



Filbert Tsai
DEBIT CREDIT

By Filbert Tsai

(Conclusion)

Ever since I graduated from the university, I knew that I wanted to be a consultant - either employed or self-employed. My work as an auditor in the Philippines did not contribute anything to that goal. My standing offer allows me to join a finance and accounting consulting practice in one of the big names in finance - taking this offer would be much more in line with my plans.

I am not saying that staying in the Philippines doing audit would not contribute to my career growth. What I am saying here is that moving overseas, especially in the United Kingdom(UK) , would allow me a better exposure to more mature capital markets and business practices which are not readily available in the Philippines.

People who have worked in professional service companies in Philippines or even anywhere in Asia know how much we exert so much effort and incur so much stress while working. It's not something that I fancy doing longer doing more than three years - enough is enough. I cannot waste much more of my life working from 10am to the following morning seeing the sun rising in front of my eyes.

Did I regret my move from a promising Philippine career to a new and untested grounds in UK? Definitely a big no. Moving to the UK is the best step that I took in my career. I got to work with the best teams, large clients and complex transactions.

It was a challenging move for me since I was so used to the culture in the Philippines and had to adjust to the new British environment. In the UK, it was challenging to start conversation about the weather every day. Short talks with my colleagues becomes quite a gruelling morning task as I meet people in the pantry.

However, living alone for me is nothing different from the Philippines since I am so used to being independent. I like living away from home and as such, being on my own in a faraway land seems a blessing to me.

My move to the United Kingdom brought me quite a hefty amount of learning that I won't be able to get back home. I'll not dwell about what I've learned in my work - rather, the intangibles that I've got working overseas.

Initially I thought that the work life balance in the UK is just fantastic. I worked from 9am to 5pm flexibly and can work from wherever I want. It's the ideal world. When I went back to the Philippines to do a bit of work, I realized that we stay long in the office everyday not because we're actually working - we spend more time enjoying lunch, taking intermittent breaks, having long chats in the pantry, texting messages, and feasting on a grand dinner. Actually, we're actually working less than eight hours a day.

All members in my audit team in the Philippines are Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) and graduated Bachelor of Science in Accountancy. I note that these CPAs are proficient in the purely technical accounting matters. but oftentimes lack the well-rounded knowledge on business from different perspectives

I used to think that CPAs needed a full five year formal accounting training to be able to do our job properly. But I have now realized that this is not the case. Most of the people that I have worked with in the UK are graduates of various courses - from geology to math to classical music. They bring a wide body of knowledge from what they've learned at universities while they learned their accounting while working.

Probably the biggest change for me is that I became a lot more mature resulting from my work overseas. I had to make friends with foreigners, adapt to their culture and change the way I lived. Moving overseas compelled me to become accountable and to stop complaining about petty matters knowing that it won't change anything in my life.

Without all the experiences that I had overseas working on large consulting projects and project finance, I would not probably have started my blog "[Ask The Accounting Advisor](#)". This blog is about my personal thoughts on my professional journeys in life. can be more exciting or less exciting, but at the end of the day, it's your adventure – make it count.

Right now, I am back home already. In a few more weeks, I will continue my professional journey as I start the operations of my firm, the UpSmart Consulting, Inc.

Filbert Tsai has his own consulting firm, the UpSmart Consulting, Inc. . He's key areas of interests are start-ups and MSMEs. His blog and page, "Ask the Accounting Advisor", provides relevant insight for start-ups and MSMEs in the Philippines.

This column accepts contributions from accountants, especially articles that are of interest to the accountancy profession, in particular, and to the business community, in general. These can be e-mailed to boa.secretariat@gmail.com.