

Employer in the spotlight
Written by Foster Yim



Name: Wendy Lee
Title: Chief Accountant
Company: Best Fine (HK) Ltd

AAT graduates – Independent, proactive and quality staff

Wendy Lee, Chief Accountant of Best Fine (HK) Ltd, tells us that she holds the AAT qualification in high regard, and talks about how she formed her view from the performance of AAT graduates she has worked with.

Tell us about your company and the core business.

Best Fine (HK) Ltd is a subsidiary of the famous American apparel and accessories brand name GUESS, responsible for sourcing handbags manufacturers for its global markets. Hong Kong was picked as the location for this sourcing office because of its proximity to mainland China, its reliable legal and finance systems, its simple and low-rate tax system, and the integrity and professionalism of its people.

There are around 40 staff in the Hong Kong office. Besides sourcing potential manufacturers in China, we also have a factory in Dongguan with 500 employees.

What are your main roles in the company?

As chief accountant, I oversee the accounting department which has three staff members. I report to the managing director, particularly on the monthly financial reporting. I also liaise with the auditor during the year-end audit.

What are your views on your assistant accountant Johnson? What are his competitive advantages?

I have worked with Johnson Ng for five years. He is a very reliable colleague. Not only has he got solid knowledge in handling full set of accounts, but more importantly, he demonstrates strong initiative towards the different tasks assigned to him. For example, each month he proactively approaches colleagues from the shipping department to check their invoices so as to prepare the monthly report. Also, he will ascertain accounts from different entries in his books and reports, doing a great favour to the management. In short, he is capable of working independently and does not need close supervision.



Do these good attributes have anything to do with the AAT qualification?

Definitely. Johnson is not the first AAT graduate I have worked with. Before joining this company, I worked in accounting firms where colleagues had different qualifications. The differences in ability between the AATs and those without the qualification were significant. For example, whenever I did a random check on the accounts prepared by the staff with the AAT qualification, I never found any mistakes. They are generally quicker workers, more accurate, and more focused than their counterparts.

Are these qualities that you look for when hiring new staff?

I cannot say a definite “yes” nor a definite “no” because each recruitment process has to consider the job requirements on a case-by-case basis. For example, an accounting degree holder does not necessarily perform better than an AAT graduate. Although many accounting degree holders have better English skills, they may not possess the fundamental accounting knowledge and skill sets which are required by the position. So, an AAT qualification does represent a certain degree of ability and hard work.

What are your views on the HKIAAT and the AAT qualification?

Very positive. The qualification and syllabus provide an alternative pathway for those who want to be an accounting professional. As I have said, the abilities of AAT graduates are indeed very good. Anyone who has the experience of working with AAT graduates must agree with this and appreciate the values which AATs could bring to them.