

China Running Short of Finance Industry Talents

By Tony Chua, HR& Education, Hong Kong, 29 May 2011

From www.hongkongbusiness.hk

95% of China finance professionals surveyed report skills shortage following Mainland's booming finance industry.

China's finance sector is facing a severe talent shortage amidst strong economic growth and Shanghai's rapid ascension as an international financial hub. According to the eFinancialCareers China Talent Survey released on Friday, 95% of finance industries professionals in China believe that there is a skills shortage in the current market, with 28% of them reporting this trend as a chronic shortage.

The eFinancialCareers China Talent Survey, conducted in April 2011, reveals that 43% of respondents noticed a skills shortage of senior management or director level staff in the finance sector followed by 40% middle management level and 17% entry or junior level staff.

Finance professionals surveyed indicated "companies not providing development opportunities for staff" as the reason for the skills shortage in China's finance industry, followed by "candidates moving to better paid jobs", and "skilled professionals leaving the industry"

"To combat the skills shortage, companies must consider spending more time and resources on innovative training solutions to enhance the skills of their employees," commented George McFerran, Head of Asia Pacific, eFinancialCareers. "An investment in employee training and development now is an investment in the company's future success."

"Training and development are effective means of addressing skills shortage but are also important for employee motivation and retention," added Mr McFerran. "With 56% of respondents indicating that their firm is looking to increase hiring in 2011, the financial recruitment market will only become more competitive. Companies must build a culture that the employees embrace – one that encourages self development, empowerment, and recognition."

The survey reveals that leadership skills and international experience are most lacking in China's finance industry. Other skills that are lacking include technical skills, English language skills, communication skills and inter-personal skills, according to the survey.

The eFinancialCareers China Talent Survey also shows that 94% of respondents are concerned about losing top performers to other job opportunities in the current market. Despite the severe skills shortage, 58% of surveyed finance professionals indicated that their firm is

actively addressing this issue. Of these 58%, strategies adopted by their firms include “upgrading the skills of existing staff through training and development” (55%), “paying whatever it costs to recruit the best talent” (17%) and “hiring contract or temporary staff to help alleviate high workloads” (15%).

The survey also reveals that the majority of finance professionals in China are positive about the job market outlook in the finance sector. 80% of them claim that there are better job opportunities in 2011 compared with the previous year. Finance professionals in China are also optimistic about Shanghai’s development into a global financial centre with 64% of them believing that Shanghai can become an international financial hub to rival New York and London by 2020.