

Job Advertisements Pick Up In Q2

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ROBERT WALTERS RECRUITMENT

Asia - The number of professional job vacancies in Asia has been on the rise, as the total number of job advertisements placed in Q2 2009 increased by 6.4% compared to the previous quarter.

According to the latest Robert Walters Asia Job Index Q2 2009, which tracks advertisement volumes for professional positions across job boards and national newspapers, it found that while Q2 saw an overall decline in job advertisements in May compared to April, the number of job ads went up in the month of June.

According to Mark Ellewood, managing director of Robert Walters Asia (excluding Japan), more companies are starting to relocate staff internally to offices in Asia. "This impacted recruitment activity generally and is perhaps indicative of the overall cautionary lesson to be drawn from these figures," Ellewood added.

"The recent market rallies may be sustainable, but we have to be wary of the 'double dip' effect. 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."

The report also found that Hong Kong employers are taking a fairly cautious "wait and see" approach in April. However, with more companies are now seeking stockmarket listings on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in June than in the last twelve months, this has had a positive impact on recruitment in the financial sector as there is a demand in candidates in areas such as risk, compliance, product control and IT.

Matthew Bennett, managing director at Robert Walters Hong Kong, commented: "The strong performance of Hong Kong's stockmarket has encouraged the financial services sector to start planning for growth, but the emphasis has been on efficient expansion. While the banks are making a number of selective hires, they appear to be exercising a certain degree of caution and we would expect this to continue for a while yet. Our experience shows that commerce and industry tends to lag behind the banks, which suggests that we will not see large increases in overall advertising activity for the remainder of the year."

While China experienced a slump in job advertisements in May due to the holiday break, June saw a sharp upturn. The report also found that June's figures were the highest experienced for any single month in the last three quarters.

As retail chains and fashion stores open not merely in cities such as Shanghai and Beijing, but in other cities as well, this created a demand for retail sales and business development positions. Other sectors such as IT and healthcare are also creating the demand for jobs as well.

Carter Yang, director of Robert Walters China, said, "It's interesting to note the increasing support that the IT industry is enjoying and the higher levels of demand for suitably qualified IT contractors. In general, there appear to be a greater willingness amongst organisations to release and advertise roles and subsequently hiring times are beginning to reduce."

However, Japan's recruitment activity continues to be selective, as the number of advertisements still fell by 3.4% during Q2. With regulatory pressures ensuring the demand for qualified candidates, job demands in the accounting and finance sectors remain resilient.

The report also noted that there has been evidence of Japanese organisations outsourcing a high proportion of

their IT work abroad, especially to China, leading to reduced demand for IT personnel. "Part of the reason for this has been the continued strength of the yen, making the outsourcing of IT increasingly attractive," it added.

Kevin Gibson, managing director of Robert Walters Japan, said: "Although the number of advertisements for jobs in Japan has decreased, our own experience suggests that specialist recruiters have been more active in Q2 than in Q1. Part of the reason for this is that targeted headhunting plays an important part in the recruitment of Japanese professionals, so a trusted recruiter can be far more effective than the placement of a direct print or online advertisement."

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