



Versatile AAT
Written by Aldric Chau



Name: Evita Pang
Title: Operation Manger
Company: G.M.I. Technology Inc.

Recognition for Mainland talent

Having a free economy, world-class infrastructure and cosmopolitan culture has made Hong Kong into a unique city, appealing to not only investors but also to professional talent. With the increased links in business activities between Hong Kong and the Mainland, accounting professional are migrating to Hong Kong in pursuit of career opportunities. One of these, AAT graduate Ms Evita Pang, tells us the story of her move to Hong Kong.

Tell us about your current job.

I am now the operation manager of G.M.I. Technology Inc., which is a company listed in Taiwan, with branches in Hong Kong and the Mainland. I joined this company five years ago, and I am now mainly responsible for internal control to maintain workflow at a minimum cost. Before this I was with the company's accounting team for four years.

Did you have an accounting background? Why did you choose to attain AAT qualification?

Many years ago I did receive some basic accounting training in the Mainland. I also spent some years there doing accounting and administrative jobs. After I moved to Hong Kong with my family, I found it quite difficult to secure a decent accounting job without a qualification here. Also I needed some academic input to increase my knowledge. Therefore I decided to take AAT examination on a self-study basis. I spent about three years attaining the AAT qualification while I was serving my current company as an assistant accounting manager.

How does accounting differ in Hong Kong and the Mainland?

Although the same set of accounting principles are applied in both places, the taxation law and accounting standards are very different. When it comes down to spreadsheet presentation and other accounting procedures, it took me quite a while to adapt to the system in Hong Kong.

What did you gain most from the AAT examination?

First and foremost, the AAT qualification has enhanced my marketability, due to its wide recognition. This helped me a lot when I first looked for an accounting job in



Hong Kong. Of course I also learnt most of the technical knowledge during preparation for the examinations. Whenever I find any differences between the two systems, I would jot it down and explain them to my colleagues in the Mainland. Auditing was one of the most useful subjects because it relates closely to my current job, which involves internal control and compliance management. From the auditing subject I also grasped the techniques of presenting figures properly on spreadsheets, which is an essential skill for every accounting personnel.

Have you become a better communicator after passing the AAT examination?

Definitely. In the past, I always found it challenging to communicate with external auditors because I was not familiar with the jargon they used. Throughout my studies for the AAT examination, I mastered all the terminology that I need to know for my discussions with people at work. From the business communications subject, I learnt many practical skills in drafting business letters, formal language usage, and so on. These skills are essential for my entire career.

What are the opportunities in the Mainland market for you? Would you consider going back there to develop your career further?

Whilst there are big opportunities in the Mainland market with the fast-growing economy there, I do not plan to go north in the foreseeable future because I enjoy my current job very much. Also, my position requires me to work closely with our teams in the Mainland and Taiwan, giving me a special exposure to different accounting systems. I consider this to be a value-adding experience for my future development in accounting.

What is your competitive edge when compared with local accounting workforce?

As more local companies are expanding their business across the border, it is increasingly essential for Hong Kong accounting staff to have exposure to the Mainland market. My knowledge of the working culture, historical background and lifestyle of the Mainland market makes it easy for me to work with people there. I would say this is my biggest advantage.

What is your career or study plan for the next step?

With my degree in accountancy and AAT qualification attained in Hong Kong, I plan to work toward attaining membership of the Hong Kong Institute of CPAs. I am grateful that my employer has given me the opportunity to learn about operation management, which is another direction I am heading. I plan to devote more effort to enriching my experience in this new area.

Do you have any advice for students in the Mainland who are planning an accounting career in Hong Kong?

From my experience, I would firmly recommend a professional qualification such as the AAT as the very first step. With this qualification, you stand a greater chance of securing a job here. Also, by studying for the eight papers, you will be guided through all the important aspects of accounting.



Evita's Career Pathway

Studied and worked in accounting and administrative areas for around five years in Mainland China	Before 1996
Secretary and Accountant - Chung Nam Enterprises Co.	1996 - 2000
Accounting & Administrative Officer - Suckow & Fischer System Asia Pacific Ltd.	2000 - 2004
Bachelor Degree of Accounting of China - Jinan University (part-time degree conducted by Jinan University and HK College of Technology)	2003 - 2008
Undertook and passed Accredited Technician Examination (ATE) (with 1 paper exemption)	2004 - 2007
Assistant Accounting Manager / Operation Manager - G.M.I. Technology Inc.	2004 - Now