

News Clipping

Client / Product: The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Publication: SCMP
Date: 6 January 2018 (Sat)
Page: Classified Post 2



Dr Lesly Lam Lik-shan has many strings to his bow, writes **Kit M Yip**

HIGH-FLYERS

Lesly Lam Lik-shan, HKIS vice-president of council, year 2016-2017 and deputy general manager – property investment, of Logan Property Holdings, is a well-rounded surveyor who demonstrates how professionalism, people-centredness and a positive attitude result in remarkable synergies.

From Chek Lap Kok airport's "prehistoric" days to the recent record-breaking bid in Ap Lei Chau; from full marathons to band jamming, Lam shows a can-do attitude in living life to the fullest.

Yet, as a high-school graduate in the early 1990s, Lam had little idea about surveying except that it was a profession worth pursuing. Upon completion of Polytechnic University's BSc in surveying and geoinformatics, he was excited to join the Airport Authority and help build the new airport.

"From pebbles to bridges, I stepped on every inch of Chek Lap Kok Island. With the aid of ropes, we climbed to the rooftop of the airport terminals, the arch-shaped roofs we see today," Lam recalls.

Shortly after the new airport opened in the summer of 1998, Lam left the Authority to join the Lands Department. Already then chartered and qualified, he was responsible for West Rail's land acquisition. The job involved dealing with radical demonstrators and heated disputes – really tricky situations which he now looks back on with ease and humour as eye-opening experiences.

After a job transfer to the Civil Engineering and Development Department, Lam won a government sponsorship to pursue a

master's degree at University College London, where he specialised in hydrographic surveying. "My year in the United Kingdom widened my perspectives," he says. "I acquired intercultural experience, problem-solving skills, and learned to see beyond the surface."

Back in Hong Kong, his overseas training enabled him to effectively negotiate with contractors about claims about underwater measurements during reclamation. Perhaps more importantly, he introduced to the government new technologies ranging from 3D multibeam bathymetry to 3D laser scanning, the latter being instrumental in the Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier projects.

Lam was invited to join mainland real estate developer Vanke in 2013, becoming its vice-president. "People asked me how I had stepped out of my comfort zone after 14 stable years in the public sector; in fact, I was finally stepping into my comfort zone by entering private enterprise," he says, half-jokingly.

At Vanke, Lam's variety of experience acquired over the previous decade fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle. "I enjoy meeting challenges, making decisions, and developing my potential. This was exactly what Vanke promised," he notes.

After years in the Lands Department, he was able to master the details of land lease to facilitate bidding. Lam helped Vanke beat off 17 other competitors to successfully bid for a residential site at Sham Shui Po at a land premium of around HK\$4,200 per square foot, which was considered to be at the low end of market estimates.

Now, as deputy general manager of

Logan Property Holdings, Lam scored another success earlier this year when he and the corporation hit the headlines after achieving a joint-venture bid for a premier waterfront residential site at Ap Lei Chau.

"The key to successful bidding is to do your homework – conduct thorough research and investigation, make concise calculations, identify our competitors, and think about their potential strategies. Speak the language of real estate industry such as cash flow, return on investment and valuation," Lam says.

When Lam was still working for the government, he spent five years completing a doctor of business administration qualification at the University of South Australia. His thesis, "Knowledge Transfer in Public Private Partnership", was published in the *British Journal of Economics*.

Apart from seeking professional advancement, Lam is an enthusiast for marathons, Oxfam Trailwalker's 100km hike, and winter and water sports. He is also into music, as the lead vocalist of a pop band, lyricist, and a member of the Composers and Authors Society of Hong Kong.

Lam continues to give back to the surveying profession. "I aspire to help the HKIS enhance surveyors' branding and recognition," he stresses. "To young surveyors: I hope that you will actively participate in HKIS activities. Be flexible, step out of your comfort zones, network with others, and learn the most you can. Widen your horizons: you may end up having careers with a broader range than you had expected."

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