

Top Print Edition Stories

Job ads for pros in S'pore dive 41% in Q4

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Survey shows lower falls in China, Japan and Hong Kong

(SINGAPORE) The number of advertisements for professional jobs in Singapore fell 41 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2008 - the biggest drop in Asia.

A survey by recruitment firm **Robert Walters** Asia (RWA) also found that ads for professional jobs posted on boards and in national newspapers fell 11.7 per cent in China, 24.2 per cent in Japan and 34.3 per cent in Hong Kong.

As well as registering the biggest drop in ads, Singapore also registered the lowest number of ads during Q4 - at 189,782. In December, the segment here with the highest number of job ads was engineer/surveyor/architect/technician (7,869 ads), followed by accounting/finance (6,689) and retail servicing/sales/business development (6,457).

The segment with the fewest ads was editor/reporter (89), followed by lawyer/solicitor/barrister/compliance officer (223) and property management (305).

According to RWA, sales-related jobs have become the main focus for employers in Singapore. 'These areas have seen a greater level of activity than financial services, which has been more severely affected by the global downturn,' it says. However, a focus on financial regulations meant that roles for compliance and audit specialists were advertised, with several of the larger accountancy firms starting to recruit in anticipation of new project work in 2009.

One area that has held up quite strongly here is public sector work, especially in infrastructure, where the Singapore government has moved to underpin the economy.

RWA says ads always fall towards the end of Q4 because of the holiday season, but the decline this time around has been exacerbated by the economic climate. This was also evident in candidate sentiment. 'Many candidates, especially the best ones, showed a reluctance to move jobs, preferring to remain in positions in which they felt more secure and confident,' the firm says.

In Hong Kong, the focus of recruitment activity is sales and marketing and business development. Other areas where there is still evidence of activity are accounting and information technology.

In China, the recruitment focus is on engineers and other technical staff for construction and infrastructure projects. Investment in human resources and training is also growing.

In Japan, creative skills in areas such as online marketing and Web design remain in demand, as do talented salespeople where creativity is required.

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