

Employer in the spotlight

The two “A”s for success: AAT qualification and Attitude



Name: Gilbert Loke
Title: Managing director
Company: Falcon CPA Limited

As a business leader, a mentor and a teacher in accounting, Gilbert Loke's multiple roles offer him the opportunities of grooming accounting professionals, and give him a keen insight into the qualities that determine success in this sought-after profession.

What is the background to your firm?

Falcon CPA Limited (Falcon) is a relatively new audit firm, set up two years ago. It offers a range of accounting, auditing and company secretarial services. Currently we have six staff members. Our clients are mostly Hong Kong based companies which require auditing services. They mainly come from the manufacturing industry.

What is your role in the company?

As the managing director of Falcon, I spend most of my time in business development. I also focus on staff training and development because every staff member is an important asset. It's crucial that they receive the best possible training at work.

What are the particular qualities which Tiffany shows that impress you, and how does she assist you at work?

Tiffany impresses me the most with her positive work attitude. She is eager to learn and open to advice from superiors, which makes her develop and improve very fast at work. Also, she is a very hardworking colleague who is committed to go for the extra mile for the company. Tiffany still has relatively little experience and so I am now coaching her in many areas from auditing and company secretarial services to accounting and taxation. I believe that the diversity of job nature can broaden her career horizon.

How would you comment on Tiffany's competence in applying technical knowledge at work?

The fact that Tiffany passed the AAT Exam in two years demonstrates the strength of her technical knowledge. Actually, she has achieved more than that. She absorbs practical knowledge day-in day-out, and proactively applies theories to work. I can see her doing this particularly well when handling taxation tasks.



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What are your views on the AAT qualification?

I first heard about AAT when I was in the United Kingdom. I have found that it is a very good qualification for young people who are considering joining the profession. I am also a part-time tutor teaching one of the AAT Examination papers in an educational institution. Therefore, I know that the AAT syllabus is well-planned, very comprehensive and practical, and covers all the essential knowhow.

Do you think attaining the AAT qualification helps accounting personnel like Tiffany excel at work?

Having the qualification gives candidates a great advantage during the job-searching process. From my perspective as an employer, I would definitely give priority to candidates who possess a recognized professional qualification like AAT because it proves that they possess a combination of knowledge and quality. Studying for the AAT Examination has enriched Tiffany's technical knowledge and prepared her to take in and learn more from her practical experience. However, one important quality that distinguished her from the other candidates was her diligence and positive work attitude.

As an employer, what qualities do you expect from accounting personnel?

Experience is a key consideration. However, for candidates with less experience, having qualifications such as AAT or CPA is definitely a plus on their resumes. It is also important for applicants to show commitment to the job. Strong communication skills are essential because as an accountant or auditor you need to communicate with clients in a professional manner. Last but certainly not the least, integrity is everything. Being honest and ethical at work is of utmost importance for accounting personnel at any level.

What in your opinion are the opportunities for Tiffany as she develops her career in the profession?

I can envision Tiffany becoming a qualified accountant or auditor in future. Within the company, in time with experience, she has the good potential to become a manager or even a partner with the firm in future. There are several criteria for partner selection in our company: ability to serve our clients, business development, job management, and time and cost management. These are the important pillars for ensuring financial returns while maintaining a consistently high level of client service. Once she has completed her degree programme and attaining the CPA qualification, Tiffany's go-getter nature means she will be ready for any opportunities presented to her.

What is your advice to youngsters who are interested in joining the profession?

From my frequent contact with young students at the college, I reckon that attitude is the single factor that determines how far one can go in a career. Be positive and proactive. Opportunities are plentiful for those who are prepared.

Written by Aldric Chau

