

The voice for the global staffing industry

GR

THE GLOBAL RECRUITER

ASIA PACIFIC
FOCUS

UNEVEN RECOVERY

UNIQUE CHALLENGES AHEAD

DEFYING GRAVITY – CONFERENCE PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED

RELOCATION ADVICE

ASIA PACIFIC ROUND UP

UNEVEN RECOVERY

With the S&P 500 recently tracking an all-time record intraday high, the US economy shows clear signs of a steady recovery. The eurozone remains mired in recession, with policy makers debating ways of resolving sovereign debt issues and spurring growth in their economies.

Asia Pacific economies have so far escaped the brunt of the global credit crises and the region continues to attract new investments. According to The World Bank's April 2013 update, East Asia and Pacific region contributed to 40 per cent of global growth in 2012. Domestic demand grew at 7.5 per cent in 2012 – higher than any other region in the world.

Through the lens of an Asia-domiciled recruitment business, we see global firms responding to the uneven pace of recovery in different ways. Some have continued the trend of shifting roles to lower-cost regions such as Southeast Asia, which represents nations like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Some have headed in the opposite direction, moving roles from Asia back to European countries where competitive advantages have emerged – for instance, Poland and Ukraine. Others have simply cut back on overall hiring. However, relative to other regions as a whole, Asia Pacific remains a key engine for global growth in 2013. And Singapore, a tropical island city-state

sitting just south of the Malay Peninsula, is one of its leading financial centres and the world's fifth busiest port.

Singapore

According to Boston Consulting Group's 2012 Global Wealth Report, Singapore has the world's highest density of millionaire households at 17.1 per cent or 188,000 households. With personal income tax capped at a modest 20 per cent and no Capital Gains Tax, it is unsurprising that Singapore has become a magnet for wealth around the region. In a recent survey of 1,000 mobile millionaires, Singapore was deemed the most desirable place to call home in Asia – billionaires Richard Chandler and Eduardo Saverin are amongst the notable individuals whom have chosen Singapore as their home-away-from-home. Singapore's popularity as an offshore banking hub is also renowned, with wealth under management projected to overtake Switzerland by 2020. Switzerland currently manages some \$2.8 trillion in assets, whereas Singapore has seen assets under management grow from just \$50 billion in 2000, to \$550 billion by end-2011. With an area half the size of New York City, signs of over-crowding and increasing urban stress are quite evident. Residents fret of surging prices, public services slipping, and infrastructure

bursting at its seams. It is thus understandable why Singapore's liberal immigration policy which has largely allowed companies unimpeded access to foreign talent over the last decade, is now coming under close scrutiny. With a population of 5.3 million comprising of 3.3 million citizens and 2 million foreign residents, Singapore is an ideal case study for other countries contemplating the path of sustaining economic growth through the import of human capital.

In direct relation to it becoming one of the world's most crowded and expensive cities, one of Singapore's most frequently debated topics nowadays is the merit of bringing in foreign talent (both Asian and Western professionals) when given the availability of locally accessible talent.

Local versus Foreign

The above debate can also be extended towards professional staffing in the Asia Pacific context: is it more effective for a client to use the services of a regional staffing business or an international one?

The answer is emphatically – it depends. It depends on the value-addition that a service provider brings, whether the scope of its services meets the clients' needs, and at what cost it is able to provide them. That being said, we do see regional staffing businesses possessing

a unique advantage when certain criteria have been met. If a company has been operating on the ground in excess of 15 years, and its returns are derived solely from its regional business, it is likely an indication of the strength of its relationships with both clients and candidates alike. In addition to this the company will also have survived cyclical and structural changes that have affected hiring in the region. This includes changes in government policies, shifts in labor market conditions, the easing or tightening of immigration, as well as boom-bust cycles like the Dotcom Crash, Asian Financial Crisis, and Global Financial Crisis. A locally successful company will undoubtedly have established a track record and already identified a blueprint for its business to be sustainable in the long run. If the company's reputation precedes itself, and has an aggregate business which has grown beyond a tipping point, new relationships would expect to come by way of introductions and word of mouth. Having a self-evident track record can send a very different message when compared to brands which need to promote their service through marketing and international presence. Regional firms are also more likely to have a deeper pool of candidates available locally. This is likely to mean they have access to hard-to-find or passive candidates, who rarely furnish

