

ROBERT WALTERS FINANCIAL SERVICES, ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

MARKET UPDATE DECEMBER, 2008

MARKET UPDATE

2008 has been an eventful year for the Financial Services industry, and this has had a noticeable impact on recruiting activity.

In the early part of the year, we saw increased activity in recruitment by retail banks and in the wealth management area, due in part to new branch openings in Tokyo. Conversely, investment banks have, for the most part, halted hiring activities, even in the case of replacement positions. Overall, there was a general decrease in hiring across the financial services industry.

Many companies are still in the early stages of planning corporate strategies for 2009. We expect to see a peak in recruiting activity and an increase in the number of candidates on the market towards the latter half of quarter one 2009 to coincide with bonus payments. The continuing fallout from the credit crunch will also increase the number of candidates on the market, and although we anticipate that accessing key talent will still be difficult in Tokyo's candidate short market, we believe this coming year will bring about chances for opportunistic clients with flexible hiring strategies to acquire talented candidates.

Job Volume

There have been noticeable hiring trends within the accounting & audit field, with the following areas staying active and an increase in demand seen for solid JCPA accountants and qualified auditors:

Audit - We have seen an increase in audit roles across the client spectrum, including insurance, asset management, investment banking and retail banking. In the investment banking sector, auditors with capital markets product specialisation and hands-on skills are highly sought after due to the critical nature of the audit function in the current volatile market.

Accounting - In 2008, hiring focussed on core financial accounting roles, with Japanese CPAs in particularly strong demand, and we saw a focus on key financial roles requiring local knowledge and good, general financial accounting experience. This growth has been especially noticeable within the banking sector, extending to non-permanent accounting roles as well.

In contrast to the above, the following areas have seen decreased activity:

Product Control - Due to the reduced trading activity within investment banks, continued off-shoring and cost-saving drives, the number of roles open in Tokyo has decreased. In some cases, these vacancies are also being handled on a contract basis to provide local coverage while maintaining flexibility in the face of headcount restrictions.

Real Estate - With the decline in real estate linked securitized financial products, whole companies in this sector have gone under and, in the larger firms, entire real estate related units have been laid off. Personnel are struggling to find new employment in the sector and, as such, need to market their skills to other sectors.

Projects, Business Planning & Analysis - There has been a downturn in the demand for strategic related roles, such as corporate strategy, process improvement, change and project management teams, and there is an abundance of candidates with these skill sets on the market.

Candidate Flow

The majority of the most experienced and qualified staff in high-demand areas are being retained by their employers, and for this reason, our expectations of a large influx of high quality candidates onto the market following the collapse or merging of several major players in the financial industry, and the poor performance of others, have been partly unfulfilled.

Candidate demands are changing, and we are finding people are more conservative and wary of making a job change, valuing company stability above monetary reward. Candidate expectations have also changed, and many candidates who previously had ambitions to move from back office into more front office functions are now being more realistic and choosing roles within the scope of their skill-set.

Contract Market

Uncertainty in the market can restrict headcount necessary for permanent replacements, and as a result of recent market instability, our clients are now turning to direct contract or even haken-based contract solutions for typically permanent positions that require a more mature skill set, such as product control or financial control, as companies seek alternative means for hiring key staff.

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Robert Walters was established in 1985 and operates across five continents with 38 offices in 17 countries. Robert Walters is one of the world's leading global, specialist professional recruitment consultancies and has earned a well-deserved reputation for satisfying the career aspirations of the highest calibre professionals.

Since 2000, **Robert Walters Japan** has specialised in permanent, contract and interim recruitment across all industry sectors, and our clients in Tokyo and Osaka include some of the world's leading investment banks and multinational, blue chip commercial companies. Operating at all levels of seniority, we manage the careers of the best professionals in the fields of accounting, banking & securities, real estate, insurance, IT, investment, legal & compliance, sales & marketing, human resources, administration support, supply chain, retail, hospitality and healthcare.

OUTSTANDING CANDIDATES

FINANCIAL SERVICES, ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

Candidate 1 : Internal Auditor

This candidate is a bilingual, qualified Japanese accountant and experienced auditor, with previous experience at a Big 4 audit firm, who is currently working in the financial control team of a top-tier investment bank, where she is responsible for P&L for fixed income products.

She is seeking an internal auditor role within an investment bank to develop her long term career. With a Masters degree and USCPA as well as Zeirishi qualifications, she comes across as a dynamic and talented candidate who is ambitious and career minded.

Candidate 2 : Financial Controller

This superb candidate has lived in the USA, speaks fluent English, and is USCPA and MBA qualified. In person, he presents as an exceptionally gifted and diligent Japanese accountant, and we believe he will work very well in a Japanese or international environment.

He is currently Head of Accounting at a multi-entity financial institution, where he is responsible for managing a medium-sized team covering financial reporting, internal control and tax (both international and domestic). He has excellent exposure to Japanese GAAP and IFRS. Previously, he held a senior finance role at a leading foreign insurance firm.

Candidate 3 : Product Controller

This candidate is a product controller at a leading top-tier foreign investment bank, where he has been covering P&L for fixed income derivative products for several years.

He is keen to continue developing his career in product control, leveraging his prior Big 4 auditing experience and accounting qualification.

Candidate 4 : Tax Manager

This Japanese tax manager is bilingual and bicultural, having many years of overseas experience. He is well educated, with a strong post-graduate education in accountancy and taxation. He is also USCPA qualified, with a variety of tax experience. At a Big 4 firm in the USA, he focussed on corporate tax for Japanese clients. After returning to Japan with the same firm, he further developed his knowledge of Japanese domestic tax and supervised large teams on various projects.

Currently, he is working as a senior tax manager for a leading international consumer finance company but is looking for a fresh challenge.

Contract Hiring Options

Did you know that Robert Walters is the first company to establish a dedicated recruitment team to focus on finance-related positions on a contract basis? Our contract division specialises in all non-permanent employment categories, from temp staffing (haken) and temp to perm (shokai yotei haken), to direct (keiyaku) contract solutions, across three major disciplines: IT contract, operations & accounting contract and support contract.

For enquiries, please call Casey Wahl on (03) 4570 1500 or email at contract@robertwalters.co.jp.

Expansion in Kansai

From January 2009, our Robert Walters Japan Kansai branch will move to a larger office location in the sleek and modern Pias Tower in order to provide even more capability for servicing clients in the Kansai region.

For enquiries, please call John McCrohon on (06) 4964 2660 or email at osaka@robertwalters.co.jp.

Salary Survey 2009

Our annual salary survey provides a significant insight into recruitment trends and salary movements within the financial services, IT and commerce & industry markets. Currently, we are correlating the data for the 2009 salary survey, our tenth annual edition. Look for the 2009 salary survey in print and available for download in early Q1 of 2009. The Japan market version in Japanese will be available soon after.

To reserve a copy in advance, email your name and mailing address to info@robertwalters.co.jp.

2009 Calendars

Our 2009 Robert Walters Japan calendars, featuring photographs from locales around the world printed on high quality paper, are a compact and attractive addition to any workspace. If you haven't yet received our 2009 calendar, please contact us right away.

To request a copy, email your name and mailing address to info@robertwalters.co.jp.

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