

Meet The MBA Students Running Top Industry Events—From FinTech To Startups In Hong Kong

Students on the MBA at City University of Hong Kong organize leading industry events. We speak to two recent event organizers to get the full story

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Vincent Chow networked with top Hong Kong businesspeople while planning his SHARP Forum event

Putting together a successful industry event can be the making of a manager.

Decisiveness, organization, communication, delegation—event planning takes all of the skills that make a leader, and putting them to the test in a dynamic business environment can be the making of a successful career.

On the MBA at [CityU](#), students get to experience this first-hand through the school's SHARP Forums.

Discussing regional challenges with the experts

The SHARP Forum is a platform that was created by the school to bring together business executives, government officials, leading academics, and many more experts to discuss the pressing business topics of the day—all organized by full-time and part-time students.

Students are responsible for every aspect of putting together an industry-focused discussion panel, from contacting the speakers to promoting and hosting the forum event.

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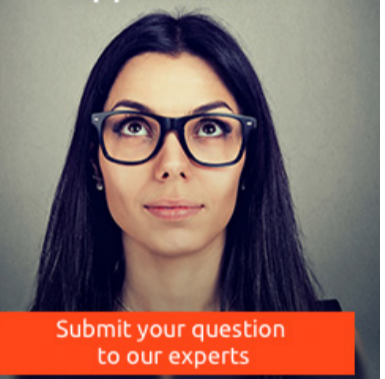
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Emily Wu was a recent organizer of a SHARP Forum at CityU, and she says that the experience has given her greater exposure to the rapid development occurring in the region.

Emily grew up in both Taiwan and the US, so when she was looking for an MBA program, she wanted to find somewhere that would bridge these international experiences.

“When I was considering pursuing an MBA, Hong Kong was on the top of my list,” she says. “It’s a very international city—it has excellent infrastructure and is a connector for global businesses that are interested in trading with China.”

Emily was particularly interested in the government-funded development of what has become known as the Greater Bay Area: the metropolitan region linking Hong Kong, Macau, and other inland cities.

This development places Hong Kong at the center of China’s recent development, and Emily and her SHARP Forum teammates took it as the focus of their event.

“Our topic was ‘Unravelling the Supply Chain Complexity in the Greater Bay Area,’” she explains.

“A lot of opportunities are expected to be created in the Greater Bay Area, and it’s expected to compete with Silicon Valley, but there a lot of challenges to explore there—it is one country, but it involves three types of customs systems, [for example.]”

The panel on Emily’s forum consisted of prominent academic and business figures within the supply chain industry in the Greater Bay Area, including the president of the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong, as well as the president of the Hong Kong Logistics Association and the co-founder of shipping software startup Easyship.

Not only did organizing the forum expose Emily to the practicalities of putting together an industry event, it also expanded her network by working with classmates from Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, and the Netherlands, and diversified her understanding of the challenges facing the region—a difficult task if she were confined to only classroom learning.



“It helped me to prepare myself for a future position”



Vincent Chow is another recent organizer of a SHARP Forum on the [CityU MBA](#). He helmed a project on fintech—specifically, mobile payment systems launched

by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority—and he says the experience has helped him sharpen his business skills.

Through meetings both before and after the event with speakers like the CEO of Octopus, the equivalent of London's Oyster Card, plus top management from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and Bank of China, Vincent was able to expand his network to the top levels of some of the region's most influential companies.

“I think driving the Forum’s success is similar to running a company,” he says. “It’s designed as a company hierarchy, because we divide the key members into three teams: one doing research and networking, one marketing and communications, and one logistics and outreach.

“As a leader, I have to identify the strengths and the weaknesses of each member and assign them to the appropriate team.

“It wasn’t easy for me. As an IT solutions architect, I was working as an individual contributor most of time in my past career. So it really helped me to brush up my people management skills and prepare myself to reach the next level in the career.”

When asked whether the experience they received on the SHARP Forum on the [CityU MBA](#) was one they could have received elsewhere, Vincent and Emily are both in agreement: absolutely not.

“I think the SHARP Forum is unique because not to my knowledge are there any MBA programs that offer a similar forum,” Emily says.

“It’s a very formal event that you have to brainstorm yourself—from the very beginning to shaping the actual product, you have to engage with speakers from the industry.

“It’s a complete package and I don’t think this kind of practice is available in any other MBA program in Hong Kong—I don’t think I could have had this experience elsewhere.”



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