

Employer in the spotlight

AAT qualification lays a strong foundation



Name: Sarah Wong
Title: Accountant
Company: Hong Kong Carpet Holdings Limited

Sarah Wong is not only impressed by AAT-qualified employees' passion for the industry and their professional knowledge at work, but also how the AAT qualification helps accounting personnel pursue their career aspirations.

What are staff member Fanny Siu's key roles and responsibilities?

When Fanny first joined the company, she was mainly responsible for settling payments, handling remittances and working closely with the bank on daily operations. Currently she is still performing these tasks but at a more advanced level and needs to oversee a wider range of areas. She is also responsible for managing the full set of accounts of two subsidiaries by reviewing the general vouchers and transactions.

Tell us about your company's business nature.

Our company specialises in carpet manufacturing and trading businesses. Carpets produced in our mainland factories are distributed to global retail outlets. The Hong Kong office employs about 15 colleagues in the finance department. As a holding company with affiliates and operations in mainland China, we have to be aware of all the PRC accounting rules and regulations in order to avoid any delays in the payment process. Even a tiny mistake in a purchase order could cause serious disruption to the mass manufacturing process.

What were your first impressions of Fanny when she joined the company?

Fanny is a very efficient staff member who achieves high accuracy, which is particularly valued in accounting profession. Also, she is one of the most responsible members of the team. For instance, after submitting the monthly closing report, which is an important accounting document for us, she always waits for my review and approval before leaving the office to make sure everything is fine and that payments can be processed smoothly.

She had just finished the AAT Examination when she joined the team – does she possess any qualities that distinguish her from her counterparts?

Compared with her counterparts, Fanny has a very clear understanding of accounting rules. I believe this was built from her studying for the AAT Examination. I am also impressed by her good financial reporting skills. She is an organized person who keeps a record of all financial documents clearly and can always make data readily available and present them logically for client and management review.

How did you learn about the AAT qualification? What are your views on the examination syllabus?

Apart from Fanny, quite a number of our colleagues have acquired the AAT qualification, and I have learnt about it from them.

The AAT syllabus covers a comprehensive range of topics that accounting personnel are exposed to. The content is localized and practical. It mirrors daily accounting jobs, which is something that students cannot learn from their college studies. Therefore, I can always tell that individuals who have completed the AAT Examination possess a stronger foundation in the basic concepts and techniques when compared with university graduates.

I believe the AAT Examination is suitable for anyone who is interested in learning the essentials of accounting. The level of difficulty is just right for beginners in the profession and is filled with a lot of real business cases as examples which can be applied directly at their work.

Professional qualification, experience and education background – how would you rate these elements when recruiting accounting team members?

Although all of them are very important, to put them in priority, I would say having a professional qualification is what distinguishes you from your counterparts. This can help you stand-out at the interview and increase potential employers' confidence in your abilities. The other two elements are critical as well but they can be attained over time. Continuing education can keep you informed about changes in accounting standards while accumulated experience can enhance your professionalism.

Do you have any advice to people who are interested in accounting?

I would suggest that they follow Fanny's foot steps in attaining a recognized professional qualification such as AAT in order to be in sync with what the industry requires from them. Having the AAT qualification can also open up more opportunities for them to move up the career ladder.

Written by Aldric Chau