

SPECIAL REPORT: HKMA SME CLUB 46TH DISTINGUISHED SALESPERSON AWARD

# A toast to top salespeople

Outstanding performers in 46th DSA programme receive congratulations from organisers, supporters and key sponsors

**O**n behalf of The Hong Kong Management Association (HKMA), I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to the awardees of the 46th Distinguished Salesperson Award (DSA).

In addition to the quickening pace of change in the industry, the increasing popularity of online shopping is creating new challenges. Attentive salespeople understand the importance of showing their enthusiasm to customers and differentiating their products and services, which explains the theme for this year's awards – "Happy Selling". It includes honesty and openness in recognising the intrinsic needs of customers which, in return, builds a cornerstone for long-lasting, win-win relationships.

The DSA has long had the purpose of recognising and improving the quality of salesmanship. It is encouraging that more and more salespeople from various industries are participating. We are glad to witness increasing recognition for the programme, and its role in forming a standard among sales professionals. My heartfelt thanks go to our panel of judges and the committee members of the Sales and Marketing Executives Club (SME Club) for contributing to its success.

Lastly, I take great pleasure in wishing all the awardees every success in their future endeavours. Our association is proud to recognise them as the best salespeople in Hong Kong.

**Dr Dennis Sun, BBS JP**  
Chairman  
HKMA

Established in 1968, the annual DSA held by the SME Club of the HKMA aims to give recognition to



Dennis Sun



Victor Lee



Willis Turner



York Chow



Phoebe Chow



Brian Kwan

outstanding salespeople who have worked tirelessly in the face of ever-growing challenges posted by the economy and the fierce competition within the sales and marketing industry.

Being at the forefront of their companies, salespeople are always the first to get in touch with customers, to receive feedback, and to recognise fast-changing market requirements. A successful salesperson can bring not only significant interest, but also great pride to his or her company. To thrive and prosper in this challenging environment, a sales professional can no longer merely sell, but needs to befriend clients and understand their needs so as to cultivate a solid long-term relationship.

Adaptability to change and a passion for professionalism are some of those driving factors behind successful salesmanship. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the awardees for their remarkable accomplishments. I have faith that our awardees will continue to achieve new heights for their companies and in the sales industry as a whole.

**Dr Victor SK Lee**  
Executive Director  
HKMA

**O**n behalf of the board of directors of Sales & Marketing Executives International (SMEI) and all of our members around the world, I extend sincere congratulations to the SME Club on a successful 46th DSA presentation ceremony.

A special congratulation goes to each of the recipients of the DSA and the Outstanding Young Salesperson Award (OYSA). Through their professionalism, determination and commitment to excellence, each of the awardees has demonstrated the qualities of a winner. This ceremony honours the achievement of outstanding sales professionals who recognise that their value to the marketplace is enhanced by striving to consistently perform at the high standards that are recognised and applauded around the world.

Each of the awardees of this programme has learned how to harness change in sales and marketing in order to thrive as a professional. By having a passion for professionalism, each awardee has proven their mettle in sales and marketing fundamentals including relationship-building, customer-centric service and high ethical standards. I encourage each of

the award recipients to continue their focus on fundamentals, balancing their business decision-making with sound economic and ethical business practices and with a pledge to make lifelong learning a key to sustained personal growth and professionalism.

Thanks to the HKMA and the SME Club for contributing to SMEI's goal for a better standard of living for all through better selling.

**Willis Turner, CAE CME CSE**  
President & CEO  
SMEI

**O**n behalf of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to the SME Club of the HKMA on organising the DSA programme for the 46th year.

In today's ultra-competitive marketplace, salespeople and enterprises must go the extra mile in order to distinguish themselves. It is no longer adequate to have great products and great services. Indeed, "diversity and inclusion" has become the business imperative to drive customer satisfaction and loyalty. In essence, this

means taking time to understand customers. This includes understanding their culture, values and interests; catering to the needs of different customer groups; and incorporating cultural dimensions and universal design in developing products.

