

Press release
April 2018

Experience more important than education when awarding higher salaries for IT jobseekers

The 2018 Robert Half Salary Guide reveals the latest hiring trends and in-depth salary data for Hong Kong's IT and technology sector

- Hong Kong CIOs are willing to pay IT professionals a higher starting salary based on previous project experience (71%), previous product/service launch (51%), previous company/industry experience (49%), previous team lead experience (47%) and education/qualifications (20%)
- Top three in-demand IT roles in Hong Kong are: Fullstack Software Developer, Application/Product Support Manager and IT Security Specialist.

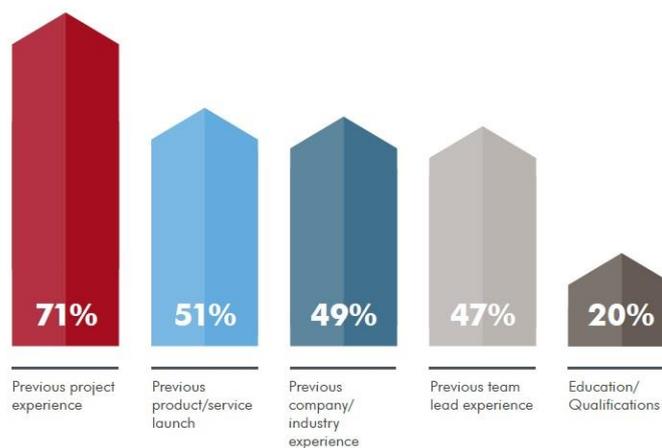
Hong Kong, 18 April 2018 – New independent research commissioned by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) and published in the newly-released [2018 Robert Half Salary Guide](#) reveals Hong Kong's IT leaders are willing to raise starting salaries for top IT talent.

According to the research, experience trumps education when awarding higher starting salaries. More than seven in 10 (71%) CIOs are willing to pay a higher starting salary to IT jobseekers with previous project experience, followed by more than half (51%) who would do the same for skilled candidates with previous experience in product/service launches. Previous company/industry experience and team lead experience closely follow with respectively 49% and 47%. However, just one-fifth (20%) of CIOs consider education a critical factor when deciding to award their IT staff a higher starting salary.

To find out up-to-date salaries, download the [2018 Robert Half Salary Guide](#)

Adam Johnston, Managing Director of Robert Half Hong Kong said: *“There are certainly merits to both education and experience when weighing up the professional profile of IT jobseekers. However, as the continuously-changing technology industry becomes more customer-centric and concern increases amid persistent cyber-security threats, specific industry knowledge and project-based experience are key factors IT employers are looking for when hiring new talent, with companies willing to increase starting salaries for top IT candidates.”*

Top 5 factors for which Hong Kong CIOs are willing to pay IT professionals a higher starting salary*



* Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 75 CIOs in Hong Kong – multiple answers allowed.

As most IT leaders are willing to increase starting salaries to attract new skilled IT staff, employers realise they have to pre-empt their current top IT performers being enticed to new roles with more attractive salary packages, especially in a market where 92% of Hong Kong CIOs find it challenging to source qualified IT professionals. The research shows 100% of Hong Kong’s CIOs plan to allocate pay rises to an average of 20% of their IT staff, with the average increase expected to be 8%, well above the national average of 3.8%¹, thereby acknowledging the importance of salary increases to retain top staff in a skills-short market.

“Top IT talent are firmly in the driver’s seat in today’s market when negotiating salaries – particularly in the areas of cyber-security, and software and application development. Most employers know they have to reward their staff with above-average pay increases or risk losing them to the competition who would be willing to raise salaries.”

“IT experience and qualifications that are most in demand are Agile/Scrum, Open Source Code, and Algorithm Coding. However, IT leaders increasingly expect their IT staff to not only be proficient in their technical specialities, but also master certain soft skills as IT takes a more central place within the wider business. Those who can demonstrate they master soft skills, such as adaptability, stakeholder management and proactivity, have a competitive advantage in the employment market,” concluded **Adam Johnston**.

The Robert Half Salary Guide has identified the top technology positions in demand in 2018² –Hong Kong’s IT sector is currently experiencing a supply/demand imbalance, so top IT professionals – especially those in the following job roles – are likely to negotiate a higher starting salary when interviewing for a new job:

- **Fullstack Software Developer**

	Salary Range			
Percentiles	25 th	50 th	75 th	95 th
	\$282,000	\$400,000	\$701,000	\$1,000,000

Source: Robert Half Salary Guide

Developing innovative and market-leading software tailored for companies is a highly specialised area, one that calls for IT professionals with a unique blend of specialist technical skills, creative thinking, and business acumen. These professionals need to be comfortable working across both back-end and front-end technologies – making their area of specialisation highly desirable and placing upwards pressure on starting salaries.

¹ <https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp210.jsp>

² The **2018 Robert Half Salary Guide** contains new formatting for how the starting salaries for each position is presented. The salary ranges are now presented in percentiles (rather than the low-to-high ranges used previously). These percentiles are determined by a candidate’s skillset and experience level, as well as the complexity of their role – the higher the percentile the more complex the role and the greater skillset and experience level required.

By providing a more comprehensive salary overview, hiring managers are able to better benchmark starting salaries against a candidate’s experience and qualifications, and candidates get more guidance about the necessary steps they can take to earn a higher salary.

- **Application/Product Support Manager**

	Salary Range			
Percentiles	25 th	50 th	75 th	95 th
	\$540,000	\$731,000	\$923,000	\$1,050,000

Source: Robert Half Salary Guide

As Hong Kong companies increase their use and implementation of customer-facing technology, IT teams need to be equipped with the right talent skilled in these application systems. Because of this, demand is increasing for Application/Product Support Managers to help implement and manage these new technologies – placing these professionals in a good position to negotiate higher starting salaries.

- **IT Security Specialist**

	Salary Range			
Percentiles	25 th	50 th	75 th	95 th
	\$480,000	\$600,000	\$720,000	\$800,000

Source: Robert Half Salary Guide

The escalating cost and frequency of cyber-attacks has resulted in organisations increasingly relying on IT security experts, pushing companies to take a pre-emptive approach to discovering and tracking security issues. This has resulted in rising salary growth for IT security specialists as companies vie for the best talent.

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Notes to editors

About the Robert Half Salary Guide

The 2018 Robert Half Salary Guide is the most comprehensive and authoritative resource on starting salaries and recruitment trends in finance and accounting, financial services and information technology in Hong Kong.

It offers a comprehensive overview of the current salary ranges, industry trends and specific job trends for finance and accounting, financial services and technology professionals. The results and insights of the 2018 Robert Half Salary Guide are based on comprehensive analyses, local job placements, local expertise and independent research of executives and office workers.

The full 2018 Robert Half Salary Guide can be downloaded via this [link](#).

About the research

The annual study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted in June-July 2017 by an independent research firm, surveying 75 CIOs/CTOs in Hong Kong. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the world’s first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy. Founded in 1948, the company has more than 300 offices worldwide providing interim management, temporary and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services and technology professionals in Hong Kong. More information on roberthalf.com.hk.

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