

ROBERT WALTERS SINGAPORE ENGINEERING MARKET UPDATE

QUARTER ONE 2010



Welcome to the Robert Walters' specialist market update, designed to provide you with an insight into the very latest recruitment market and salary trends across the engineering sector.

We provide a truly consultative service and offer professional advice, insight and market information whether you are recruiting or not. Our consultants have in-depth expertise and knowledge of the commerce marketplace and possess a high level of specialist sector based experience. We offer a fully integrated service, through experienced team members who possess a wide range of recruitment skills and specialist knowledge, combined with hands-on experience from within the commerce sector.

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SALES & MARKETING

- More candidates who were retrenched during the economic downturn in 2009 were rehired in the beginning of 2010 and have since returned to their areas of specialisation.
- Demand for marine/offshore professionals started to see a slowdown due to the completion of existing rig orders and a lack of new bookings.
- The competitive labour market within the aviation industry has resulted in labour gaps created by movement within the industry. The highly niche skill sets required for the aviation industry highlighted the need for stronger retention programmes, or the industry may risk facing a shortage of labour.
- In 2009, the demand was predominantly for direct revenue contributors, such as sales and business development managers/directors. The year 2010 has seen more opportunities for marketing and communications professionals whilst demand for sales and business development professionals remained high.
- We have also seen an increase in sales professionals wanting to move out of their industries to apply their skill sets in other similar/relevant sectors.
- The downturn in 2009 has given companies the opportunity to streamline their businesses, resulting in a higher demand for professionals with sales and marketing experience who can generate revenue in 2010.

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ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

- Coming off the tail end of 2009, there has been an increased demand for commercial managers and business controllers who can partner the business and support the organisation's strategic business planning.
- Market leaders and/or companies who were not significantly affected by the recent economic downturn have acknowledged the importance of cost efficiencies. Hence there is an increasing demand for the creation of shared services divisions; or a primary shift of operational finance activities to low cost locations. As such, candidates with project management and shared services experience will be in demand.
- As companies globalise and engage in more cross-border transactions, there is also a shortage of tax professionals with transfer pricing knowledge. There is also continued demand for candidates with tax planning and advisory experience.
- Internal auditors are still highly sought after at all levels. This is particularly challenging for roles which require intensive travel. Bilingual candidates who can speak Mandarin or a third language are still in demand due to the shift of manufacturing and assembly operations to low cost locations such as China, Vietnam, India and Thailand.
- Contract opportunities have increased in organisations due to changing business conditions.
- Overall, we project a positive, albeit cautious hiring trend as we move into the first two quarters of 2010.

ENGINEERING



- With improved business performance in the fourth quarter of 2009 and a positive outlook for 2010, more companies have started to increase and nurture their talent pool in preparation of the market upturn. Higher manufacturing activities within the electronics and chemicals sectors have also led to an increased demand for engineers.
- As more and more global companies establish their R&D centres in Singapore, we noted an increased and corresponding demand for researchers. This trend of hubbing R&D operations in Singapore is likely to continue, and will potentially bring in talent from abroad with niche R&D skills.
- We anticipate more movement after the annual bonus payout periods in quarter one. As the market recovers, we expect many engineers will start looking out for new career opportunities.
- There is a continuing demand for "green collar" professionals as companies take steps to reduce their energy consumption and carbon footprint.

REQUEST YOUR COPY: 2010 SALARY SURVEY

Our 2010 survey, now in its eleventh year, covers salaries and market trends across the globe.

To request a copy, please call any of our consultants or download the survey online at: www.robertwalters.com/salariesurvey



ROBERT WALTERS ASIA JOB INDEX

The Robert Walters Asia Job Index was launched in Q2 2008 with a view to creating a quarterly defector barometer for the job market across the region.

Since its inception, the Index has grown in scope and now covers Singapore, Japan, China and Hong Kong. The Asia Job Index is highly regarded as an informative source, and its reports have been covered by numerous mainstream and trade media around Asia. Many companies have also used the Asia Job Index as a reference for their organisations' research and strategy reports.

For the latest report, please visit www.asiajobindex.com





HUMAN RESOURCES



- Business sentiment within the industrial sector has improved noticeably in quarter one of 2010 as compared to the early part of 2009. We saw hiring activities for HR professionals picking up towards the end of 2009 and this continued into 2010.
- The financial downturn in 2009 has given organisations the opportunity to create greater efficiency within HR, including outsourcing of transactional HR activities as well as up-skilling of HR functions.
- We are seeing an increase in demand for HR managers with experience spanning Southeast Asia as this region is seen as an important emerging market for a number of organisations.
- We foresee demand for HR professionals in 2010 to be primarily at the middle-management level, where the pool of candidates is relatively smaller than those at the junior levels. We have also observed that HR professionals from the industrial sector are typically stronger in HR processes. As such, they will be sought after by organisations looking to improve HR processes and systems. Talent retention at this level is critical.
- Hiring activities in 2010 look positive across all sectors, as employers' confidence returns in line with the market recovery.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- IT spend continues to be keenly scrutinised at the turn of 2010, with business case and return on investments for new projects facing increasing commercial justifications. However, we noted the resurgence in IT projects that have been put on hold for most of 2009.
- With improved business conditions, more companies are looking into technology upgrades, new implementations and business process reengineering to position themselves for the sustained market upturn.
- Companies are also increasingly building internal capabilities to deliver services, translating to roles that require strong technical knowledge along with business process experience. Employers are currently actively looking for experienced ERP specialists and project managers with salaries ranging between S\$100,000 to S\$150,000 per annum.

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