



***Employer in the spotlight***  
***Written by Foster Yim***



**Name: Dominic Tai**  
**Title: Partner**  
**Company: Dominic K. N. Tai & Co.**

***Take pride in your profession.***

Dominic Tai, the sole proprietor of a CPA firm, tells us how he finds AAT graduates better prepared for work when compared with those without the qualification. He also tells us what attributes, other than technical know-how, are important for one's success.

***Tell us about your firm and your main roles.***

Dominic K. N. Tai & Co. (DKNT) was established in 1996. We have a wide client portfolio comprising mainly small-and-medium enterprises (SMEs) in Hong Kong and overseas. Currently, there are 11 people at DKNT. Being the owner, I am in some way also the Chief Support Officer, of the firm. I oversee the day-to-day management of the firm, provide support to employees, ensure a high standard of client services, market the firm and formulate and implement long term strategic planning issues.

***What are you looking for when you hire accounting staff?***

With the global convergence of accounting standards, local accounting practitioners are encountering increasing competition from our mainland counterparts who are employed by large international firms. They can work on projects originating from Hong Kong with absolute cost advantages. The frequent updating of accounting standards and changing regulations has also put pressure on smaller firms' limited human resources.

Under such keen competition and pressure, technical competency is definitely a must. In addition, I place high emphasis on a candidate's attitude towards life and their communication skills. By attitude, I meant a positive outlook, such as having a "can do, will do" disposition, showing accountability and willing to take ownership of a problem. We are professionals providing advice to clients to help them solve their business problems, not mere number crunchers! Hence, possessing sound communication skills is also a key attribute since we need to communicate abstract accounting concepts and complex reports in a simple and clear manner that clients can understand.



***What are your views on the AAT qualification?***

I have known about the AAT qualification for a long time. I know this is a well-recognized professional qualification which proves one's ability. Back in my accountancy training days in England in the 1980's, I worked with colleagues with the AAT qualification. Due to their training, they seemed to possess better practical skills than most other graduate trainees. Putting this into the Hong Kong context, from my experience, I find AAT graduates, for example our staff Jericho Yuen, more readily prepared for the work at hand. His maturity and professionalism have impressed me. Fresh university graduates, on the other hand, have very good theoretical knowledge, but may need some time to transform those theories into practice.

***What are your views on Jericho's work? What are his competitive advantages, especially with the AAT qualification?***

Jericho possesses all qualities I have mentioned above. He is also pro-active, serious and passionate about his work. Just two weeks ago, I received a letter of commendation from one of our clients, speaking highly of the outstanding services that Jericho had given them. I noticed that Jericho is a quick learner and he is always keen to improve. I guess this is due to his AAT training, which has equipped him with a solid foundation and sound practical know-how.

***What is your advice to students who would like to work in the accounting field?***

Allow yourself no excuses. Take every obstacle as a challenge and opportunity for character development and personal growth. Students should broaden their horizons and walk the extra mile. Being an accountant is not just being part of an admirable profession, it is a call and commitment to service. A person who understands this can find meaning and purpose in their work. Needless to say, such candidates easily stand out from the rest.