Ivan Tang, Senior Manager at Tangspac charts the unique challenges of the Asia Pacific region.

their resumes to headhunters or even find the time to visit the job boards. These kinds of companies will offer clear value-add to clients who place a premium on the stability and longevity of potential hires.

Going Local

Local firms that have continuously kept a finger on the pulse of the region are also more likely to have witnessed the rapid pace of change and development throughout the Asia Pacific region. They would be more equipped to understand evolving market practices that affect both job-seekers and employers, for instance, the presence or absence of certain trade unions in different countries. They would also be able to discern between regulations that represent a necessary inconvenience to running a professional staffing business and those designed to hold the industry to a higher standard. Comprehension of the latter is vital in educating clients especially when such regulations create ambiguity also for them. Most local firms should have an intimate understanding of demographics in this region, which can aid in a client's decision for instance of whether or not to expand their presence here. Take Singapore for example. It may be the world's fourth leading financial centre and a prominent location

today for many Fortune 500 companies. However the state only achieved independence 47 years ago. Its population in 1975 was half the size of what it is today, which means it has doubled in a single generation. Contrast this with demographics in other parts of the world (e.g. an aging population in Europe), and it helps put into perspective just how radically different the Asia Pacific region can be. Another key benefit realised by locally based firms is a better appreciation for how job seekers view their careers. Peoples' aspirations, motivations and reasons for changing jobs can vary quite substantially and at times this is influenced by their culture. A better understanding of the mentality of candidates translates into a recruiter being more effective at doing their job. It is important to tailor your approach to recruitment in this market because in spite of its remarkable growth, Asia Pacific remains a fragmented region marked by totally different regimes, types of economic systems, currencies, and attitudes towards market intervention or free markets. It is too easy to underestimate the complexity of running a regional recruitment business in this region. Taking a one-size-fits-all approach and putting in place a 'proven' methodology at four or five different locations would be akin to keeping on your winter clothing throughout different seasons of the year. It takes a



true specialist with local market expertise to build a lasting business in this region.

The bigger picture

An international firm with 50 offices across the globe, quarterly results to announce and public shareholders to please, is less likely to trouble itself with keeping a long-term view on clients and having a personal touch in a particular overseas market. Shorter-term goals tend to take the stage, with sales pressures pushing teams to deliver and branches being managed by numbers. The constant need for sales calls and revenue projections brought on by a work culture demanding short-term results might lead to higher staff turnover. Personnel replacements at the senior level could in turn result in changes to business strategy and clients ultimately end up having to cope with the differences. Contrast this with regional firms that have stakeholders focused on generating long-

term business value and have a genuine interest in the market. They would be more inclined to take a conservative approach of managing client relationships, and be able to say "No" to doing something to a client for the sake of short-term gains. They would be less impatient to market their services, and do their homework before proposing a solution. They might attract consultants who dread managing upwards, who are good at what they do, and would be given time to achieve results. They would also look after clients' best interests and likely be flexible enough to align themselves strategically with clients' future plans. Overall speaking, clients experience a more consistent level of service and deeper sense of commitment. With the added benefit of special access to Chairmen or CEOs located within the region, channels for communication could be streamlined, helping to foster a more successful relationship and partnership which delivers results. →

CLEAR MOTIVATIONS

Ann Swain, Chief Executive of APSCo, discusses the reasons why recruiters want to get involved in APSCo Asia.

It's now been almost two months since we held our first Members Meeting in Singapore and APSCo Asia is going from strength to strength.

