

YOUNG MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Amanda Yuen

AMANDA YUEN Senior Manager at
Mazars in Hong Kong



Amanda Yuen, Senior Manager at Mazars in Hong Kong and an Institute member, specializes in audit assurance yet a lot of her time is spent being a people person. She tells *A Plus* how she handles the pressures of being a manager today, while meeting the high expectations of clients

What is your current role and responsibilities? How is it going so far?

As an audit senior manager at Mazars in Hong Kong, I manage a portfolio of clients and provide them with audit assurance services. I am also a group head of one of the audit teams at the firm, managing and coordinating a group of colleagues at various job levels. This means having to communicate well with partners and managers on our team's client portfolio, plan manpower resources for upcoming engagements and respond to unexpected situations in a timely manner in order for our team to meet our goals. I also act as an intermediate between management and my colleagues within the team. I listen to the needs and comments of colleagues and convey constructive messages to our management or talent department, with the hope of reaching a mutual understanding and solutions so that we can achieve a better working environment for all at Mazars. Apart from the daily audit work, a considerable amount of my time is spent on communicating internally with people and departments to ensure every party's needs and expectations are taken care of. Despite the extra time this takes, I am glad that I get to be the bridge connecting our staff and the management.

What are the most rewarding and challenging aspects of your role, and why?

It is challenging managing a group of people with different perspectives, while creating value with their work and driving growth for the firm. Striking a balance between the expectations of staff and the needs of management is no easy task, and yet the decisions or suggestions made to the firm always have to take into consideration both sides. I am grateful that people around me have shown their trust in me. While staff would share their views and needs with me regarding operations, our management is also willing to give me honest feedback and share their experience with me, express their concerns and provide alternatives to my suggestions. It is satisfying seeing improvements within the firm based on my suggestions. It is also rewarding to hear that, even when our staff leave the firm, they have had a happy work life here or feel sad that they have to leave. All of this encourages me to continue and progress in my current role.

What inspired you to become an accountant?

I went to a traditional secondary school which separated students by art stream and science stream. As a science student back then, I never imagined that I would cross paths with accounting, until my school unexpectedly made accounting available for both art and science stream students two years before I graduated. I have been very interested in numbers and mathematics since I was young, so I decided to enrol in the accounting subject which led me to study accounting at Lingnan University. I received an offer from Mazars before I graduated, and my mentor at the time, who was a partner at a local firm, helped me as I was making my decision and encouraged me to give it a try.

What are the biggest lessons you have learned so far from work experience or managers?

People management is complex at times as every person is different. Continuous improvement in this area is required in a fast-changing world. What we have experienced in the past may not always be the correct way. So it is important that we step out of our comfort zone and to think outside of the box, and to take in feedback and even criticism from the ground-level staff and younger generations. It is also important to spend time training our staff, to ensure their continued progress, and to create a better working team. As we have less young people, particularly Generation Z, joining audit these days, managing the workload with limited resources, especially during the peak season, is a challenging task. This makes it even more important and valuable for us to create a positive working environment for our colleagues. It's critical that we spend time working on this.

How do you think the Qualification Programme (QP) has helped you in your career so far?

As an auditor, the financial reporting and business assurance modules were relevant to me, and the QP equipped me with basic accounting knowledge for my everyday work, particularly when I started as a junior auditor right after graduation. During my time as an auditor, I found that our clients always have high expectations from us and expect us to not only be reliable through our audit knowledge, but also through knowledge on other financial-related aspects. While an auditor is not exactly a financial expert and might not have in-depth knowledge on some specific financial areas, the QP's corporate financing and taxation modules gave us the basic knowledge to deal with these issues or queries, enabling us to provide clients our views before approaching a specialist. Each QP module provided us with the fundamental understanding and knowledge of different areas, allowing us to be all-rounded accountants.