

Knowledge and networking

SMU's Master of Science in Wealth Management provides Mr Jay See Jingzhong with both

Hazel Tan

AFTER seven years in private banking, Mr Jay See Jingzhong went back to school to upgrade himself academically.

He chose a year-long Master of Science in Wealth Management (MWM) programme offered by his alma mater Singapore Management University (SMU).

"This niche master's programme complemented my professional aspirations as a private banker. It offers courses taught by excellent professors and industry experts and uses relevant case studies and current industry practices as learning supplements in the specialised field of wealth management," says Mr See, who holds a Bachelor of Business Management degree from SMU and is working in leading financial services company Credit Suisse.

"In order to provide bespoke financial solutions to my clients, it is necessary to deepen my knowledge of investments and equip myself with more skills. As the Chinese saying goes, 'zi qiang bu xi, li qiu shang jing', meaning the continuous improvement of oneself is very important," adds the 31-year-old who completed his programme in July last year.

"After the Lehman and Euro-zone crisis, besides having the quintessential EQ and interpersonal skills, a successful private banker would need to be very technically grounded to manage risks properly as well as provide clear and concise advice to our clients."

Close industry ties

The MWM programme is one of SMU's longest-standing post-graduate programmes. A distinctive feature is that the programme was developed in close collaboration with the Wealth Management Institute and is supported by the wealth manage-

ment industry. Its rigorous curriculum leverages the strength of four institutions; SMU, Wealth Management Institute, Swiss Finance Institute and Yale School of Management, across Asia, Europe, and the United States of America, giving participants a broad-based education with invaluable international exposure and interactions with both practitioners and academics.

The MWM programme is ranked second in the world this year by The Financial Times in its global Masters in Finance post-experience ranking 2013, making SMU the top institution in Asia to be ranked.

It is Asia's first and only wealth management programme, and one with an Asian focus. Since its inception in 2004, the SMU MWM has trained nearly 400 wealth managers, welcoming its 10th batch in July last year.

Mr See says his postgraduate degree has added value to his career.

"It has empowered me with the twin benefits of increased knowledge and a network within the industry. Having more technical abilities increases my value as a private banker to better serve the burgeoning China market," he says. "With increasing sophisticated investors and financial tools being invented, my clients want tailored solutions for their business and personal wealth management needs."

The programme also broadened Mr See's network and provided him the opportunity to learn from industry leaders and experts.

"Gaining industry network is of critical importance to me too in building a growing client list and asset base. The investment universe is limitless and it's important to find and leverage expert support whenever possible," he says. "SMU also has strong local and overseas alumni associations and the regular networking sessions benefited me as it allowed easier access to information to make good decisions."

The MWM programme is designed with a modular structure comprising five study blocks over 12 months, to allow professionals to pursue the master's degree while working.

Still, it was tough juggling a full-time job with part-time studies and family. "The finance world does not stop. I had to fully utilise breaks and lunch time to keep abreast of market movements and stay



The postgraduate degree has added value to Mr See's career. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

on top of my clients' investment positions," Mr See recalls.

"It helped tremendously to have understanding colleagues who helped cover some of the tasks, and a supportive wife who constantly encouraged me and took care of issues at home."