

ROBERT WALTERS FMCG MARKET UPDATE

MARCH 2009

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION

- Strong HR business partners at the junior to mid level (salary range of S\$80K to S\$150K) are still in demand across industries. As a result, the FMCG industry has to position itself as an industry of choice to a small talent pool of HR professionals who possess the ability to engage with business leaders.
- As the FMCG industry prides itself on talent development, there is an emphasis on talent with strong organisational development/effectiveness experience to assist organisations in overcoming the current market climate.
- There is an increasing demand for the creation of shared services divisions and the outsourcing of HR transactional activities. Hence, candidates with project management experience in setting up shared services division(s) will be in demand.
- There is increased demand for contract employees, with general acceptance among candidates to take on contract jobs for projects.
- There is still a demand for rewards candidates at a junior to mid level (salary range of S\$50K to S\$120K).

SALES AND MARKETING DIVISION

- Increasingly, there is high demand for market/business development professionals, particularly to cover developing/emerging markets.
- Sales candidates at junior levels (where turnover tends to be higher) remain in demand. Popular roles include key account managers.
- The demand for FMCG marketing candidates has slowed, while that for FMCG sales candidates has largely remained the same.
- A sizable proportion of FMCG sales and marketing candidates have moved to other industries, making the pool of available candidates smaller.
- FMCG candidates with multiple category and market experience are still in demand.
- More companies are looking to establish or strengthen the trade marketing function and candidates with good experience in this area are sought after despite the global slowdown. We see many candidates without local market exposure, but with good marketing experience, strong track records and excellent educational credentials keen on opportunities based in Singapore.



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IT DIVISION

- We have noticed many companies turning to outsourcing vendors for IT management functions such as desktop/helpdesk support, call centre and data centre management.
- There are more contract opportunities across sectors as companies look to reduce overheads and seek the flexibility to adjust themselves according to changing business conditions.
- Some companies are still working on IT infrastructure and business applications and are looking into implementing global systems such as ERP, hardware and infrastructure upgrades, giving rise to a demand for IT professionals who are skilled in these areas.
- There have been opportunities in strategic roles that cover both business and IT. This includes service delivery management and vendor management, with salaries ranging between S\$100K and S\$150K.
- Companies are starting to look into IT governance more seriously, leading to the emergence of new roles such as IT audit and compliance, with salaries ranging between S\$80K and S\$120K.

COMMERCE FINANCE DIVISION

- There is a shortage of audit candidates, with candidates not willing to take jobs that require more than 50% travel.
- Shortages also exist for tax candidates, with demand for tax candidates far outstripping supply. Clients are looking at alternative sources like Hong Kong or the US, where there are more candidates with transfer pricing knowledge.
- Candidates with FMCG experience are highly sought after.
- There has been an increased demand for supply chain finance professionals, particularly for candidates from manufacturing backgrounds. Senior candidates will not move for the same job scope, but will opt for one with a broader scope and which also has a commercial aspect.
- FMCG companies tend to expect candidates (even at junior levels) to perform within a short time frame. This means that the selection criteria for the FMCG space needs to be extremely stringent to ensure a right fit. Candidates with FMCG experience are considered highly transferable by other industry sectors, including Pharmaceuticals, Telco, Media and IT.



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SUPPLY CHAIN, PROCUREMENT & LOGISTICS DIVISION

- More contract opportunities exist within the FMCG industry due to the need to reduce overheads as companies seek the flexibility to scale up/down depending on demand and/or supply.
- Due to Asia's rapid growth and the intense competition within the FMCG market, there is a need for more optimal and cost competitive supply chain management improvements. This has led to an increase in strategic roles within the FMCG areas of process improvement, change management and process re-engineering, with salaries in the range of S\$100K to S\$150K.
- There is an increasing number of FMCG companies re-looking at their supply chain systems, with significantly more companies integrating their SC information systems to achieve optimal supply chains and faster response to supply chain changes and disruptions. This has led to a demand for supply chain professionals skilled in data management and analytical work.
- In an increasingly volatile environment, the supply and demand planning environment is challenged, making it harder to balance demand and supply. Planning becomes more erratic, making it harder to gauge forecast numbers. Moreover, with no historical data as reference, it has become hard to predict consumer/market requirements.
- Supply chain management within the FMCG sector has evolved to focus on revenue and profit contribution. Companies are now concentrating not just on sales for revenue generation, but also on supply chains to initiate cost savings that can be pumped back into marketing and other expenses.

SECRETARIAL DIVISION

- The demand for experienced and qualified secretaries and personal assistants within the FMCG industry remains high.
- Contracting is a comparatively new market in Singapore but has become very popular due to the flexibility it offers. We expect the demand for contractors to increase substantially in 2009 and 2010. Another growing trend we have observed in the market is "temporary to permanent" offers. This involves the candidate starting a role as a contractor before being offered a permanent role (provided that both the hirer and candidate are keen to continue the working relationship).
- The demand for candidates with MNC experience remains high and in addition to basic secretarial skills, organisations are looking for candidates with a stable career history and solid secretarial experience.



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