

### ***Employer in the spotlight***

***Written by Aldric Chau***



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**Title:** Principal – Business Risk Services

**Company:** Grant Thornton

### **Opportune conversion into accounting profession**

Non-accounting major graduates can start a bright new chapter in their careers with the AAT qualification. Experienced accounting practitioner Mr. Patrick Rozario from Grant Thornton tells the success story of one e-commerce graduate who has turned into accounting professional through the AAT qualification.

### ***Briefly tell us about Grant Thornton's business***

Grant Thornton, with about 1,500 staff all over China, is the fifth biggest accounting firm in Hong Kong. Our broad scope of service covers auditing, taxation, corporate finance and forensic analysis. In my team, business risk services, we specialize in corporate governance and internal control. Our main clients include listed companies both in Hong Kong and overseas.

### ***How many staff in your team have the AAT qualification?***

There are about 50 colleagues in my team, most of whom are accounting majors or graduates from conversion programmes. Liz is a team member under my supervision. She entered the profession with the AAT qualification.

### ***How does Liz's AAT studies help her work?***

Technical accounting and auditing knowledge is not directly applicable to the work of our business risk service team. However, with the solid accounting foundation, Liz can confidently answer clients' inquiries on accounting matters and procedures. Such confidence, together with sound communication skills, leaves clients with a lasting impression of professionalism. What's more, I am impressed by Liz's advanced computer skills. Since passing the information technology paper in the AAT exam, Liz can use accounting software at ease and often helps other colleagues with it.



***How is Liz' performance so far?***

Since attaining the AAT qualification, Liz has proven herself to be competent and stands out from her colleagues. As far as technical knowledge is concerned, she is a fast-learner and did a great job in assimilating the accounting, auditing, taxation and even e-commerce knowledge into her workplace. Also, she has the right mindset and attributes, as well as good communication skills and strong analytical powers.

To give you an example, there was a time when we had a wrap-up meeting with clients upon completing a project. At the meeting Liz was praised for her professionalism and was even invited to stay with the client for follow-up projects. This is definitely the most encouraging client feedback I have ever received as a project manager. Client satisfaction is the biggest reward that any accounting professional longs for. Liz's quality is highly valued, especially considering that she has been with us for only slightly over three years.

***What do you think is the significant of AAT qualification?***

I think it is a good training ground for both sub-degree holders and non-accounting major degree holders. All main accounting-related areas are covered within the eight subjects in the AAT examination. In an international financial hub like Hong Kong, accounting talent is always in constant demand. AAT qualification is a perfect bridge between employers and talent in filling this demand.

***What do you think are the essential qualities for an accounting professional?***

***Do you have any advice for AAT students?***

Many people may think that competence is only linked to technical knowledge. But I believe the key is self-learning since knowledge, especially accounting knowledge, is updated very frequently. Another essential quality is communication skills. With the increasingly busy cross-border business activities, accounting professionals should be bilingual whilst possessing a wide cultural exposure. Also, a positive mindset is what we all need to get through this economic downturn before embracing the next wave of prosperity.

AAT students should focus on improving these qualities. They may also find it useful to gain some experience at a CPA firm for a couple of years before joining the commercial sector.