As I revealed in this column last month, we are now in the process of creating our Representative Committee and as I write we are finalising the line-up. By the time we hold our next Members Meeting in July we will have the structure and group in place but in the meantime I've been catching up with some of the new committee members to find out why they are getting involved and what they hope to achieve by working with APSCo in the region.

Adam Price, NES Global Talent's Regional Director in Asia, is looking forward to the prospect of properly representing professional staffing companies across Asia: "The relatively immature nature of some of these markets, particularly outside Singapore and Hong Kong – and the potentially positive message that APSCo can bring – is the primary reason for my involvement," he says. "I am extremely proud to be a part of this first committee and look forward to working hard to achieve the same gold standard that APSCo represents in the UK..

"There are so many things that we can achieve in Asia," Price continues: "The implementation of a members' code of conduct, cultural and business practice education across the region,



best practice initiatives, supplier list quality assurance and lobbying for better conditions and new legislation – the list really is endless. The prospect of dialogue with the various government agencies across the region in order to affect change is a strong driver for me."

SThree is a longstanding member and advocate of APSCo in the UK and it was a logical step to extend the relationship into Asia. From conversations with Matt McManus, Regional Director in the Asia Pacific region, I understand that he joined the committee to help shape APSCo's communications in the region. As yet, there isn't a trade body that lobbies for recruitment consultancies in the area. Singapore has a population of five million and there are around 2,500 recruitment consultancies in the country. As such, it is arguably

one of the most competitive markets for the recruitment industry but many of these consultancies work at the lower level.

Matt believes that it is important to build a trade body which can lobby on behalf of the industry, increase knowledge about the sector within government and raise our profile within the profession. He also realises the importance of positioning APSCo Asia as a forum for networking and sharing experiences as well as setting out guidelines and principles. He said that clients and candidates will be able to come to the association for advice and be able to rest assured that their concerns will be dealt with efficiently. He fully supports the three pronged approach that the Representative Committee will take to serve its members in Singapore to give the industry

a voice, govern standards and give organisations a platform to network and share best practice. He also emphasised that APSCo Asia is not an 'ex-pat' club and will actively encourage membership from non-UK based consultancies. APSCo needs to engage Singaporean consultancies to join, and to get exposure to markets outside of Singapore.

After months of planning, we have most of the building blocks in place – the foundation of our presence in this dynamic region. I have no doubt that our new committee will help to drive APSCo's vision of building a world-class association which will effectively support and represent our members across Asia. The next step is finalising our APSCo Asia Code of Conduct – I'll keep you posted on all the latest developments. →



THE GLOBAL RECRUITER

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DAY ONE



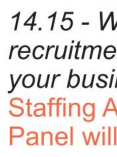
10.00 - Sales Yoga: A transformational practice for Opening Doors and Closing Deals
Scott Wintrip, Founder, Wintrip Consulting Group



12.30 - Facing the change of agency recruitment
Adam Gregory, Head of Search and Staffing Sales APAC, LinkedIn



11.45 - Influencing skills for the recruitment market
Karen Leong, Influence Speaker & Coach



14.15 - What do you perceive to be the challenges facing the recruitment market in the next few years and what steps is your business taking to meet them?
Staffing Agency Panel – Panelists to be confirmed – Panel will include leading agency experts

PLEASE CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING TWO TRACKS FOR THE AFTERNOON SESSIONS

The Management Track:



15.45 - Levitating Leadership - getting your team to rise above the norm
Fiona Lander, Head of Professional Development, APSCo & Toby Buckle, Senior Recruitment Management Trainer



The Executive Track:



15.45 - Acquisition remains a competitive growth strategy
Rod Hore, Director, HHMC – M&A in Asia



16.30 - Revolutionary Sourcing
Laura Stoker, Executive Director of Global Training, AIRS



16.30 - Growth Strategies for the Asia Region
Miles Hunt, Chairman, Serocor – Round table discussion

DAY TWO



10.00 - Turning Data Into Revenue
Russell Clements, Non executive Director, cube19 & formerly CEO of SThree



12.00 - How do you think client needs for staffing services will develop over the next few years?
Client Panel – Panelists to be confirmed – Panel will include leading end client experts



11.15 - Mobile Recruiting
Laura Stoker, Executive Director of Global Training, AIRS

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MOVING STORY

Steven Pang, Managing Director of Reccelerate offers advice for a smooth transition to the Asia Pacific region.

