

# Lord of the rings

**A**t first glance, accountancy and magic may not seem like the most appropriate combination of skills. But look a little more closely and you may find something unexpected. Wilson Wan, a CPA and a magician, uses his training in both disciplines to novel effect. Wan runs courses to improve peoples' communication and presentation skills and as part of the programme he teaches a number of simple magic tricks.

Wan first saw magic as a child and immediately wanted to learn more. He grew to understand the magician's philosophy – how they solve problems and turn the impossible into the possible.

As he trained to become an accountant, Wan also saw the relevance of his hobby to his work. "A lot of magic is about distraction, or altering peoples' perception," he says. "This is relevant to anyone performing an audit. Accountants need to think critically, to interpret the rationale behind peoples' words and actions. They must understand that two things may look the same, but be very different."

Wan's approach shares similarities to the Institute's own educational philosophy, which not only encourages, but demands, critical thinking. His engaging style has made him an ideal facilitator for the CPA qualification programme workshops on financial management.

There's no doubt Wan's way of thinking is original. So was it hard getting clients to buy into his method? "Companies need outside agents to facilitate change," he says. "When I ask a company if they want to change something within their organisation, they inevitably answer 'yes.' The easiest way to change an organisation is to change the perceptions of its people. Many companies were conservative at first, but over time they have become more open to my ideas."

It also helps when you have good credentials. Wan has introduced his *Success by Magic* training to some of Hong Kong's biggest companies, including Hang Seng Bank, Citibank, AIA and MTR Corp. He also tailors the programme for different audiences. When working with senior managers, he places more emphasis on handling change; for accountants the emphasis is on problem solving and communication.

If you want to run rings around your competitors, Wilson might be able to help you find the magic ingredient. **A+**



► Wilson Wan  
magician and CPA