

SINGAPORE

## Asia's job ads up 6.4% in 2nd quarter

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BOUNCING back from a dismal first quarter, Q2 employment advertisements were up in Asia, according to the latest **Robert Walters** Asia Job Index report.

Job ads rose 6.4 per cent quarter-on-quarter, with a total of about 6.17 million posted in Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan and China, compared with a 6.2 per cent decline in Q1. This was partly because there were more working days in Q2 than Q1, according to the report.

'The second quarter of the year is usually a truer indication of the overall state of the market than the first quarter, which can be distorted by a late return to work from the Christmas and New Year breaks,' said Mark Ellwood, managing director of **Robert Walters** Asia ex-Japan.

Between April and June, job ads increased 2.9 per cent, as business sentiment improved and hiring gathered momentum.

After Hong Kong, Singapore enjoyed the biggest surge in job ads, with 177,020 placed in Q2, up 8 per cent from Q1. Hong Kong saw a 9.1 per cent increase, riding on increased initial public offer activity.

Singapore also finished Q2 on a strong note, with ads placed in June increasing 10.7 per cent from the number in April.

'The increase in recruitment advertising in Q2 has been reflected in overall market sentiment,' said Andrea Ross, managing director of **Robert Walters** Singapore. 'There is evidence of more commercial confidence and a degree of cautious optimism.'

Professionals in customer service and account servicing had the most to cheer about during Q2 in Singapore - the sector recorded the highest increase in job ads, at 21.6 per cent.

The retail and creative sectors also saw strong increases in job ads, at 16.8 per cent and 17.4 per cent respectively.

Among the four countries, Japan was the laggard, experiencing a Q2 sequential job ad contraction of 1.3 per cent. It also ended the quarter on a downbeat note, with ads placed in June shrinking 3.4 per cent from April's figure.

After taking into account seasonal effects, people in the job market will continue to wait with bated breath as prospects remain uncertain.

'The recent market rallies may be indicative of the overall cautionary lesson to be drawn from these figures,' said Mr Ellwood. 'It is therefore too early to say if the increasing upward trend of job advertisements seen at the end of the second quarter will continue throughout the year.'

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