

# ROBERT WALTERS SINGAPORE LOGISTICS SECTOR MARKET UPDATE

HALF YEARLY UPDATE 2010

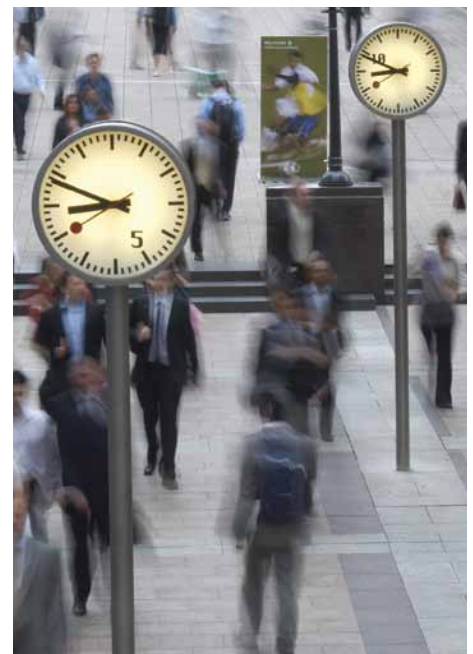


Welcome to the Robert Walters' specialist market update, designed to provide you with an insight into the very latest market trends across the Supply Chain, Procurement & Logistics sector. We provide a truly consultative service and offer professional advice, insight and market information whether you are recruiting or not. Our specialist consultants have in-depth recruitment expertise and possess a high level of specialist sector-based knowledge, combined with hands-on experience across all industries. Our global network of offices enables us to provide both local and international recruitment solutions to our unrivalled client and candidate base.

## MARKET OVERVIEW

Since 2007, Singapore has been one of the world's premier logistics hub with its unique geographical location, world-class infrastructure and unparalleled Supply Chain Management (SCM) knowledge. Despite hosting 21 out of the 25 largest logistics MNCs in the world, the logistics sector is gradually recovering from the 2009 global financial crisis with many companies continuing to maintain a cautiously optimistic stance. This is reflected in the Robert Walters Salary Survey 2010, which illustrated employers offering salaries 10% lower than candidates' expectations.

Instead of offering an attractive salary package, companies are looking at other factors to improve their employability. Research has revealed that many logistics professionals value a steady and visible career progression as having more significant importance in comparison with an attractive compensation package. Consequently in 2009, \$481m was invested into the Singapore's logistics sector to ensure over 1,200 available job opportunities for SCM planners, research engineers and skilled workers. Employees have also rolled out more talent management plans to ensure strong career growth for its high potential staff.





## SALES & MARKETING

- The global recession has hit the supply chain and logistics industry significantly, with major companies going through a bout of restructuring and lay-offs across their sales and marketing functions. The recession also resulted in some companies being forced to close their marketing functions and lay off poor performers.
- Given the current market upturn, most logistics companies have now decided to regroup their divisions and rehire to replace lost headcount and skill sets.
- Hiring activities have started to improve since quarter four of 2009, although they are still slower as compared to the hiring levels between 2006 to 2008. We are witnessing a sudden upsurge in demand for niche skill sets, particularly for hunter-type profiles with strong knowledge in cold chain environments (especially for pharmaceuticals and perishables) as well as within the upstream and downstream of the marine, oil and gas verticals.
- Recently we saw a higher demand for senior level professionals on a local and regional level. This includes positions ranging from AGMs, GMs, MDs, as well as Sales VPs. However, these companies are also conservative with their expansion plans (if any).
- Given Asia's shortage of talent for the oil and gas verticals (particularly in Singapore), these high-demand skills are extremely challenging to source for. Whilst most logistics players require hunters who specialise in the oil and gas industry, there remains a gap between the salaries offered by the logistics players as well as the salaries currently in play with the shippers. As a result, available roles may remain unattractive to candidates who are keen to make a career switch.

## SUPPLY CHAIN & LOGISTICS

- Q1 2010 is a buoyant quarter for two key reasons – companies are hiring after headcount freezes implemented during last year's recession, whilst signs of economic recovery have resulted in employees being more receptive to looking out for new positions (particularly after the bonus payout in the first quarter of the year).
- There is an increased demand for trade compliance and customs compliance professionals from the logistics as well as electronics manufacturing industries.
- Procurement professionals are highly sought after. Financial institutions and manufacturing companies that were impacted by the crisis last year are gathering momentum in terms of consolidating their regional sourcing teams in Singapore.
- Companies are becoming more focused on lean, TQM, Six Sigma and change management to consistently keep up with the need for cost efficiency and to maximise revenues. As such, professionals with process excellence profiles are highly sought after.
- The pharmaceutical, FMCG and banking organisations continue to remain the employers of choice.
- There is a constant demand for professionals in the logistics industry who specialise in key sectors such as contract logistics, operations and general management.





