

EMPLOYMENT

Jobs hot in China, with a catch

Foreigners drawn by good salaries, but competition can be intense, narrowing one's chance for offer

By SU ZHOU
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Large increases in pay and better career development prospects are two main considerations that draw job hunters from developed countries to China, according to some recruiters and experts.

Audrey Deng, a recruitment manager with more than eight years experience at recruiter Spring Professional, said Chinese employers are willing to double salaries to attract overseas talent, plus pay subsidies for children's education and housing.

"Chinese companies are in their golden time of development, which means they are more willing to invest in research and development and provide career opportunities for foreign talent," Deng said.

According to Expat Insider 2015, the InterNations Survey, China only ranked 38th in overall reviews but it ranked fifth in terms of income and 17th in terms of career development, higher than the United States and France.

Wages offered by Chinese companies appear to be helping companies attract expatriates who want to flee the salary freezes and rampant unemployment of the debt-stricken West.

Robert Parkinson, CEO and founder of RMG Selection, an international human resources service organization that focuses on China, said the perception that working in China



A recruitment fair sponsored by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs attracted foreigners in Beijing. The number of foreign employees could grow, experts say. WANG JING / FOR CHINA DAILY

240,000 foreign employees

were in the Chinese mainland at the end of 2012, a 17-percent increase from 2007.

is a hardship has changed from years ago.

Many expatriates have found the fast growth of the Chinese economy exciting. Ash Sutcliffe, a public relations manager in Zhejiang province at Geely Holding Group, which owns Volvo, said the 30-year-old company still looks like a startup company because it is developing fast and has a young staff.

"I have been in China for 14 years. I am 31 years old and the oldest member of my team. All my Chinese colleagues are open-minded," said Sutcliffe, who hails from

the United Kingdom.

By the end of 2012, there were more than 240,000 foreign employees in the Chinese mainland, up 17 percent from 2007, according to the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

Compared with other countries, the figure is not particularly high, and it has potential for further growth. Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization, said the number of people born in foreign countries who live and work in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou rose by more than 50 percent between 2000 and 2013, and now accounts for about 0.5 percent of the population.

Even so, the job market will not necessarily embrace every foreign job seeker. Human resources insiders said experienced professionals with more specialized skill sets and knowledge of advanced technology or

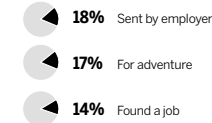
industrial processes will be in great demand, while upper management level and entry level positions will shrink.

"The term of work assignment for the upper management level is longer than before because of the cultural learning curve. If you have them in China for three years, you are not getting any return on the investment," Parkinson said.

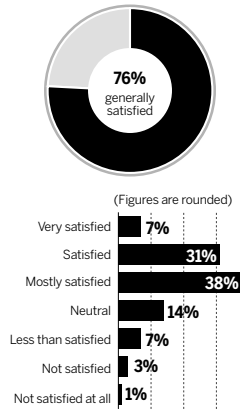
"As for entry-level jobs, I think many foreigners want them but cannot get them easily. Overseas returnees who have absorbed language skills and a foreign education system will take them."

Some talented people from Asian countries, such as Singapore, are popular because of their Western insights, Chinese language and lower cost. Deng of Spring Professional said wages paid for European and US citizen experts are 50 percent higher than for their Asian counterparts.

Top three reasons for relocating to China

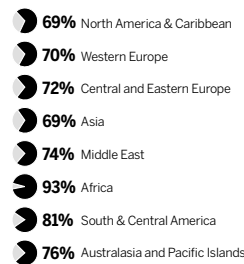


How satisfied are expats with life in China?



Note: 14,388 expatriates representing 170 nationalities from 195 countries or overseas territories were surveyed. Source: InterNations

Graduates who want to work outside their home country, by current location



Source: Talent Mobility 2020 and Beyond. PwC

CHINA DAILY

Workers: Technical experts in demand

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shifted to searching for international candidates for Chinese employers," said Xiao Lirong, director for Beijing and Shanghai at Spring Professional.

"Besides the private sector, even State-owned enterprises have become our clients," she said. State companies have traditionally relied on government agencies to introduce overseas talent.

Robert Parkinson, CEO and founder of RMG Selection, another international human resources company that focuses on China, said its annual placement for foreigners in Chinese companies has doubled in four years.

Parkinson said the demand for skilled technical foreign talent is growing as China moves from low-cost manufacturing to more diversified innovative business.

"In the past, foreign talent we searched for focused on marketing or selling. Now, Chinese companies increasingly need technical experts," Parkinson said, adding that this business will continue to grow.

Business for international recruiters is poised to continue soaring after the government pledged to introduce more overseas talent for pillar industries during the 13th Five-Year-Plan (2016-20), with "the market playing the leading role", instead of government-initiated recruitment.

China targets top overseas talent, including professionals in innovation, breakthrough technologies and new industries, as well as scientists in strategic sectors.

The government has simplified the visa application process to hire them.

One example is new-energy vehicles. Last year alone, China manufactured 379,000 such vehicles, a fourfold increase year-on-year, which has demonstrated the shortage of overseas talent.

Audrey Deng, a recruitment manager with more than eight years' experience, said six automobile clients have created more than 80 new positions, mainly for leading experts from countries including the United States, Germany and Japan.

Christine Raynaud, Greater China CEO for Morgan Philips Group, a global recruitment company, said that despite the growing demand, international recruitment is difficult for local and foreign companies in China.

"Chinese firms and brands are internationalizing to compete in global markets, and this means they have to attract and integrate foreign experts on critical projects," she said. "However, the traditional recruitment model is 'too local' in terms of sourcing and recruiter experience."

Raynaud said the internet could speed up the screening process, but when it comes to the final interview, only professional human resources experts can judge whether candidates are suitable.

Backed by international resources and professional experts worldwide, recruitment firms are expected to bridge the gap.

Deng said, "We have branches in many countries that can help Chinese employers to expand their channels to search for international candidates."

Student Recruitment Column

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