

# Perseverance and curiosity are vital

In terms of personal attitudes and values, Bobby Liu Kam-hing believes that, along with kindness, curiosity and perseverance are among the most important qualities for anyone looking to live a meaningful life and make the most of their potential.

In his own case, innate curiosity has made him a lifelong learner who saw the CityU DBA as the next logical step after completing a master's at the same university. He was spurred by a desire to pursue more in-depth academic research and produce findings that could have a positive impact to improve aspects of the international supply chain.

Liu, who is chief executive officer of Milton Holdings International, a supplier of engineering plastics and special polymers, wrote his thesis on the risk management of order fulfilment for the plastics industry in China. He wanted to show that order fulfilment is not just a matter of providing goods and services at a designated time and place. The process also has financial and reputational

implications, and even the largest companies can see volatility in their stock prices if they fail to execute order fulfilment effectively.

“My research examined the upstream risk concerning this indispensable part of many industries,” Liu says. “I wanted to identify the risk factors that can hinder the process and how improvements in performance could help various parties along the supply chain. I also planned to identify the standard practices used by companies considered outstanding in this area.”

Achieving that, not surprisingly, demanded a fair amount of perseverance. It required a series of interviews with senior managers across the sector, but getting access to targeted respondents in China was often more difficult than expected. Their feedback, however, was essential for later qualitative analysis and working towards viable conclusions.

“There were few existing academic studies that could provide related information on upstream order fulfilment, so I had to find out which risk factors



**Bobby Liu, CityU DBA graduate**

have most relative importance for the industry and come up with a comprehensive list as a point of reference,” Liu says. “As a result, my study provides a way for the plastics industry to evaluate these processes, which can have a tremendous effect on downstream industries, too.”

Liu recognises that the DBA gave him a chance to delve deeper into complex business issues and concepts and boost his critical and analytical thinking. “My general advice to candidates is to be ready to adjust your area of research if the initial topic is not significant enough, and to keep close to your supervisor and professors.”