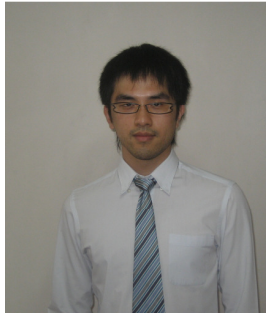




Versatile AAT
Written by Foster Yim



Name: Samuel Leung
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Company: Cre8 (Greater China) Ltd.

AAT qualification, a ladder to promotion

From an accounts clerk in a small & medium sized enterprise (SME) to now a senior account supervisor in a multi-national company, Samuel Leung tells us how his AAT qualification has helped him climb the corporate ladder.

Tell us about your current position and what tasks are involved at Cre8.

I am a Senior Account Supervisor at Cre8. I am in charge of its Accounting Division, taking care of the full set of accounts, preparing annual costing analysis, monthly reports, and advising management on any accounting issues.

Out of your various duties, what is the most challenging but fulfilling task?

I would say the preparation of the annual costing analysis. The tough part is that I have to collect a vast amount of data in a short span of time and to process them in a timely and accurate manner. The accuracy of my analysis bears a direct impact on the company's pricing strategy and setting of sales targets. An error of my part can well be translated into a big loss. For this reason, I am very aware of the significance of my role as well as the importance of a solid accounting knowledge acquired from the AAT qualification.

Tell us something about your route of pursuing the AAT qualification?

After completing form five, I took a one-year course in Diploma in Accounting Studies at YMCA College of Careers. I joined a paper supply company working as an account clerk after graduation. By then, I realized my accounting foundation was inadequate and therefore I decided to start my journey of pursuing the AAT qualification. However, I took a break for a few years after I had taken two AAT papers as I had to work in the Mainland at that time.

It was tough to start up again, wasn't it? What motivated you?

It was my strong desire to climb the corporate ladder. A year after joining the former company, I was actually promoted to the post of senior account clerk for three years. However, at that time, although I knew that I had a fairly good foundation in accounting skills and knowledge, I needed strong credentials for further promotions. I needed a recognized qualification. That's why I started the AAT Examinations all over again.



So, back to the story, did the AAT qualification bring you any further promotion thereafter?

Yes. I do think that the AAT qualification helped me achieve this in a tremendous way. In the early stage of my career, even if there were opportunities in front of me, I didn't dare to take them. I did not have the confidence in myself. I just felt that I was not yet up to the standard required for a higher position. My confidence grew as I completed more and more AAT examination papers. Then I moved to Cre8, my present company, working as an account supervisor and one year later, I was promoted to my current position after I attained the AAT qualification.

Besides confidence, what else from the AAT qualification is helping you in your career advancement?

I can't stress more the importance of Paper 5: Hong Kong Taxation, and Paper 8: Auditing - the syllabuses of both cover information that is highly relevant in my day-to-day duties. Having said that, however, I would add the real breakthrough regarding my business and management sense lies in Paper 6: Hong Kong Business Law, which I found most challenging.

Like many accounting students, I am more sensitive to figures than to words; the writing style and terminology of legal text were all French to me - if you pardon the expression! Worse, many beliefs I had were actually legally unsound. After preparing and taking this Paper, I felt I was better equipped with fundamental legal concepts, such as what a valid contract really is, what constitutes an offer and acceptance. All these are indispensable in every course of business.

A proper mastery of these legal concepts helps me think outside of the usual mindset of an accounting clerk, rather more of someone with managerial duties. With more responsibilities, accounting personnel with supervisory roles should be aware of issues not merely related to books and accounts, but also their possible legal implications and remedies available.

If you were on the panel of a recruitment board, would you be in favor of an AAT? Would that be emotionally-driven?

I would definitely give weight to an AAT for the simple reason that they are ready for work immediately while this cannot be guaranteed for non-AAT-candidates. This is the most direct way to help the company.

In brief, how would you describe the AAT qualification? What is your plan for the future?

I would say, the AAT qualification is highly job-oriented and practical. It gives you a full and complete picture of what one will face in a company's accounts department, which enables candidates to be ready for work immediately from day one of employment. You will find every subject to be applicable in a real business setting.

I am now taking the Professional Bridging Examination (PBE) and would like to finish it before my early 30s and then proceed to attempt the CPA Qualification Programme of HKICPA.



Samuel's career and study path:

Graduated from F.5	1999
Diploma in Accounting Studies - YMCA College of Careers	1999-2000
Account Clerk / Senior Account Clerk—Samson Paper Company Limited	2000-2006
Undertook and passed Accredited Technician Examination (ATE)	2002-2007
Account Supervisor / Senior Account Supervisor—Cre8 (Greater China) Ltd	2006-current