



MANDY CHH

Wu: putting business of motherhood first

by Margaret Chan

Agnes Wu Mang-ching gives financial advice without fear or favour; with motherhood, she is equally fearless in putting family over career.

Before becoming a freelance finance commentator, Ms Wu worked over 10 years in the gruelling brokerage and insurance industry. Her past job was vice president of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Corporation Brokerage Services (Asia) Limited.

Yet, two-and-a-half years ago, she decided to give up her frantic-paced career when she found out she was pregnant.

“At that time, my team was asked to work on shift. We had to work from 7 a.m. to late at night. This is not feasible for a pregnant woman

and I made my decision very quickly,” she said.

After her son was born, Ms Wu managed to combine work and motherhood as a freelance host for Metro Finance Radio, Cable TV and

“All my advice is based on the interests of investors”

as a regular contributor to two local Chinese-language newspapers: *AM730* and the *Economic Digest*.

Though she has to spend a lot of time watching the world’s stock markets and doing preparation owing to her job’s nature, Ms Wu still manages to take care of her little son.

“Sometimes, I get up at 4 a.m. to get ready for work. And I try to squeeze as much time as I can to see my two-year-old son,” she said tenderly as she mentioned him.

“I sometimes go back home for lunch to see him if I don’t have any appointments. If I can’t make it, I’ll phone my mother to see if he is fine,” she said.

Then she heads to Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited in Central for a live show at 4 p.m. every day. In the evening, she also hosts *Money Café* for Cable TV. She writes her newspaper articles in the evening at home after dinner.

“My son usually plays beside me when I am writing. This little boy is my motivation to work quickly. I try to finish as fast as possible so that I



Ms Wu is showing *Varsity* her treasures in her big bag which she carries every day, such as several magazines about economy and her note book.



Ms Wu is checking the stock market on the computer after her live TV show.

can play with him,” she smiled and recalled the sweet feelings whenever her son called her “mama”.

She also said her job amuses her son. She said her son sometimes calls out “mama” in front of the television. “He thinks his mother comes out of the television. It’s just like a ghost in a Japanese horror movie!” she laughed.

However, her role as mother sometimes conflicts with her role as a career woman. She remembered that once she brought her son to the studio, as there was no one to take care of him. An audience later lodged a complaint about the noise made by her son while the program was on air.

“He didn’t make much of a sound actually,” she said. “Sometimes, I wonder why people could not be more understanding and tolerant.”

Ms Wu describes herself as a “straight person”, who speaks only what she feels. On her investment advice, she said she was not afraid of offending investors, listed companies or anybody.

“I am not a security agent trying to persuade people to buy certain shares. I am not afraid of offending investors and companies or anybody. All my advice is based on the interests of investors,” she said.

Ms Wu also said no one could please the whole world. “If you care so much about how people think of you, then you will lose your character,” she added. “If I have to worry about everything I say, I would never open my mouth (to comment).”

After hearing that a member of the audience said she was rather harsh in her comments on stock markets, she said it was a waste of time trying

“If you care so much about how people think of you, then you will lose your character.”

to find out how others feel about her. She said time was too precious and she would rather spend time reading corporate profiles, which was at least constructive and meaningful.

Apart from researching stocks, Ms Wu puts her research skills in picking a kindergarten for her son, who will start schooling next year.

Her choice of school was mainly based on the quality of teaching and learning. A school with a good

learning atmosphere and responsible teachers will be her choice.

“Whether the school is an international one or has students coming from wealthy families is not my priority. Having classmates from wealthy families may not be good,” she said. “I am afraid that my son may become a spoiled kid who comes to me and asks for money to buy an iPod!”

Ms Wu is happy that her two-year-old son already knows what money is as her son enjoy the moment of giving money to the cashier whenever she takes him to the shops.

“Now he (his son) only learns that he needs money to buy things,” she said. “But later, I will teach him where the money comes from and how to work hard for the money to pay for what he wants.”

To Ms Wu, financial literacy is not that high in Hong Kong and it is something kids should learn. “I think it is important for the young to know they should not spend more than they have and become the slaves of credit cards,” she said.

She also said she is unhappy with parents who give money to their children to invest. They would most likely lose all the money as they had



Ms Wu describes herself as a “straight person”.

Ms Wu brings along her scripts and notes for the TV programme to lunch.

not earned the money in the first place and would not treat it seriously or respectfully.

Seeing more and more teenagers buying stocks, Ms Wu advises young people to use their own savings to invest rather than their parents’ savings.

“Before investing in the stock market, young people should read the corporate profiles of the companies and not just blindly follow what others tell them. Analytical skill is very important,” she said.

Working in the stock markets for years, Ms Wu used to think that financial knowledge was the most

important thing. “I thought it was something that could help you to make a fortune,” she said.

She now holds a different view. She emphasises interpersonal and presentation skills in the workplace. “Interpersonal skills are more important than academic results. Young people today spend so much time in front of the computers and they forget how to communicate,” she added.

She pointed out that it is important for young people to keep on good terms with their boss and work colleagues because

employment opportunities come from them.

“The key to a harmonious relationship is to be yourself. Like me, I am a very straightforward person and I will not try to flatter anyone.”

She continued, “If you get along with others well, you will have fewer enemies in the workplace; your career path can then be built up more easily, and you will eventually be elevated to a higher position.”



1&2: Wu is preparing for her live cast in the afternoon.