The world is increasingly a smaller place. With the slowing economies in the UK and Australia over the last couple of years, we have seen recruiters from these areas relocating to Asia to seek their fortunes and seeking an adventure living and working overseas. From my own personal experience, having moved my career and family from Sydney to Singapore, Singapore to Tokyo and back to Singapore again, I have picked up a few tips on relocating and settling into a new environment that might be useful for you.

Of course, it should be remembered that two of the most stressful events in life are changing jobs and moving to a new place. When you relocate overseas for a job, that is one mega-combo!

The first thing to consider in making this move is cost – don't underestimate it! If you're going to pack up your home and shift to another country you need to think about:

- Getting out of your current lease if you are renting
- Selling big ticket items such as the car, white goods, furniture
- all usually at a loss
- Mobile phones, are you going to pay a penalty for prematurely ending the contract?
- Do you need to finance a hotel stay when you are homeless while waiting for the big trip to begin?
- Transporting all your belongings via sea or air to the new abode.

On arrival

What are the hidden costs to consider? Let's start with the deposit for a new rental apartment, it can vary from two months to six months rent up front plus the fee for the real estate agent (usually a months rent) to help you find the apartment. If you have kids don't forget you'll need to find the fees

for international schools. You may also need to buy everything you sold when you left your previous home: a new set of wheels, new white goods, new furniture and household items, a new mobile phone, plans and so on.

Thankfully you're not always on your own. Some employers do offer relocation allowances to offset some of the costs above, however, increasingly we are seeing more 'local package' or 'semi local' and less 'expat' packages being offered. So, negotiate and agree all your terms upfront to avoid the shock of burning a hole in your bank account before you start your dream job overseas.

One of the attractive things about moving overseas in some cases is moving from a high income tax rate country (eg. Australia, Canada, UK) to Singapore and Hong Kong where the income tax rate is very 'friendly'. That is certainly a big positive to consider.

Language – have fun with it!

If you are considering moving to Asia, apart from Singapore and Hong Kong, English isn't widely spoken. Unless you are a talented linguist, it is not easy to attain fluency in a new language quickly, even with lessons. Be prepared to use the most basic forms of communication to get your message across – hand gestures, body language or

even your drawing skills. There are countless instances of expats walking into restaurants having to 'flap their wings' to order chicken or make 'moo' noises to indicate beef.

Orientation

For my first month in Tokyo, I had a hand written sheet of paper with instructions in Japanese which I gave to my taxi driver to take me back to my apartment. I prayed to God every time that he didn't turn around and ask me questions, if he did, all he would get is just a blank stare as a reply. I would have had no idea how to get myself home if I lost that piece of paper!

Also, I had to invite my secretary to my apartment to show me how to work the aircon, TV and the washing machine. All the controls were in Japanese! She was nice enough to print labels in English and stuck it on the controls. Simple, basic things we take for granted become huge inconveniences when you are basically an illiterate in a foreign country.

With the help of Japanese friends and colleagues, it took me three months to adjust to a comfortable routine in Tokyo and once I had that, life was sweet! As costly and as difficult initially it was for my many relocations, I would do it all again in a heartbeat because it had made my life experience richer, multi dimensional and hopefully made me a more interesting person.



Expansions and opportunities from the region.

