

Bleak half-year period for job seekers: survey

Most hiring frozen or slowed for Jan-June 2009

By **LEE U-WEN**

[SINGAPORE] The first six months of this year look bleak for job-seekers, as companies prepare for the full brunt of the financial downturn.

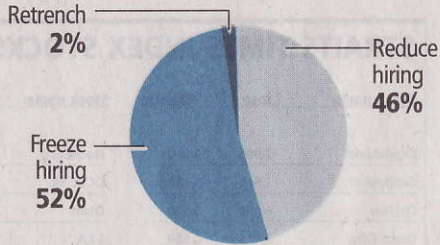
A survey of more than 500 companies here – mostly multinationals and medium-to-large companies – has shown that the majority have lowered their hiring expectations for January-June.

Fifty-two per cent intend to freeze hiring and 46 per cent plan to hire but at a slower pace. Just 2 per cent intend to axe staff.

The findings are from a

Freeze, cut or raise

Hiring plans for H1, 2009

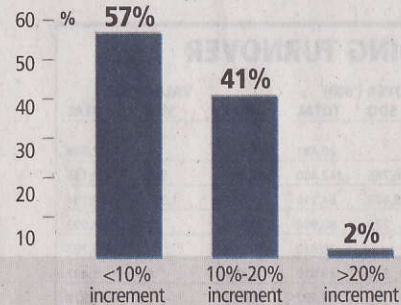


telephone survey carried out by employment services consultancy Achieve Group in late-November last year. Achieve Group polled more than 500 Singapore-based human resource decision-makers.

For those lucky enough to snare a job during the recession, do not expect to earn much more at your new company than your last-drawn salary.

The survey found that 57 per cent of employers

Salary increments for H1, 2009



Source: Achieve group of companies, 2009

who still intend to bring in new blood will offer a pre-negotiation pay increase of less than 10 per cent to new recruits. Forty-one per cent will make a more generous offer of between 10 and 20 per cent.

Just 2 per cent will offer increments exceeding 20 per cent – mostly for jobs in the energy, oil and gas, information technology, healthcare and industrial sectors.

Although the survey shows that things are leaning towards an employers' market, 71 per cent of respondents said that their intended salary offers are the same as usual, while 29 per cent said that their offers are lower than usual.

Achieve Group chief executive Joshua Yim said that the survey shows employers are cautious in anticipation of "an even more severe 2009". "But a good number of employers are still willing to hire workers on a selective basis," he said. "Specific industries are also experiencing some growth."