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The Changing Face of The Singapore Job Seeker

Adecco takes an in-depth look at the Singapore Job Seeker and how their profile has changed in the first five months of the year.

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Adecco, Singapore's leading human resource and staffing solutions company, takes a look at the Singapore job seeker and how their expectations and approach to finding a job have changed since the beginning of the year. These white paper findings are based on comment from Adecco Office Managers and from applicants that have registered with Adecco.



At the time of this white paper going to print, the most recent available Singapore Ministry of Manpower statistics showed that 7500 employees had been retrenched in Q4 2008. With a reduction in full time hiring across Singapore and a continuing increase in downsizing and retrenchment, Singapore job seekers, like their counterparts in many other countries, have had to adjust to a more demanding and discerning job market. Job Seekers in Singapore have observed market changes and have significantly changed the way that they are approaching the job market. They have become:

- More flexible in how they are approaching their job search. They are considering other options, for example temporary and contract positions, as a stepping-stone to the right full-time position or as a means of gaining additional skills and experience. Applicants are asking more questions about different ways of working and what could be the right solution for them. Likewise, employers are aware that offering flexible work solutions is a way to manage costs and expectations.
- More accepting that higher salaries and large bonuses may not be attainable right now. There is a definite job seeker understanding that salary packages may be reduced as companies focus on restructuring and streamlining their workforces. Whilst acceptance in this area was minimal in January, by the end of Q1 2009 the majority of job seekers had come to terms with it.
- Strong networkers. Job Seekers are exploring more avenues to find the right position and to develop their careers in the long-term. They are networking to a much greater extent and being far more pro-active in their job search activities. This extends to the added attention to detail that applicants are applying to their resumes – ensuring that this 'personal selling tool' stands out and 'positions' them at the right level. This attention to detail also includes time spent researching an industry, company or role, before a job interview and ensuring adequate preparation for the interview opportunity.
- More prepared to consider re-training or re-skilling. As the Singapore Government continues to respond to the changing employment landscape by offering courses and training that can help individuals re-train and re-skill, job seekers are thinking to a far greater extent about how they can personally prepare for long-term career change. This desire to consider re-training comes at a time of far greater public awareness of the type of courses on offer and what job opportunities these can lead to.
- Less choosy about distance to travel to work and workplace location. There is a general understanding that locality and distance to travel to work is less important than identifying and moving into the right position. This acceptance is timely as more companies are considering how to produce products or provide services from more cost-effective locations.

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This change in mind-set and approach will support a workforce that keeps Singapore competitive with other regional centres. This change also comes at a time when job seekers have access to more job seeking tools than ever before. They are embracing the internet and on-line resources such as LinkedIn, MySpace and Facebook, which are surging in popularity as all age groups continue to leverage these tools to support the job search process.

As the world of work becomes more mobile and truly international with organizations looking at cheaper and faster ways to manufacture or deliver services, the flexibility of the global workforce will become even more crucial to supporting economic success. The findings in this white paper that show job seekers responding swiftly to market conditions are positive signs for Singapore in general.

“The half-hearted job seeker is something from the past. The Singapore job seeker of today is focused, well researched and most definitely investing in their future. They understand the current job market situation and for the most part are aware of the work options open to them. They are prepared to go that extra length to find the right position and there is an extra level of flexibility that is refreshing to see”.

Lynne Ng,
Regional Director,
Adecco South East Asia.

“I knew that I would be up against strong competition in the interview process and had to be at my sharpest – not just in terms of demonstrating my skills and experience – but also in proving why I would be a better fit than the next interviewee...or the one after that. I researched extensively the company I was interviewing with and believe that I was able to better understand the role because I fully understood the company and the environment they operate in”.

Cillia Yow
- who secured a full-time position with a leading US commercial information company in February 2009.

“As I met with recruitment specialists during my job search – I considered them as ‘mentors’ and tried to learn as much as I could from them. It’s not always about what you can get from someone, but also what you can learn that puts you in a stronger position during the job search process”.

Jocelyn Chew
– who secured a full-time position with a world-leading manufacturer of renewable food and industrial ingredients.

Adecco S.A. is a Fortune Global 500 company and the global leader in HR services. The Adecco Group network connects over 500,000 associates with clients each day through its network of over 34,000 FTE employees and over 6,600 offices in over 60 countries and territories around the world. Registered in Switzerland, and managed by a multinational team with expertise in markets spanning the globe, the Adecco Group delivers an unparalleled range of flexible staffing and career resources to clients and associates.

Established in Singapore in 1985, Adecco Singapore offers a comprehensive range of services that includes temporary & contract staffing, permanent recruitment, outsourcing, executive search, leadership development, career management and outplacement. Services are delivered through a network of 19 general staffing and specialist divisions.

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