

Programme inspires students to address the big issues

Taking the CityU DBA has a profound, yet contrasting effect on every student.

For instance, Alex Fong, founder and director of a human resources consultancy, credits the programme with inspiring him to start his entrepreneurial endeavour.

“During the DBA, I developed a model which works something like a regular physical check-up,” says Fong, whose career started in government service before a later switch to his family’s electronics manufacturing business. “There are eight main variables based on data collection and talking to individuals, and the results help in developing more effective strategies for human capital management.” Taken together, these factors have a significant impact on issues such as productivity, morale and employee retention over the longer term.

This was one key objective when starting the programme. The other was to become a true “practitioner-scholar”, with a possible view to becoming a professor. “I came up with a formulation appropriate to the knowledge economy and the post-millennial workplace,” Fong says. “It will help companies manage staff better by tracking characteristics like



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ALEX FONG

creativity and commitment and identifying vulnerable areas.”

For Beryl Chow, whose thesis examined the implications of external and internal factors on bank risk taking, the programme was an opportunity to address deep-rooted questions that have faced the sector since the financial crisis of 2008.

Her research focused on four aspects – cost-to-income ratios, tier-one capital, bank revenue, and franchise value – in order to create a valid reference point for banks operating in Hong Kong.

“To have a robust risk management model, you need to understand the key issues and how to take action,” says Chow, who in her day-to-day role looks after premium clients for a major retail bank. “The DBA programme helped me do that, and is a basis for



persuading other people to implement my ideas.”

Initially, one of the more challenging aspects was collecting data which went beyond the basics of the balance sheets, income statements and year-end results of licensed banks in Hong Kong.

However, with the guidance of her supervisor, Chow mastered the skills needed for academic research, approaching useful contacts, and preparing questionnaires to elicit information without infringing personal privacy.

“Over the four years, there were a lot of ups and downs,” she says. “Therefore, you need a ‘never-give-up’ attitude and a good sense of time management, but the weekly contact with mentors and the support of classmates made it a great experience.”



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