

# hot jobs

where the jobs are in 2006

by Oliver Draper

**W**e're frequently asked for our opinion on the state of the recruitment market from a candidate's perspective: "What industries are hot and what's not?" Rather than simply say that China continues to boom and there are opportunities across almost all sectors, we've attempted to list below some of our predictions for the next 12 months and where we see continued demand for capable talent.

## finance and accounting

Continued foreign investment and the tightening of accounting controls continue to ensure strong demand for China's experienced accounting professionals. The increased focus on corporate governance is set to ensure an increase in recruitment levels of high caliber, bilingual personnel in the areas of compliance, risk assessment and internal audit across all industries. In particular demand will be those with Sarbanes Oxley, US GAAP, IAS and SEC reporting skills. We also foresee an escalating demand for finance professionals with joint venture accounting experience as well as PRC tax and mergers & acquisitions (M&A) exposure.

## banking

Experienced bankers at either Vice-President or Assistant Vice-President level with native Mandarin skills will continue to be in demand as foreign interest in the potential of China's banking sector escalates. Consumer banking professionals are also in demand and we expect there to be a few senior roles for those with private client wealth management experience, although these positions will be competitively sought. Demand for corporate finance advisory and M&A professionals will continue to grow. Commercial bankers, trade financiers and those with experience in treasury and cash management can also expect strong demand for their services.

Notably, we foresee an increase in demand for back and middle office banking professionals. Compliance, audit and risk assessment skill sets will be needed as both the international and domestic banks tighten their corporate governance.

## logistics and supply chain management

We predict an increasing demand for strong supply chain managers/directors, procurement specialists, buyers and logistics and shipping professionals as the manufacturing, garment and electronics sectors within mainland China continue to flourish. Demand for Mandarin speaking, highly mobile, Western-educated professionals will be high, particularly in southern China. We forecast that an increasing number of senior roles will be moved from Hong Kong to the mainland.

## sales and marketing / business development

The outlook for sales and marketing professionals and business developers looks positive with both international players and domestic manufacturers wishing to promote their products on the domestic market. We foresee an increase in demand for regional sales and marketing positions within the Fast Moving Consumer Goods and retail sectors as a result of expansion in China and as Shanghai continues to develop as a hub for North Asia.

## IT, R&D, engineering

It is a recognized trend worldwide that many international software and IT companies are moving their R&D and development capabilities to China. We expect to see continued demand for capable project managers and IT professionals. Increased recruitment activity is expected across all levels from university graduates to seasoned professionals, with the ability to communicate effectively being a much sought after skill, in addition to technical competence. Chinese returnees will be in high demand in this area.

## factory workers

While you may have set your heights somewhat higher, should that dream job fail to materialize you may be able to take comfort in the fact that most factories will be willing to add you to their payroll, particularly if you live in southern China. Despite the fact that China has a population in excess of 1.3 billion, the insatiable rush to produce the world's consumer products and electronic goods has meant labor shortages in many parts of the country. Skilled, vocational labor is in high demand, however with salaries averaging RMB 1,000 per month, you will need to manage your finances tightly to make ends meet. ■