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David Chang Wan, chief executive officer and regional head of Greater China at Franklin Templeton Investments (Asia), is a firm believer in the value of people and connections.  
"As a Chinese proverb goes, when I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. The more I'm in the financial industry, the more I feel this is the case," he says.  
What impressed the industry veteran most is there's no shortage of smart and hard-working people striving for the best.  
"Stepping out of the ivory tower, one probably thought he's the smartest person in the world and knows everything. After getting into the financial industry, even up till today, most of the people I have worked with have proved to be very smart and hard-working. That gives me the incentive to keep learning. Otherwise, I would have been lost in the current."  
Such a motto in life encouraged Chang to venture into the unknown territory of mutual fund business in his early 30s, at a time when his career had already taken off with 10 years of hard work in the trust industry.  
The "significant turning point" in his career popped up when an acquaintance approached the young upstart with an offer from Franklin Templeton — an offer "with no promotion and a better-than-nothing monthly salary increase of just HK$ 2,000".  
At that time, a trust department of a US-based major bank had already reached out to the rising star, offering him "a big promotion and a 100-percent pay rise".  
After sleepless nights and long talks, he made a decision that turned out to be a good one. He stepped into the mutual fund business with self-confidence and preparation to put in a lot of extra hard work to fight his way out in such a new field.  
"Unlike the trust industry, the fund business is a big sector with a good many players vying for a bigger market share and producing a mass of career opportunities, although it's a totally new industry that I knew almost nothing about," Chang admits.  
"If I had really wanted to make a career switch, that's probably the right time. Do it when you are relatively young and look at things in the longer term," he says. "There're different priorities throughout your lifetime. At that age, money shouldn't be the key consideration."  
"I've done well in the past. What makes me think I won't be able to learn new stuff and do well in the new industry? In the midst of a world that is moving faster than ever before, don't think there is such a thing like a 'comfort zone' anymore. We all should step out as quickly as we can."  
Chang believes his career story is a living embodiment of how people and connections could deliver a winning growth formula.  
The acquaintance that offered the job opportunity in Franklin Templeton had used to work with him. "The reason he remembered me after being out of contact for six years is I had volunteered for a project that helped him restructure the company," recalls Chang.  
That project, where Chang turned out to be the one and only volunteer, gave him the chance to showcase his capability and personality, so much so his name cropped up in the acquaintance's mind once a job opening appeared.  
"Young people can be very short-term. If you're so calculated, it's very difficult to be successful. Do not ask for immediate results when you do something. If you feel something is right to do, just go ahead and do it. It will bear fruit somewhere down the road."  
"At the end of the day, if you just rely on policies and regulations, it would be very difficult to get things done. It is the relationship and network you build up that really matters," he says.

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