

Employer in the spotlight

Access to the key to success



Name: Martin Chao
Title: General Manager
Company: Fortuna Optical Factory Limited

Attaining the AAT qualification is not only about passing examinations; it also shows the potential of accounting personnel. Martin Chao, General Manager of Fortuna Optical Factory Limited, talks about how an AAT graduate working at the company manages the accounting responsibilities of the family business.

Give us a brief introduction to the company.

Fortuna has been operating in Hong Kong for more than 30 years. When the manufacturing industry in Hong Kong relocated to mainland China, so did we. Nowadays our focus is not on manufacturing anymore. We are primarily a trading business specialized in eyewear, spectacle frames and parts.

With the changes in our business nature, our accounting needs have also changed. In the past, our accounting department was sizable since there were many transactions involving different factories. Sometimes we had to outsource complicated accounting tasks to accounting firms. Now we rely solely on our in-house accounting personnel to handle the company's accounting needs, as the transactions in a trading business are relatively simple and straightforward.

Which of Yan Liu's qualities impress you most?

Yan worked with us as a general clerk for the first two years. She then started to show an interest in accounting. So I recommended that she should take some courses or acquire an accounting qualification; she then took a diploma course in accounting and sat for the AAT qualification. When there was a vacancy in our accounting department, I decided to give her a try.

Our accounts, as I have mentioned, involve relatively simple transactions. Since I know little about accounting, what I need is an accounting personnel who can manage the company's full set of accounts and at the same time be able to provide reports and figures when required. Yan fulfils these roles admirably and has shown significant improvements since she first took on accounting responsibilities in the company.



What do you think of the AAT qualification?

I always encouraged Yan to attain a relevant accounting qualification such as the AAT qualification. It is a really good benchmark when recruiting accounting personnel. More importantly, I believe the knowledge that accounting personnel acquire from their studies goes a long way in helping their daily work.

I am convinced that the studies for the AAT Examination do train up accounting personnel to work in small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) like us. Even at her beginning of the AAT studies, Yan was already able to identify her mistakes and rectify them. She has shown substantial improvements in terms of understanding the financial statements after acquiring the AAT qualification. In addition, Yan is well-versed in accounting software and can deal with book keeping, settlements and issue invoices and cheques. She is really a reliable and trust-worthy staff member in Fortuna.

As an employer, what qualities do you look for in accounting personnel?

As a previous factory owner, I prefer experienced accounting staff who possess substantial technical knowledge and who are able to give advice and provide services to the company in a comprehensive manner. Currently, however, with the shift of focus in the business, I am more interested in the reliability of accounting personnel. While technical knowledge such as general book-keeping and balancing the accounts are still necessary, I would place more emphasis on the employee's independence and ability to review his / her own work. These are the crucial qualities in accounting personnel in all SMEs. I am glad to see that Yan, an AAT graduate, shows these crucial qualities as an accounting personnel.

What in your opinion are the opportunities for Yan in terms of career development?

It would be a good idea for Yan to start looking into joining an accounting firm when she has achieved a suitable level in her studies. Joining an accounting firm would be an important step for her to garner experience in the profession, and I would encourage her to do so, if she wishes, once she is ready for such a challenge.

