

SIG Update

Since the last RGGB Magazine, there have been some considerable developments regarding the SIGs and the Business Development Committee, and these are as follows:-

I now have the following SIG Chairmen in place. The contact email addresses for the SIG Chairmen of each of the SIGs above are as follows:-

Aviation	Paul Dugan, OBE, FRAeS paul@nvi-me.com
Education & Training	Tony Calderbank ajcбанк@yahoo.com
Financial Services	Sebastien Long sebastienlong@sabb.com
Healthcare	Philip Taylor philipofriyadh@hotmail.com
Information Technology	Mark Allen mark@dnjcorpit.com
Safety & Security	Jeremy Mann jeremymann@sabb.com

I hope that those of you who have attended the SIG meetings will have found these not only enlightening and valuable, but perhaps a little entertaining too. If you haven't joined you should! These meetings are always a good opportunity for Members to network and make themselves known to respective SIG Chairmen, so please come forward and get to know a few like-minded Members and maximise your membership benefits.



If you wish to join any Special Interest Group, a maximum of two (2) per Member, please let me know by emailing: nicola.quick@talk21.com and I will send the relevant SIG form for completion.

The first Meeting of the Business Development Committee took place on 27 April 2010, where I was voted as Chair of the BDC. The Minutes of this Meeting have been distributed by our RGGB Secretary.

Nicola Quick

RGGB Board Member - Special Interest Groups

Searching for Economic Necessity in the Kingdom

Around 25 members of the Financial Services Special Interest Group (SIG) gathered on Sunday May 24th for an informal evening of networking and discussion. Guest speakers Paul Gamble, Head of Research at Jadwa Investment, and Ewan Walton, Partner & Managing Director of Executive Search & Selection at KPMG, spoke about trends in the local labour market and recruitment in the second meeting of the SIG in 2010. The evening was generously hosted at the residence of Tim Dearden, Head of UK Trade & Investment for the British Embassy.

Saudi Arabia's demographics will continue to pressure the labour market. With 45% of the population under the age of 19, around 150,000 additional people will require a job each year. Historically the public sector has absorbed these people, however the private sector will have to play its part as recent growth is neither sustainable nor productive – an oil price of \$48 per barrel is required just to fund the public sector's annual SAR 400 billion wage bill.

Anyone who has worked in the Kingdom will be familiar with the issues concerning attitudes to work, productivity and mismatched expectations, and the challenges posed to managers and executives in absorbing more Saudis in to the private sector.

The government has a role to play in addressing these challenges. Whilst they invest significant monies in education, much of this is focused on infrastructure rather than improving the quality of teaching. Neighbour Bahrain has imposed a tax on expatriates, which could encourage companies to improve productivity if introduced in Saudi. There are also hopes that the introduction of a mortgage law will encourage more Saudis to take up jobs considered 'undesirable' as they seek to meet their new obligations.

The key advice shared between members during the discussions is that when making hiring decisions, try to ascertain the economic necessity of the hopefuls. If they have commitments, they are more likely to take their role seriously. Fear of negatively affecting their family name can also be a motivation for some. Whilst it is commonly perceived that a Saudi cannot be fired, proper documentation and performance management practices mean that it can be done.



Sebastien Long

Attendees learnt clients always give specifications on the nationality (or region for Saudis) to recruiters. Generally speaking, the finance function is dominated by executives from Saudi, Pakistan and the GCC. Because of Saudisation, it's often the case that a local will 'wear the hat', whilst someone else actually executes the job. Those seeking job stability are recommended to learn Arabic, as companies increasingly ask for bilingual staff.

I am sad to say that this article will be my last contribution as Chairman of the Financial Services SIG. By the time you read this I will have relocated to Hong Kong in an internal move within the HSBC Group to work on the rollout of a business reorganisation across the region within our Trade & Supply Chain function.

My colleague David Stokes at SABB Takaful will assume my responsibilities as the SIG Chairman. David has spent 14 years in the region with eight in the Kingdom focused on IT and financial services. I wish him and my fellow RGGB members all the best in their Saudi endeavours.