As the population ages in various societies, the demand for barrier-free consumption cannot be underestimated. To fully tap into the potential of this market, we rely on the distinguished salespeople to lead by example, to share their good practices and to motivate their peers to show empathy and respect for customers, so that each one can enjoy a satisfying and "happy" experience.

I extend my hearty congratulations to the award winners, and look forward to working with all of you and the SME Club to build a truly inclusive and diverse society free of discrimination.

**Dr York Chow**  
Chairperson  
EOC

It is my honour to be the chairperson of the SME Club of the HKMA. May I express my sincere congratulations to all

awardees on their excellent performance.

This year, we were honoured to have Dr York Chow, chairperson of the EOC, to be our guest of honour for the ceremony. My heartfelt thanks go to our lead sponsor, Prudential Hong Kong, and our sponsors Centaline Group, China Construction Bank (Asia) and Sun Life Hong Kong. I would also like to thank our 21 honourable judges for devoting their precious time and unfailing support to the event.

It was also our great pleasure to have Michael Hui, honorary president of the Hong Kong Performing Artists' Guild for life, to conduct the presentation-skills seminar and share with us his valuable experience. My thanks also go to Brian Kwan, chairman of the 46th DSA Organising Committee (OC), and his able team for making this programme a remarkable one.

Lastly, may I express my gratitude to all members of the DSA OC for their enthusiasm and commitment, which contributed towards the success of the programme.

**Phoebe Chow**  
Chairperson  
SME Club

I am honoured to be the chairperson of the 46th DSA OC. The DSA has established itself as an important annual event and one that gives recognition to outstanding salespersons by setting an industry-wide standard.

The OC has adopted the theme "Happy Selling" this year, to encourage nominees to build sustainable relationships with customers. This is essential, especially in challenging economic times. A salesperson who is able to treat customers equally and objectively with "a caring heart" and a cheerful and positive attitude can definitely impress their customers and thus establish a long-term beneficial relationship.

This year, we are delighted to have 167 DSA nominations and 39 OYSA nominations from 65 companies. Undoubtedly, it has been a remarkable and encouraging year for the DSA programme.

I would like to thank all members of the DSA Organising Committee for their hard work, passion and commitment in making the programme a success.

**Brian Kwan**  
Chairperson  
46th DSA Organising Committee



DSA and OYSA winners from Prudential's Agency Channel (from left) Henry Tsang, Wilson Lam, Venus Lo, Louis Li and Jeffrey Leung say they found the awards programme both challenging and rewarding.

**T**he 10 salespeople from Prudential Hong Kong recognised in this year's Distinguished Salesperson Awards (DSA) demonstrated to the judges a thorough understanding of their industry, strong presentation skills and outstanding sales abilities.

Executive financial services managers Ada Wong, Queenie Choi, Sunny Fung, Fion Chan and Dickson Koo – all from the Partnership Distribution Channel (PDC) – picked up a number of invaluable tips from both preparing for the awards and presenting in them.

Ada Wong says working with Prudential training professionals helped her identify her strengths and weaknesses. "I discovered interesting things about my abilities and personality and the ways I can improve," she says.

Queenie Choi, a winner of the Outstanding Young Salesperson Award (OYSA), was

encouraged to be more creative. "There were a lot of good examples of salesmanship and out-of-the-box thinking, which I can adapt and use," she says.

Sunny Fung says a key attribute of a distinguished salesperson is to be an active listener and ask the right questions. "This is the most effective way to match clients' needs with products," she says.

For Fion Chan, being an effective salesperson also means helping clients. She says one of her clients who bought critical illness protection was later diagnosed with cancer. Chan helped obtain hospital documents to process the claim and hand-delivered a cheque to her home. "I am happy that my client sees me more as a friend than a salesperson," she says.

OYSA recipient Dickson Koo says winning the award has given him more enthusiasm for his work. "[The DSA] taught me

the important role salespeople play in society," Koo says. "Good salespeople are like a lubricant; they can make things happen smoothly."

From Prudential's Agency Channel, regional director Henry Tsang says that even if he is facing a challenging day, he never lets emotion detract from his professionalism. "Whatever the situation or circumstance, it is our job to provide our clients with peace of mind," he says.

