

SPECIAL REPORT: CLASSIFIED POST CAREER FORUM

Learn from the leaders

Three company heads to show how companies are run in Shadow a CEO Programme. Reports by **Liana Cafolla**

Lau Ka Shi
Managing Director and CEO
BCT Financial and Bank Consortium Trust

Those selected in the Shadow a CEO Programme to follow Lau can expect to be exposed to a particularly broad range of industry insights – and busy days.

As well running BCT, a major pension and fund service provider, Lau is also chair of the Hong Kong Trustees' Association and a committee member of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission, the Minimum Wage Commission, and the Hong Kong Retirement Schemes Association.

Shadowers can expect at least a taste of some of these business areas. "I will expose students to many facets of business work life, so that they can actually see what is being done," Lau says. "Some of the

shadowing may not be completely with me alone. I will expose the students to other areas, [including] briefings, risk management and technology. I want to give them exposure to different roles in the organisation."

Shadowers will also attend both internal and external meetings. "I don't want to create meetings just to show them – I really want them to go through what I actually have to go through," Lau says. "If appropriate, [this will include] some of my industry meetings, some investment briefings and some understanding of risk management."

Those seeking to make the most of the shadowing opportunity can prepare by doing some preliminary reading of publicly available reports, which Lau admits may "put them to sleep", but which will help develop a deeper understanding of the financial services industry, particularly trusts. Among others, Lau has led reports on the trust industry and two reports on MPFs.

Lau, who was awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star in 2013 and says her actions are guided by her Christian beliefs, believes integrity and ethical behaviour are paramount to a successful career in financial services.

"Since financial services look after so many people's financial affairs, it has always been under the microscope," she says.

Success in the industry also depends on an aptitude for innovation and creativity, particularly disruptive innovation and technology, as digital advances are changing the business landscape.

She also emphasises the

importance of a sustainable, long-term outlook based on lifelong learning. "Being stationary doesn't mean you will stay put; it means you are already behind," she says.

As a woman who is at the top of her field, she believes that confidence and networking skills are things many young women need to learn. "As a woman, we generally question ourselves more – are we up to it? We have to be more confident. Be a woman. Don't try to be a man. Why would you want to be a man?"

"Celebrate femininity. Femininity doesn't mean you're weak. Just be yourself and have the courage of your convictions, commit to lifelong learning and be self-reliant."



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LAU KA SHI, MD AND CEO, BCT FINANCIAL AND BANK CONSORTIUM TRUST



Song Hoi See
Founder and CEO
Plaza Premium Lounge Management

Those with a passion for the travel and hospitality services industry will particularly benefit from the opportunity to shadow Song and discover how to run a successful premium service global business.

Plaza Premium Lounge designs, operates and manages 120 independent airport lounges which are open to all classes of passengers in 31 airports around the world.

Shadowers will have the opportunity to gain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the premium airport facilities business and the service culture that is crucial to providing a positive

hospitality experience. It is a profession that operates around the clock, as well as around the world.

Song says his shadowers will get practical on-the-job experience. "Learning by doing is a very important requirement for a leader," he says.

"Therefore, I will take my shadowers to visit our company facilities to meet and train under different departments – including with frontline colleagues – and let them understand how we operate."

Participants will also have an opportunity to learn about branding and business development, he adds.

Song has previously mentored students, and says it offers a valuable experience. "As a father of two, I find it to be extremely helpful, as mentorship offers an additional insight into the real

world beyond what you learn in a textbook, and it helps students veer in the right direction.

"Students should not be afraid to ask questions. It is a great platform to exchange experiences and put what you have learnt into practice."

Song employs more than 2,500 people around the world and has high expectations and a keen insight into the kind of people who are likely to succeed in his industry.

"If you are a person who looks at their feet or stares blankly when in an elevator instead of smiling or striking up a conversation, hospitality is probably not for you," he says.

