

MD's crash course in professional judgement

The students assigned to Vincent Ho Kui-yip by the *Classified Post's* Shadow a CEO Programme were, in a way, getting two bosses for the price of one.

Not only is Ho the managing director of Freevision – provider of surveying, project management and design services to the property sector – he is also president of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS).

“They shadowed me at Freevision, but I also spoke to them about my role with the institute,” says Ho.

The trio tracking him over the course of the programme were all studying at the University of Hong Kong: second year students Bernie Chan Chi-hun and Julius Shih Ting-yu joined PhD candidate Aaron Chung Wing-lun for three activity-filled days with Ho.

As part of the programme, the students were given the opportunity to attend Ho's meetings, spend time with his staff and watch him deal with daily issues at his office. They also accompanied him on site visits and observed his communication with the media.

The Freevision boss was struck by the varied approaches to the programme that the students adopted.

“The three students shadowing me came from slightly different backgrounds,” Ho explains. “Two of them are undergrads and studying finance-related subjects, while the other is a postgrad student of physics who is about to join a company to work in a more technical role.”

He says that the finance students, Chan and Shih, were certainly attentive and responsive, but not as proactive when it came to asking questions.

“They were not so capable of imagining what their lives will be like after graduation. This is partly because they are so focused on their examinations and not on real-world issues – which is understandable.

“I took them out for a site inspection of an old historic building and I showed them the problems in a development project involving prestigious houses. But because of their academic backgrounds they may not have appreciated what I was trying to do, what kind of assessment I was making and what kind of professional judgment I was using.

“Though I'm not sure they fully appreciated the technical aspects, I think they could appreciate the management skills involved in my job.”

Physics PhD student Chung, on the

other hand, was more focused on his forthcoming working life.

“He was expecting to start work very, very soon and he is also expecting to become an entrepreneur in the future.

“Therefore, he was more willing to initiate discussions about the way I operate my business and the considerations I have to take into account in terms of its daily operation and human and financial management, and also what it took to establish the business from scratch.

“Aaron was more proactive and he liked to probe into more practical aspects. Because of his science background, he was also more willing and able to talk to me about technical matters, such as 'green' buildings and their design.

“I took him out for a site visit involving a shoot for a TV programme, and he saw how I conducted the interview and responded to the questions. He was very attentive and willing to grasp the practical skills required to handle problems, questions and presentations, all of which may help him in his future career.

“He could see things in greater depth and understand the reasoning behind certain decisions I took.”



Vincent Ho of HKIS with students (from left) Julius Shih and Bernie Chan. Photo: HKIS