

Case study

Tony Kwok Man-Wai



Course title MBA

Age 49 years

Country of origin Hong Kong

Career history On completion of his secondary education in 1966, Tony Kwok Man-Wai joined the Hong Kong Government as a Revenue Sub-Inspector in the Customs

& Excise Department. In 1975 he joined the Independent Commission against Corruption as an Investigator. He has been promoted over the years to his current position of Deputy Commissioner and Head of Operations. Between 1992 and 1994 he completed an MBA course at the City University of Hong Kong.

“The MBA course is only the beginning – learning is a journey that has no end.”

‘I have been employed by the Hong Kong Government since leaving school, and the work has always fascinated me. When the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was set up in 1975, I was very keen to get involved. There was a real corruption problem in Hong Kong at the time, and I was motivated by a sense of duty to join the department where, over the years, I have been promoted to my present position of Deputy Commissioner and Head of Operations.

I went straight from secondary education to full-time employment, but I have never lost the desire to learn. Over the years I have studied bookkeeping, law, management and accountancy, and endeavoured to improve my English, particularly for business. I believe that it is essential to keep improving oneself through learning.

Much to learn

When I began to consider taking an MBA, I was the most senior local officer in the ICAC. I knew that my chances of promotion to Head of Operations were good and I wanted to be prepared for that role. Doing an MBA course would be very helpful to me in a senior position. However, when I attended an interview at the City University of Hong Kong, I was so surprised when the Board Chairman suggested to me that I would have little to learn from the course at this stage in my career. He was wrong! Though it may well be that he was only trying to test my learning attitude.

The MBA course has been invaluable to me in my role within this organisation. For instance, not only have I learnt the correct way to implement new procedures, I now have the confidence to do so.

Determination

Combining full-time work and study has been a real test of determination for me. Because of the nature of my work, I am “on call” all the time. If it is necessary to work until midnight, then I must do that. There were many times when I missed a tutorial, or part of a project and had to make up the time myself. In fact, one of the most beneficial things I learnt during the course was how to prioritise my workload.

Action learning

The MBA course is fairly general, and suitable for people from all trades and backgrounds. It is often conducted in groups which is so valuable as the students learn so much from one another. Once I had completed my project, I had to do a group presentation which was good practice for working together with future colleagues. At the City University of Hong Kong, there is an “action learning concept” which is far superior to learning simply through lectures.

Sparking off ideas

The City University of Hong Kong is fairly new, and you can see that the staff is very enthusiastic about the course. There is a good

mix of nationalities among the faculty which produces a range of approaches.

The facilities at the City University are excellent – a good library, all the latest technology and modern lecture halls. The social side was also good, although we did not have much time actually to socialise! But I got to know my fellow students well and many of them are among my best friends today.

There is a real emphasis on self-development on the course: you have to consider your past, and decide what you really want in the future. For me, it was a good opportunity to take stock of where I was at and where I was heading.

During the course, my mind kept sparking off ideas for improvement at work and the whole process became very exciting. I firmly believe that since doing the MBA I have been more efficient in my job – it was definitely worthwhile. For many the MBA course is only the beginning – learning is a journey that has no end.’