"An extroverted personality is definitely a plus, but an eye for detail is important – that coffee shop you went to,

we know you like it, but can you articulate what you liked precisely? That is the difference.

"Meeting the requirements of guests takes innovation, teamwork and an individual committed to excellent service – three things I include in our company's core values."

Shadowers will be expected to have done their homework. Song recommends that students read up on the latest news and trends in the aviation and hospitality industry, and arrive hungry to learn and ready to absorb information.

"I want to give every new graduate the following advice: when considering what you would like to do, ask yourself what kind of person you are. When on the job, be humble, be curious and be open-minded. That way, you will go far."

Vincent Ho
President, HKIS and
Managing Director, Freevision

As a qualified building surveyor who has mentored several students over his 22 years of experience in the field, Ho, president of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS) and managing director of surveying and design company Freevision, has a clear vision of what someone shadowing him can expect.

His view of how to best train young people promises to provide on-the-ground insights into the world of property and building, as well as a crash course in problem-solving, decision-making and media training.

"I think the most important thing is to

let them experience my working life, my way of approaching people and my way of dealing with problems," Ho says. He will also use the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of potential future talent for his business.

By shadowing him, students will have an opportunity to understand his mindset, and use that knowledge to help them face future challenges in a similar work environment.

"They may share my daily working life – the problems and challenges I have to handle, the way that I approach and deal with problems, and also how I evaluate problems and generate optimal solutions," he says. "[They will also see] what overall considerations – apart from the technical issues – I have to make use of in making the best answers or

delivering the best solutions. That is the way I will approach it."

Shadowers will go with Ho to work in multiple locations – including at his office, external meetings and on-site visits – depending on his schedule. However, they will mainly spend time at his office getting to know his business, the working environment and the people.

"The most important thing is that they experience how I resolve problems," he says. "They have to walk with me and I will tell them how I do it."

As president of the HKIS, Ho frequently represents the institute during media interviews for print, radio and television. Shadowers will be able to sit in and watch how he delivers his message.

He suggests that to prepare, students can visit the HKIS website to find out

more about the profession and recent industry news.

They do not need specialist knowledge, Ho emphasises, but some general background information about property development, land development and social issues relating to land, housing and building matters might help them to make better use of the shadowing experience.

For those considering a career as a surveyor, Ho says an aptitude for independent thinking, the ability to take up a challenge and take responsibility, and being able to communicate ideas are the most important attributes.

"And if they have a passion to help society and work for the benefit of people at large to resolve problems, they can contribute," he says.



Shadow a CEO Programme

As part of Classified Post's continuous commitment to helping jobseekers build a bright career future, here comes a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet some of the most well-known top executives in Hong Kong.

You will be in with a chance of spending three days shadowing a CEO from one of the forum's participating companies, experiencing their daily lives and picking up some essential management tips.



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Career Forum

Supporting CEOs



Ms Lau Ka Shi, BBS
Managing Director & CEO
BCT Financial Ltd and Bank Consortium Trust Co Ltd



Sr Vincent Ho
President
The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

Managing Director
Freevision Limited



Mr Song Hoi-see
Founder and CEO
Plaza Premium Lounge Management Limited



How to apply

Applicants are required to:

- Submit a résumé to ClassifiedPost.com on or before Mar 7
- Write a short essay of maximum 2,000 characters on "Why I should be selected for the Shadow a CEO Programme"

Note

- A maximum of 120 candidates will be scheduled for the first interview to be conducted on Mar 6-7. Priority of interviews will be given to applicants registered on or before Mar 3.
- First interviews will be conducted at the Career Forum by professional consultants. A maximum of 54 candidates will be shortlisted to enter the final interview.
- In the final interview, each participating company will select a maximum of three candidates to shadow their respective CEO.

*Registration deadline: March 7, 2015, 3pm

Get certificated

Individuals who have successfully completed the programme will be rewarded a certificate of participation.

For details and registration, visit www.ClassifiedPost.com/ceos

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