

Money  
**Asia job ads fall in last quarter**

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THE number of job advertisements placed in key regional markets fell 6.2 per cent in the first quarter compared with the previous three months, said recruitment consultancy **Robert Walters**.

But there was a sliver of better news: The key markets of Hong Kong, Singapore and China recorded a gradual rise in job ads during the quarter.

**Robert Walters** said the effects of the economic downturn did not fully hit recruitment advertising across the region until the fourth quarter.

And the Chinese New Year period ensured that advertising volumes in January and early February were seasonally low.

In Singapore, significant public sector spending and completion of major leisure and infrastructure projects spurred demand.

There were 163,952 job ads placed in the first quarter, down 13.6 per cent from the fourth quarter.

But the number of ads rose from 48,711 in January to 57,755 in March.

Accountants were in demand as a result of the ongoing need to control costs and comply with new regulation and reporting standards.

Also in demand were business development professionals, especially in the retail and leisure sectors, as several large casino and leisure complex projects near completion.

Government funding for infrastructure projects led to more openings for engineers, architects and technicians.

'There is still evidence that recruitment remains focused on cost-cutting rather than business generation,' said **Robert Walters** Singapore managing director Andrea Ross.

In Hong Kong, some businesses recruited for longer-term growth.

In China, there were relatively fewer recruitment ads for more junior roles. Such recruitments were done mostly internally to manage costs.

Japan's figures were uniformly dismal. It posted a 30 per cent fall in job advertising during the quarter.

Overall, **Robert Walters** said it was too early to tell whether the first quarter figures pointed to a permanent return to advertising growth.

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