

# Who makes 30 million yen? Our survey reveals all

By Philip Carrigan

I have been working as an executive search consultant in Japan for a number years now and I always get asked the same two questions.

“Who is moving in the market?” and, “what kind of candidates do I meet?”

The following statistics, based on 2576 candidates from the pharmaceutical and industry related companies answer these questions and reveal a snapshot of current trends.

In a nutshell, our average candidate is a man aged between 35 and 50, earns between 13m and 16m yen, and works at a foreign company.

Interestingly, only 10% of candidates we meet are women, but more than 30% of the placements made by the Optia Partners Pharmaceutical team are female.

Further analysis needs to determine if, (a) women are more likely to change companies, (b) are in higher demand or (c), Optia Partners Pharmaceutical consultants are more attuned to the needs of female candidates!

I unashamedly lean towards option (c).

The vast majority of our candidates hold manager or senior executive positions and more than 40% are aged between 40 and 49.

About 30% are under 40 years old and only 15% are older than 50.

Certainly, high-level employment opportunities decrease dramatically after 55. However, companies usually target people aged 46 to 53 years old when looking outside for director candidates.

The vast majority of candidates work at foreign companies, and only 30% of these are linked with Japanese companies. Most of those people are associated with Research and Development roles and candidates at foreign companies tend to fill positions in business functions.

The survey showed our candidates have strong education backgrounds and more than 50% hold advanced degrees. More than 10% have gained MBAs, a further 15% have attained PhDs and more than 25% have Master's degrees under their belts.

This high level of education is reflected in the candidates' language proficiency.

We ranked 45% of our candidates as having functional business English and 34% have advance business level proficiency. The English level is based on communication skills and does not include reading or writing.

However, I admit our statistics are somewhat subjective because some candidates with high TOIEC scores may not have the cross-cultural communications skills, which are needed for business-level English.

Now let's talk money. More than 60% of our candidates earn between 11m to 19m JPY. About 40% fall into the lower part of that bracket earning between 11m to 14m and about 20% earn between 15m and 19m.

At the senior director level, 12% of candidates earn more than 20m, and 5% pull in 30 million plus each year.

One trend emerging is that foreign Pharma companies in Japan continue to be transformed because of their attractive pipelines and changing personnel.

JFK once said "the wave of the future is not the conquest of the world by a single dogmatic creed but the liberation of the diverse energies of free nations and free men".

These sentiments could well be said too for the Pharmaceutical industry in Japan. Diversity is key to growth.