Louis Li, senior unit manager and OYSA recipient, believes a good salesperson can clearly explain how a product works. He says by putting his belief into action, he once won the trust of a family that had had a bad experience with another firm. "Through taking time and a lot of care to explain ... I was able to erase their bad experience."

Senior business manager Venus Lo says being involved in the DSA programme was a worthwhile experience. "As a group, we built up a lot of team spirit and benefited hugely from company training and experience-sharing sessions with colleagues from previous awards," she says.

Jeffrey Leung, principal financial planner, says that when he faces a challenging day, he remembers: "The sun always comes out from behind the clouds. I think positive thinking is very important to enable salespeople to do their job well."

Unit manager Wilson Lam, another OYSA recipient, says DSA participation was like performing on a stage where he could challenge himself. "I had some excellent tutors who introduced me to interesting presentation skills," he says.

Chris Davis



Winners from Prudential's PDC (back, from left) Sunny Fung, Dickson Koo, (front, from left) Fion Chan, Ada Wong and Queenie Choi.

Sponsored Feature

## A Winning Team, A Winning Attitude

American Express Winners of the Distinguished Salesperson Award and Outstanding Young Salesperson Award



Happy Ho, Ryan Chan, Cynthia To and Joe Lau (from left to right), winners of the Distinguished Salesperson Award and Outstanding Young Salesperson Award, from Acquisition and Partnerships team of American Express, together with Susanna Lee, Vice President and General Manager for Card Services, Hong Kong (second from right) and Susanna Hui, Head of Training (right).

At American Express, service has been part of the brand heritage since the beginning, and it remains a major reason why our customers choose us today. This was the case when Happy Ho, a telemarketing officer, received a call from an expatriate mother-to-be who urgently needed a card to pay the hospital for her upcoming delivery. The due date was in seven days, but there were documentation issues preventing her from receiving the card in time. Could the young saleswoman help her?

Happy sympathized with the woman's plight and immediately contacted her supervisor to expedite the application. A few days later the customer received the card and went on to enjoy a trouble-free delivery at the hospital.

"Afterwards, I received a compliment letter from the client," Happy says. "It's that kind of experience that encourages me and gives me such satisfaction in my job."

Service like this is not unusual at American Express and explains why Happy and three of her colleagues have won recognition in this year's Distinguished Salesperson Award ("DSA") program.

They are from Acquisition and Partnerships

team including the Outstanding Young Salesperson Award for Happy Ho, Telemarketing Officer - Telemarketing; and the Distinguished Salesperson Award for Joe Lau, Telemarketing Officer - Telemarketing, Cynthia To, Account Manager - Premium Products, and Ryan Chan, Account Manager - Premium Products.

Training plays a significant role in the excellent performance achieved by these and the other sales professionals at American Express.

According to Susanna Lee, Vice President and General Manager, Card Services, Hong Kong, American Express International, Inc., "Our training focuses on delivering outstanding results and superior customer experiences which are the cornerstone of American Express' offering. The expert knowledge we provide helps our staff develop the can-do spirit and winning attitude needed to anticipate customers' needs and exceed their expectations."

"We provide training in product knowledge, presentation and selling skills, and other competencies required to bring out the best in our sales professionals and support them in their career development," remarks Ms Lee.

As winner Joe Lau puts it, "Never have I realized the importance of positive attitude."

The training is so inspiring that I am becoming a very positive person, empowering me to deliver the company's premium value with ease for my customers."

"This is the fifth consecutive year that American Express has won the Distinguished Salesperson Award. Not only has the stellar performance reflected our staff's exceptional ability to build customer relationship and close sales, but also demonstrated American Express' strong commitment to delivering premium customer experiences," adds Ms Lee.

American Express' focus on creating an ideal place to work and service excellence is reflected in the various awards received including the fourth consecutive recognition of Aon Hewitt Best Employer in Hong Kong in 2013 and the Gold Award of The Inbound Contact Centre of the Year by the Hong Kong Call Centre Association Awards in 2012 and 2013.

A global services company, American Express is the world's largest card issuer by purchase volume with a worldwide network of operations in more than 130 countries.