



IT projects reactivated in 2010: Robert Walters

There is growing evidence of previously suspended IT projects and commercial activities being reactivated, plus an increased demand for information technologies professionals across the Asia Pacific.

These are among the key findings of the Asia Job Index Q4 2009 released today in Singapore by major international recruitment consultancy Robert Walters.

The Robert Walters Job Index tracks advertisement volumes for professional positions across the leading job boards and national newspapers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan.

It found a 37.1 per cent increase in job advertisements placed in the fourth quarter of 2009, compared to the same period 2008. The total number of job advertisements increased by 12.8 per cent compared with the previous quarter.

The Index report said the "overall growth in job advertising is indicative of a return of employer confidence".

Resilient industries

The Robert Walters Salary Survey 2010, released simultaneously with the Job Index, found that the pharmaceuticals, FM (fast-moving consumer goods), retail and telecommunications sectors were the most resilient and had the biggest increase in jobs.

Mark Elwood, managing director of Robert Walters, Southeast Asia, said towards the end of 2009, although many employers remained cautious and costs were still a key focus, "we began to see some organisations increase their hiring activity".

For the IT industry, the financial services sector saw an increased demand for IT contractors in response to uncertain market conditions as well as to circumvent headcount restrictions.

The second half of 2009 saw spikes in demands for solutions architects, service delivery managers, pre-sales professionals and security specialists.

Andrea Ross, Robert Walters' managing director of Singapore, said there remains a talent shortage in Singapore, within some sectors of financial services.

Increased contracting

"Contracting roles have continued to grow irrespective of the market, due to companies wanting a more flexible workforce and not restricting themselves to hire individuals on a permanent basis," Ross said.

"Sectors that have seen a steady recovery include oil and gas, heavy equipment, security, semiconductors and IT and we see an increase in hiring activity across various levels."

In Hong Kong, higher levels of recruitment activity were seen in the second half of 2009 "as organisations, which had perhaps cut headcount too deeply, struggled to cope with increased commercial activity levels".

In China, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and medical devices sectors drove increased levels of recruitment activity throughout the year.

In Malaysia, the RW Salary Survey 2010 found that "increasing levels of confidence are likely to raise expectations of high salaries and bonuses in 2010".

In Thailand, social unrest led to a number of organisations exiting the country during the first half of 2009. The most active sectors were energy, consumer business and supply chain. The RW report said that "increasingly levels of confidence are likely to raise expectations of higher salaries and bonuses in 2010".