



Double happiness

Roger Yu and Polly Tang of Roger Yu & Co. is partners in business and in life.

Accounting is life

Roger Yu and Polly Tang, the husband and wife team behind CPA Roger Yu & Co., decided to work in the accountancy profession for somewhat contrasting reasons.

Yu, from Hong Kong, is the son of parents who both worked in the accounting and tax industry. "I grew up in an environment that was very number-sensitive," as he puts it. But his interest in accounting comes from an almost missionary zeal in its importance and applicability beyond the workplace. "It is everywhere," he says. "It is the language of business and also of life. A lot of accounting concepts can also be applied to life, such as debit and credit, which are about the need to find balance. Accounting is actually the coding of life."



Roger Yu, Founder of Roger Yu & Co. and his wife, Polly Tang.

When compared with her husband Tang, who came from Sichuan, has her firmly feet on the ground. "I'm much more practical than my husband," she says. "For me it was a straightforward choice. I considered my future career development. Hong Kong is a world finance and business centre – it's how the city presents itself – and that's why I chose accounting. If I can align my personal development with the development of the city, I'll have more opportunities."

Both of them studied at The University of Hong Kong, Tang moved to the city for her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (Accounting and Finance), and Yu studied his Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (International Business and Global Management) followed by a Master's degree in Corporate Governance from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

They both started their careers as auditors at KPMG. "It was demanding but also rewarding," says Yu. "And at that time of your career, you are expected to work hard." After a stint in auditing Tang moved to the consulting department, where she worked on corporate finance projects.



Making a difference

About five years ago, Yu felt the time was right to set up his own business, something he'd been thinking about for a while. Tang joined the company later, with the couple reasoning that both of them jumping ship from corporate employment at the same time would be too big of a risk.

CPA Roger Yu & Co. now provides the full set of CPA services, with auditing forming the largest portion of its business. Whereas the pair's work at KPMG focused on listed companies, most of their own firm's clients are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME), in sectors including trading, education, restaurants and health. Yu says he finds working with smaller businesses more rewarding.

"I always wanted to run my own business; I thought I would be in a better position to help people. With SMEs and start-ups I feel I can make a difference – we're more connected. It's quite hard for me to meet the CEO of a listed company, but now I know the CEOs of many companies, and by giving them advice I feel I can help them pursue their dreams."

Both of them studied for the Institute's Qualification Programme (QP) as soon as they graduated from university. "I think QP is very practical," says Yu. "In each module's exam there is a case study. To tackle case questions, you need to think like a business owner, find possible solutions and propose appropriate strategies."

Tang adds, "The programme sets up a very comprehensive framework for the knowledge and skills accountancy professionals need to possess. The framework is particularly valuable for young professionals, who have just joined the industry, and the QP enables them to see the full picture; it's very good at broadening horizons."

Yu is in a particularly good position to give advice about QP, as the outstanding student in his year: he achieved the highest aggregate mark across the four modules, as well as the top mark in the final exam. He says the most important advice for students who are hoping to emulate his success is to think for themselves.

"Avoid just memorizing stuff. Analytical thinking is more important than reading or memorizing. Think like the examiners: why did they ask this question? What are they testing? Students often make a common mistake - copy everything from textbook on their answer sheets when attempting open book exams. In fact, an open-book exam is more challenging. You have to understand technical concepts well and apply that knowledge when answering questions. Otherwise, you won't get many marks."



Yu has been busy applying his knowledge in a wide range of channels. Particularly passionate about youth education and entrepreneurship, he is the Chairman of the Hong Kong Entrepreneurial Culture Association and the Hong Kong Regional Outstanding Youth Association; a member of the Hong Kong CPPCC Youth Association; a regular speaker at events organized by the Institute and other organizations on subjects including assurance, taxation, financial management and corporate governance; and author of the book *Practical Guide for SMEs in Hong Kong*, published by the Hong Kong Economic Times. For many years he was the case writer for the Institute's case competition.

“This is consistent with my goal to help people pursue their dreams; often those dreams are start-up related,” he says. “I deal with entrepreneurship every day, so it’s just another part of my interests. It appears that I have many different roles, but really they are all part of the same thing.”

Interview and reporting by Richard Lord