**REGIONAL
NEWS**

Fircroft Attracts Pioneer

A Singaporean recruitment pioneer has been appointed by Fircroft to head up its Asia Pacific division as it seeks to expand in the region. Dhirendra Shantilal has more than 33 year's experience in recruitment, and was one of the founding partners of Business Trends in Singapore, a recruitment firm which was sold to Kelly Services in 2000. Dhirendra went on to transform the company ultimately creating a business which spanned 85 offices across the Asia Pacific region. Dhirendra will now take on the role of Board Director and Head of the Asia Pacific region, as Fircroft seeks to maintain the growth which has seen its annual turnover exceed USD 1 bn. "Dhirendra's appointment comes at a landmark moment for Fircroft," says Johnathan Johnson, CEO at Fircroft. "We have expanded rapidly over the last six years, turnover has more than tripled and we now operate in over 45 countries. Expansion in the Asia Pacific region is a key strategic priority for us now and we promise to bring Fircroft's exceptional customer commitment to more businesses in Australia, China, India, Singapore, and the wider region. "Unparalleled industry expertise is one of the key strengths of Fircroft and I can't think of anyone with as much knowledge

and experience of specialist recruitment in the Asia Pacific region as Dhirendra." Dhirendra Shantilal has managed operations across 12 countries and territories in Asia Pacific – Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand.

CareerCross to sell CareerLingual

CareerCross, the Tokyo based multi-brand career recruitment group is seeking a strategic buyer for its international multi-lingual job board CareerLingual <http://careerlingual.com>. The move follows a strategic review of the CareerCross group of companies by Human Capital merger and acquisition advisors Boxington Corporate Finance. CareerLingual is an international job board launched in 2011. Underpinned by strong technology and a growing CV bank of bilingual and multilingual candidates (currently c.20,000) it specialises in bilingual and multilingual jobs worldwide. It enjoys a diverse user base of UK and international employer and recruitment companies. "We are in many ways reluctant to go down the disposal route having done the hard yards of build and investment in CareerLingual without seeing it yet properly grow," said Richard Bysouth, the British born

CareerCross Group CEO and winner of the British Chamber of Commerce Japan Entrepreneur Award. "But our recent strategic review has convinced us that it is non-core to the rest of our Group so it is right to explore if there is a partner out there who can give it more focus." Interested parties should contact Mark Kingston (mlk@boxington.co.uk) for further information.

Jennings Pushes Forward

Selby Jennings has opened a new initiative into mid to senior level Accountancy and Finance placements in Singapore. This specialist market offering will be delivered alongside the company's vast existing network of front office clients in Buy-side, Asset Management and Investment Banking. "We have made a key hire to head the team, Bryan Marshall," explains Phaidon International Director of APAC James Brown, who made the decision following Selby Jennings' success since 2011 in hiring Accountancy and Finance candidates. This area of business has been particularly successful in the Asia Pacific region and the company is enjoying a high volume of requests from their clients across Singapore and Hong Kong. According to Brown, Marshall is: "one of the most successful and renowned Finance and Operations Recruitment

Managers in London and has joined the Singapore office to build a team using Selby Jennings' existing world class infrastructure." Marshall commented: "I've joined Selby Jennings at an exciting time for the business and look forward to further building on our already strong track record in the Accountancy and Finance space. The unique attraction of the business model was certainly the deep specialism in micro-niches, as opposed to general majority of staffing firms in Singapore who operate as generalists." Phaidon International is actively looking for talent to support its growth plans locally and internationally. The Singapore team is currently hiring and plans to treble in size by 2014 across its six specialist recruitment brands: Viridium Associates, Laking Group, Selby Jennings, Carlton Senior Appointments, EPM Scientific and DSJ Global. Indeed this month has also seen Viridium Associates taking a step into the Asia Pacific region with the appointment of Connor Clark-Lindh to expand on the company's markets in Renewables and Cleantech as well as exploring other areas to complement the company's industry verticals. The company will use Phaidon's infrastructure to build in Singapore. "It is a great opportunity to represent Viridium Associates in Asia as the industry matures and develops," Clark-Lindh says. ■

APPOINTMENTS

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