

CAREER HELPLINE

Email: helpline@media.com.hk

The Career Helpline Section aims to solve any problem about your career.

Simply ask your question by emailing helpline@media.com.hk, and we'll find an expert to provide the answer for you.

How can I work in an agency in Japan?

Q I studied Japanese and Japanese Culture during my school time a few years ago. After my graduation, I have been working for the account servicing team in a 4As agency in Hong Kong. I wish to work in an advertising agency in Japan in the near future and I am considering furthering my studies in Tokyo for an advanced level of Japanese this year. Are there any agencies in Japan recruiting part-time account servicing executives during my studentship there? Or, if

I enroll in any full-time course or training program related to advertising in Japan, will it help my future career there? Do you have any recommendation on these related courses? What else will you advise me to do if I really want to gain access to an agency in Japan?



A Tyron Giuliani, partner, Optia Partners K.K. said, "As a foreign advertising specialist in Japan, with limited Japanese language skills, opportunities are hard to uncover. Gaining an advanced level of Japanese will certainly help, but ideally the 4As in Japan are looking for native Japanese that have fluency in English. There are many schools that offer full-time Japanese language courses and you are able to get a permit on a student visa to allow you to do some part-time work. Monthly living and studying fees will be around US\$2,000 per month – so

cost may be a factor for you to consider. Six to twelve months of intensive study should do the trick –but will cost you a premium.

"As for working, regional roles based in Tokyo may be an option, but if the client side is Japanese, they will demand native level Japanese service. Although you may be able to do some part-time work, I have rarely seen a 'part-time' account services professional – but Tokyo has many second and third tier agencies that may be open to such a set-up.

"Learning about advertising or studying the topic in Japan will also be a challenge – as the courses conducted are all in Japanese. Through the American Chamber of Commerce's marketing and direct marketing groups, they sometimes run programmes over a number of weeks that have experienced professionals providing lectures and workshops. These courses are generally not accredited, but will provide you with some interesting insights and expand your

contacts. Courses will increase your knowledge of the market but experience is what the agency is looking for – and experience working on Japanese accounts or with Japanese clients/professionals. "Obviously one of the best ways

of getting into the Japan market is trying through your current agency or another 4As in Hong Kong – they may have the ability to send you over or someone there may have the contacts to organise this. One other way – for the brave – is to come over

here on a 90 days tourist visa and hit the streets. Try and meet as many agencies as possible and test the likelihood of employment. Once again, this may be costly but could land you a role in Tokyo."

(Next issue: Singapore)



"Foreigners with limited Japanese language skills, job opportunities are hard to uncover in Japan" explained Tyron Giuliani.