For Immediate Release

Hong Kong average salaries predicted to increase by 0.8%, and 64% companies plan to resume hiring plans in 2021, according to the latest JobsDB Hiring, Compensation & Benefits Report

- Under the ongoing pandemic, employees can expect 0.8% salary increment in 2021, the lowest estimate in 10 years
- 64% of businesses anticipate resumption of recruitment plans back to the pre-pandemic levels by 2021
- 63% employers to freeze or maintain full-time headcounts while 14% will increase headcounts in Q1 2021
- 42% employers have hired fresh graduates over the past 12 months, 5% more than the previous year
- Hirers value job seekers’ personalities and compatibility to corporate culture

(Hong Kong - 18 November, 2020) JobsDB reveals that companies anticipate a mere +0.8% salary increment on average in 2021, according to the latest ‘Hiring, Compensation & Benefits Survey’ conducted in September via an independent research institute sampling 436 companies. The figure has fallen to a record low since 2010. Forecasting the hiring trends, 64% of employers expect the overall recruitment plans to rebound in the following year to pre-pandemic levels. Zooming into the first quarter, 63% of employers are inclined to freeze or maintain headcounts as opposed to 14% who express interests in team expansion with more full-time hires. Notably, employers believe candidate personalities, work ethics and compatibility with corporate culture should also be put into consideration, in addition to relevant work experience. The report also reveals that more employers have hired fresh graduates over the past 12 months.

More than half enterprises foresee recruitment plans to resume to pre-COVID levels in 2021

Due to the persistent pandemic, many companies have a cautious outlook on the economy. Between June and August, 65% of the surveyed employers recruited new staff. In particular, 55% inducted new full-time members, with frontline and clerical staff taking up 58% of the new roles. While 23% of employers admitted to lay-offs during the period, of which comprised 37% from middle management / non-managerial professionals, 43% from supervisory / officer ranks and 42% from frontline staff.

Looking at the overall economic market development in the following year, 64% of enterprises expect an employment revival to pre-pandemic levels within the year; 19% and 20% of them believe in an upturn in Q2 and Q3 respectively. While small and medium enterprises take a more hesitant position for new hires, larger scaled companies predict resumption of recruitment activities sooner.
Forecasting Q1 2021, 63% of the surveyed companies consider freezing or maintaining headcounts, an increase by 28% compared to the previous report. 7% acknowledge layoff plans to decrease operational costs, with frontline staff expected to take the biggest hit (78%). However, 14% of the surveyed businesses will launch recruitment plans targeting frontline (52%) and middle-management personnel (50%).

On top of the fluctuating employment trends in working-level positions, the research has also found that “Corporate Sales & Business Development” (24%), “Accounting” (18%), “Admin & HR” (12%), “Finance” (12%), “Merchandising & Purchasing” (12%) and “Retail Sales” (12%) are the most in-demand job functions in 2021. Additionally, over half of surveyed employers (55%) have recruitment plans in Q1 2021 for part-time, contract and temporary positions so as to save staffing costs and maximize human resources flexibility.

**Employers predict a 0.8% salary increment in 2021**

The report also reveals that employers are predicting a mere 0.8% pay rise in 2021, which is 1.9% lower than the forecast last year. Job functions likely to benefit from salary increases include “Analytics” (3.8%), “Corporate Sales & Business Development” (2.4%), “Education” (2.1%), “Transportation & Logistics” (2.1%), “Information Technology” (1.5%) and “Design” (1.4%), while most other job functions share a similar increment to the average figure.

“We’ve seen a surging demand for digital transformation-related positions, which will experience greater pay rises because their in-demand expertise will help businesses better cater to consumer behaviors online. Compared to 71% in the previous year, only 48% of employers have provided on-the-job skills training. While we understand that employers have to focus resources on dealing with the operational challenges arising from COVID-19, we hope that more efforts will be invested in staff training in order to sustain healthy business growth,” said Mr. Isaac Shao, Chief Executive Officer of JobsDB Hong Kong.

72% of hirers distributed bonuses and ‘double-pay’ in 2020, a 12% drop compared to the previous year. Similar to the prior year, bonuses are expected to amount to 1.4-month salary.

**Recruiters pay greater attention to candidate personalities and work ethics**

There has been an apparent change in attitude among companies following the pandemic. While candidates’ relevant experience remains the top criteria for employers (70%), their personality, attitude and compatibility with the corporate culture is the second most crucial requirement (45%), ranking higher than “Expectations for Salary and Benefits” (36%) and “Academic Qualification” (32%). Moreover, 5% more employers (42%) have recruited fresh graduates over the past 12 months.

“Unlike in previous years, where greater importance was placed on knowledge and skillset, our research has found that employers are increasingly mindful of job seekers’ attitude and personalities – whether they are compatible with the company culture, which helps to foster team spirit and efficiency. The report tells us fresh graduates and candidates with less experience still have a good shot at landing promising job opportunities if they are able to demonstrate agile soft skills and inject innovative and creative energy into the mix.” Shao added.
About JobsDB

At JobsDB, we believe in an open and inclusive world for all. Here, opportunities and possibilities are aplenty: A fresh start. A new career. A welcome change. These are just a few of the things we help people explore.

As a leading job portal with substantial positions across Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand, we are Asia's preferred destination for job seekers. With a team of 800 talented individuals, we have a strong local presence in every country we're in.

With our understanding and insights on each market, as well as our passion for technology, we provide candidates the best opportunities and deliver exceptional value to hirers.

About SEEK Asia

JobStreet.com and JobsDB are part of SEEK Asia, which is the leading online employment market place in Asia. SEEK Asia covers 7 countries namely Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

SEEK Asia is the extension of the Australian Securities Exchange listed company called SEEK. The company’s purpose is to help improve people’s lives through better careers. SEEK Asia’s database consist of over 500,000 corporate hirers and over 24 million candidates.

Issued on behalf of the JobsDB (Hong Kong) by MSL Group.

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