

CAREERHELPLINE

Email: helpline@media.com.hk

The Career Helpline Section aims to solve any problem about your career. Simply ask your question by emailing to helpline@media.com.hk, and we'll find an expert to provide the answer for you.

Moving to Tokyo as a Client-marketer

Q I am a Marketing Manager in Singapore while my husband is a Singaporean with his family business established in Japan. As my husband has to move to Tokyo permanently in 6 months, I wonder if I can find a job related to marketing in Tokyo as well. My existing company is a local SME company, so any internal transfer to Japan seems to be impossible. What do you think I can do in order to enhance my chance

of getting a marketing related job there? Is there a need for recruiting overseas expats for the Japan market? From an industry perspective, what industries in Japan seem to be growing and recruiting more sales and marketing people? I've been learning Japanese for over a year and I can speak basic Japanese now, do you think it helps me in finding a job there?

I appreciate your help. Thanks very much.



A Tyron Giuliani, Partner, Optia Partners K.K., replied, "The Japan employment market for marketing and sales professionals is quite a robust one, albeit in certain sectors. However for non-Japanese at mid-career level, it is not the most 'friendly' hiring environment. "There is a trend, through all industries, to reduce the number of foreigners in companies and

replace them with local talent. This does not mean that 'expats' are no longer hired. We recently were required to put two Presidents and a senior Director into the Japan operations of two separate global organizations. Surprisingly, foreigners were specially requested by the client. They were brought to Japan due to their experiences and skills in restructuring an organisation and in one case, multiple success in turning-around the financial woes of companies.

"However, an 'expat' role for a mid-career manager is probably unlikely to occur unless you have some specific skills or experiences not found here in Japan.

"The best way to test this is to find the regional headquarters of your target companies that are operating in Japan. You may be lucky to have some of them locally in Singapore. Approaching them for roles in Japan is probably the only real chance of being sent over to Japan with all

the benefits. "When interviewing in Japan as a 'local hire', the Japanese employer will be concerned about a couple of major points-language skills and intended length of stay in Japan. Without fluent Japanese and without a solid time commitment you may find it very difficult to acquire a role in a top tier or even second tier firm. "Looking at the 'hot' industries should be your strategy. In Japan, clearly the hottest markets we are witnessing for recruiting is the life science industry - this particularly includes both the pharmaceutical and medical devices sectors. "At Optia our largest teams belong to these sectors and are sourcing marketing and sales focused individuals at mid-career through to senior executive levels. If you have any experience in these fields you may be suitable for a regional role based in Japan. "Another interesting development is that some of the OTC pharmaceutical companies are

asking people with marketing skills from the FMCG non-life science industry to come in and bring fresh ideas to their products. This could be good news for you. "Once you arrive in Japan I highly recommend getting involved

in as many organizations and associations as possible - networking is the key! I recommend the FCC- Forum for Corporate Communications - great for networking with marketers. Good luck!"

(Next issue: China)



Japan: robust employment market for marketing and sales