategies. Kevin's competencies in data mining and extracting useful information from the database were much sought after during these projects. He went beyond the company's expectation as he managed to present the figures in a way which added value by giving management insightful ideas into improving business performance.

“Kevin's work constantly exceeds our expectations. He works stably, independently, and diligently. With his previous IT training, he is skilful in problem solving. He only needs guidance and supervision when tackling certain high-level projects,” says Chiu.

As a candidate with an academic background in subjects outside accounting, Kevin also impressed Chiu with his initiative towards continuous learning. Kevin first acquired professional qualifications before moving on to

his current studies, a degree programme with the Open University of Hong Kong. This proves that he is willing to go the extra mile in perfecting his industry knowledge.

“The very sound accounting concepts Kevin obtained from the Accredited Accounting Technicians (AAT) qualification have laid a strong foundation for his further development, and show his determination in pursuing accounting profession as his life-long career,” Chiu says.

A qualification that covers all

Talking about how the AAT Examination benefit students like Kevin, Chiu reckons that the examination is highly localized in terms of the syllabus setting, with topics and live examples that are relevant to the Hong Kong market situation. The syllabus covers a myriad of topics from auditing and financial accounting to business law and communications – everything a beginner needs to know. From Kevin's daily work and communications with other team members, Chiu can see that he is trying to apply the knowledge learnt, especially when he acts fast and accurately in book-keeping the hundreds of transactions which take place every day. Even in relatively minor aspects such as daily correspondence with suppliers and customers, Chiu finds that Kevin learnt a great deal from AAT Examination Paper 2 “Business communication and organization and management”. So the AAT was a qualification that literally covered all.

Knowledge application is important in the learning process and also a key quality that employers look for. “When I recruit staff, I value candidates' willingness to learn and independent problem solving skills as well as a positive attitude in completing every task delegated.” While these qualities may not be observable during job interviews, Chiu says a having a qualification such as AAT is an effective way for job applicants to let the employers know how much they know about accounting, with a solid proof of the knowledge benchmarked via a recognized qualification. “Attaining qualifications and investing in continuous learning is the only way to maintain your competitiveness.” Chiu concludes. **T/D**