

# ROBERT WALTERS MARKET UPDATE

## IT COMMERCE & INDUSTRY / TELECOMS & IT VENDORS HALF-YEARLY REPORT 2009

As we enter into the second half of 2009, Robert Walters Singapore would like to give you a brief market update of trends we have observed in the IT vendor, telecommunications, and commerce & industry (end-user) sectors during the last six months.

Faced with challenging economic conditions globally, the Singapore government has taken an active role in supporting businesses. The government aims to develop Singapore into a vibrant global city seen as a centre of knowledge, talent and enterprise with long-term competitiveness and sustainable growth in emerging sectors.

Besides strengthening existing sectors and positioning Singapore's economy for the future, the government continues to invest heavily in research and development, manpower and infrastructure. Estimated government expenditure for FY2009 amounts to \$8,882 million.

### COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Singapore has attracted many of the world's leading FMCG, pharmaceutical and healthcare companies. This has translated into well-skilled manpower for knowledge-intensive manufacturing and specialist R&D activities while reinforcing the nation's commitment to innovation.

IT job opportunities continue to be strong at the mid to senior level, with salaries ranging from S\$100k to S\$150k. There have also been opportunities in strategic roles that cover both business and IT, including service delivery management and vendor management. Many companies are turning to outsourcing vendors for IT management functions such as desktop/helpdesk support, call centre, data centre and telecommunications management. Companies are also starting to look into IT governance more seriously, leading to an increase of roles such as IT audit and compliance, with salaries ranging between S\$80k to S\$120k.

The high-tech manufacturing industry has been undeniably affected by current economic conditions as this industry relies heavily on shipment orders from electronic and automotive manufacturers. Business conditions remain particularly challenging as consumer demand from key markets in US and Europe continue to weaken. IT departments within this sector continue to face cost containment pressure with reduction measures channelled through either project budget or service contract fee reductions. Job opportunities in this sector have therefore decreased over the last six months, with only pockets of critical and strategic hires taking place.

Companies within the chemical, oil and gas sectors with diversified businesses remain resilient. With fluctuating oil prices and challenging business conditions, IT projects have been scaled back while others leverage on outsourcing vendors in order to focus on their core business. Stronger companies take the opportunity to pursue business process optimisation initiatives. Companies continue to look for mid level staff relating to infrastructure and ERP business / system specialists, with salaries ranging from S\$80k to S\$120k.



## ABOUT ROBERT WALTERS' IT Commerce Consultants

### ROGER OLOFSSON *Associate Director*

Roger Olofsson manages Robert Walters' IT recruitment divisions in Singapore covering both permanent and contract recruitment. With more than 10 years' recruitment experience, he has lived and worked in Singapore since 1996 and joined Robert Walters in 1999 to set up its IT contract recruitment division. Roger currently sits on the Adoption Committee as a recruitment industry representative for the National Infocommunication Competency Framework. He has a master's degree in Industrial Management and Engineering, specialising in Computer Science, from the University of Lulea in Sweden.

### ANNIE LIM, SENIOR CONSULTANT *IT Commerce (Permanent Positions)*

Annie joined Robert Walters in 2007, specialising in recruitment for commercial sectors within FMCG, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, retail and hospitality. Prior to that, she was recruiting for software and hardware vendors, technology consulting firms and IT services sectors, successfully placing candidates into mid to senior level positions. Annie has a total of 20 years experience and has previously worked for technology organisations, with a strong background in business development and accounts management. She has an MBA from the University of Strathclyde in Scotland.

### AYLWIN PANG, SENIOR CONSULTANT *IT Commerce (Permanent Positions)*

Aylwin joined Robert Walters in 2008, specialising in the commerce industry, with particular focus on oil & gas, chemicals, high-tech manufacturing, engineering, logistics and shipping. He has successfully recruited IT Managers, ERP consultants, infrastructure and application specialists. Aylwin has strong business and IT experience having previously worked in a different capacity of business development and IT business analysis. He has a bachelor's degree of science in Real Estate from the National University of Singapore.

