



Cheng of Avant: Taking advantage of opportunities

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Name: Amy Cheng

Title: Chief Underwriter and Co-Founder

Company Name: Avant Capital Partners

Years in Commercial Real Estate: 13

In the last 12 months, which project, transaction, honor or accomplishment are you most proud of and why?

I am most proud of the growth of Avant Capital Partners, from having closed our first deal at the end of September 2013 to servicing an expanding portfolio of loans with more in the pipeline just 12 months later. When I co-founded the company with Adam Luysterborghs in 2007, the firm was primarily a correspondent lender. We have achieved our vision to become a direct bridge lender in the past year by taking advantage of the opportunities we saw in the marketplace and needs that were not being met by traditional lending sources.

Who are three women- living or dead - that you would like to have drinks with and why?

JK Rowling because she developed such a complete, rich and magical world with the Harry Potter series and then built an empire around them. I'd love to learn more about her inspiration and journey.

Amelia Earhart because she was not only a pioneer in a male-dominated field, but also an early advocate for women's rights. I would be inspired by her strength and of course I'm curious about what happened to her.

Angelina Jolie because of her global humanitarian efforts. It would be eye-opening to hear more about the women and children she's encountered around the world and their struggles.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it?

My first job was in college working with Carnegie Mellon's Alumni Giving group. I was responsible for calling alumni to raise money through donations. This job was a great learning experience because it taught me the importance of determination at an early age, how to deal with rejection or overcome objections, and the importance of being able to find a way to make a connection to a new acquaintance.

What is your favorite quote?

"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be" by Ralph Waldo Emerson. I believe that we are the masters of our destinies and that we create our own luck with hard work, perseverance and by surrounding ourselves with good people.