## HUMAN RESOURCES



- The logistics/shipping sector was one of the industries most affected by the financial crisis in 2009. While business sentiments in 2010 have improved, companies continue to remain cautious in recruitment activities and there remains a pressure to keep costs low.
- Due to limited headcount, HR generalists are often tasked with the role of having to be strategic and operational at the same time. This can be a struggle to many HR professionals who are striving to maintain a balance between providing HR business advice and attending to operational issues.
- The challenges for HR professionals within this industry include talent acquisition and retention at both junior and middle management levels. With HR skill sets being transferable across industry sectors, HR talent within this industry tend to be more mobile in comparison with other technical functions.
- As competition for strong HR professionals becomes more intense, well-presented HR professionals who keep themselves up to date on the market will find it easier to secure a role outside this industry. In order to attract and retain top HR talent within this sector, organisations need to engage stronger employer branding strategies and ensure strong career growth/plans for high potential staff.

## ABOUT ROBERT WALTERS

With over 25 years in the business of recruitment, Robert Walters is firmly established in Australia, Asia, Europe, USA and New Zealand. Our emphasis is on building long-term relationships that provide an independent view to your recruitment challenges in the following specialist areas:

- Accounting & Finance
- Banking
- Business Support & Call Centre
- Construction & Engineering
- General Management
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Legal
- Sales & Marketing
- Supply Chain, Logistics & Procurement



## 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 call one of the team or alternatively, download the survey online at:  
[www.robertwalters.com/salariesurvey](http://www.robertwalters.com/salariesurvey)



## ACCOUNTING & FINANCE

- As a global logistics hub, Singapore has been growing rapidly and continues to attract leading global companies to set up their regional distribution centres here. We expect this trend to continue in order to support the demand for more logistics facilities and services. A number of global shipping and logistic companies such as Kuehne & Nagel has relocated in the past few months, making Singapore their regional hub and in turn creating new job opportunities.
- Companies such as Panalpina, Yang Kee Logistics and CWT have begun to build warehousing facilities to cater to the demand from local and international clients. With Singapore fast becoming a world class retail hub, the logistics and supply chain industry will potentially be a major contributor to the economy.
- Q1 financial results showed that companies in the shipping and logistics sectors were able to create new headcount for positions such as financial analysts, financial accountants and management accountants.
- During the downturn, we saw organisations trying to cope with a lean work force. With the economy turning around, more companies are re-assessing their staff strength, company processes and directions. We are witnessing an increasing demand for candidates with experience in process re-engineering and business transformation. Individuals who are able to streamline the financial and governance frameworks of a company, as well as drive strategic management process, are currently in hot demand.

## 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](http://www.asiajobindex.com)



## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- IT spend in this sector continued to be keenly scrutinised during the first half of 2010, with business case and return on investments for new projects facing increasing commercial justifications. There was also continued consolidation amongst international logistics companies, leading to cost-driven IT off-shoring activities. Regional logistic players have fared better due to strong trade activity within the Asia Pacific.
- Global trade volumes have been steadily increasing, with regional trade activity in the Asia Pacific region remaining strong. This has led to a demand for IT services for new IT systems projects.
- The IT hiring demand in this sector is expected to remain muted as technology initiatives tend to lag behind business priorities. Opportunities are available for application specialists, project managers and business analysts, with salaries ranging between \$60,000 to \$100,000.





## SECRETARIAL & SUPPORT

- With the market starting to show signs of optimism, the demand for qualified secretaries and executive assistants is gradually increasing.
- The demand for such support staff with MNC experience remains high and in addition to secretarial skills, organisations are looking for candidates with stable career histories and solid secretarial experience.
- Due to headcount restrictions which are still in place, some companies are turning to temporary/contract and/or temporary to permanent hiring strategies to fill current vacancies. This approach allows companies the flexibility to employ staff on a full-time basis for a period of time and offer permanent employment later, when both parties are keen to continue the working relationship.

## LATEST ROBERT WALTERS UPDATES



## CONTRACTING: AN ALTERNATIVE WORKFORCE SOLUTION

Contracting continued to be a popular workforce solution across the industry with many organisations increasing their net contractor numbers throughout the quarter.

Projects, maternity leave and a build up of administration work have all been drivers for the use of contractors over the last quarter, as opposed to last year where the key driver for using contractors was primarily due to unavailability of permanent headcount and budgets.

Contract staff is being used across a wide range of levels, ranging from entry-level through to middle management and in some cases, right up to senior management. Some of the more popular positions over the last quarter have included middle office, product control, business support and IT roles.

Robert Walters' Specialist Contracting Division focuses on placing high calibre and experienced contract talent with specialised knowledge and skills sets across both the commerce and financial services sectors. To find out more about our contract recruitment capabilities, please contact:

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## LATEST ROBERT WALTERS UPDATES

### HUMAN RESOURCE RECRUITMENT LAUNCHED IN MALAYSIA

Robert Walters has launched its HR division in Malaysia to serve the growing need for HR professionals. The Robert Walters Human Resources division specialises in the placement of mid to senior level HR professionals into the financial services and commercial sectors. We recruit for specialist HR positions ranging from administrators and officers through to HR director and VP level, across all market sectors and functions such as: change management, compensation and benefits, employee relations, HR business partner, HR projects, in-house recruitment, learning and development and organisational development.

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### LEGAL RECRUITMENT LAUNCHED IN SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG

Robert Walters has expanded its legal recruitment division into Singapore and Hong Kong. Our consultants have a wealth of international legal recruitment expertise within financial services, private practice and commerce and industry. Roles we recruit for include qualified lawyers, general counsel, paralegal and partners.

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