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## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

There has been a growing trend of commerce companies outsourcing their telecommunications needs to telecommunications vendors. The trend moving towards managed services and service level agreements is now particularly critical in retaining customers who are at the stage of renewing contracts. This has led to roles in service delivery and requirements for Service Relationship Managers becoming more relevant.

With government initiatives, telecommunications companies are actively hiring in Telco OSS/BSS areas for service provisioning, billing and mediation as these professionals are required to support both project integration and delivery. IT job opportunities for unified communications, IP telephony and video conferencing are moving up steadily into high demand within the industry.

## IT VENDORS

The technology sector has shifted its business focus to service delivery and continues to build its pipeline of projects on managed and professional services. There is a high demand for strong technical expertise within infrastructure at the architect and engineering level. In order to gain differentiation and the competitive advantage, it is critical that the technology sector hires candidates with professional industry credentials and certification such as Cisco, Microsoft and ITIL. Regional experience for China, India, Indonesia and Vietnam is also becoming an increasingly sought-after skill set, particularly as the sector continues to head towards providing services and delivery for clients with regional coverage.

## IT CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES

IT contracting staff continue to be a preferred recruitment choice for many organisations due to the flexible manner in which IT manpower resources provide their skills for projects, especially for IT services and consulting companies. In the first half of 2009, we observed a cautious approach towards hiring for IT contract staff, with many hiring decisions based on short to mid term plans rather than long term strategies. Skills in infrastructure, ERP, delivery and support positions have been the most sought after contract positions.

Commerce industries that continued to hire IT contract staff included FMCG, pharmaceutical and healthcare companies that had committed to long term projects prior to the current economic downturn in technology areas such as infrastructure virtualisation/consolidation projects and ERP system rollouts and migrations.

Skilled contract staff with experience reviewing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of outsourced IT operations have seen increased demand as companies looked to review internal and external IT spend and cost efficiency in view of current market conditions.

Within the information technology sector, hardware and software product vendor companies that have been able to provide good returns of investment (ROI) continue to buck the current market trends by generating modestly increased demand. Areas of increased demand include virtualisation, disaster recovery, storage and cloud computing.

**Note:** Commerce & Industry covers FMCG, healthcare, pharmaceutical, oil & gas, high-tech manufacturing, logistics, hospitality, retail, engineering and shipping.

For additional insight into the current market situation, please do not hesitate to contact the IT commerce team at [technology@robertwalters.com.sg](mailto:technology@robertwalters.com.sg) or call the relevant IT commerce consultant at (65) 6228 0200.



## ABOUT ROBERT WALTERS' IT Commerce Consultants (continued)

### DUNG NGUYEN, CONSULTANT IT Commerce (Permanent Positions)

Dung joined Robert Walters in early 2007, specialising in recruitment for financial institutions including investment banks and regional banks. Dung transferred to the IT Commerce team in 2009 to focus on software and hardware vendors, technology consulting firms and the IT services industry. Dung has a strong IT background having previously worked in development and design roles in both her native Netherlands and in Singapore. She has a Masters of Computer Science from the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands.

### JOY SEOW, CONSULTANT IT Commerce (Permanent Positions)

Joy joined Robert Walters in 2008 focusing on recruitment for the Telecommunications industry. Joy has a strong Telco background having previously worked in the Telco industry in pre-sales and bid management. She has a Master's of Science (Telecommunications Management) from Murdoch University in Australia.

### AXER GOH, SENIOR CONSULTANT IT Commerce (Contract Positions)

Axer has been with Robert Walters for almost five years, recruiting for IT/Telco contract positions within Telco, vendor and end user industries. She has successfully recruited for positions such as Infrastructure Project Managers, Solution Architects, Business Analysts and Systems Administrators. Prior to joining Robert Walters, Axer was providing IT solutions sales to clients in the manufacturing sector. She holds a BSc (Hons) Business Management Studies from the University of Bradford, UK.

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