

NEWS

SHARP RISE IN EXPECTED REDUNDANCIES

The winter CIPD/KPMG Labour Market Outlook (LMO) survey, shows a sharp rise in the proportion of employers expecting to make at least some staff redundant in the coming months, suggesting that tougher economic conditions are starting to bite in the UK jobs market.

More redundancies on horizon

The survey of 1553 employers shows that almost two in five (38%) intend to make some employees redundant this quarter – a sharp increase on the autumn 2007 LMO survey figure of 17% and the highest quarterly figure for redundancy intentions since the LMO survey began in 2004. The average quarterly figure for redundancy intentions is 21%, which compares with a seasonal winter average of 22%.

A quarter of employers expecting to make redundancies this quarter report that at least 10 staff will lose their jobs. Thirty seven per cent expect to make fewer than 10 people redundant, with the remainder uncertain of the numbers likely to be involved. Redundancy intentions have increased in all sectors since the autumn 2007 survey and are strongest in the public services where almost half (48%) of employers surveyed expected to make at least some staff redundant this quarter.

Redundancy intentions are highest in the East Midlands (47%), the West Midlands (45%) and the South West of England (45%). The Celtic fringe looks set to be the least affected in the next three months, with around a third of organisations in Scotland (33%), Wales (35%) and Northern Ireland (36%) planning redundancies, Redundancy intentions in England are lowest in Yorkshire and Humberside (34%).

Commenting on the survey findings the CIPD's Chief Economist John Philpott said: "Employers' initial reaction to talk of an economic slowdown was to hold fire and take stock of the emerging situation. But a substantial number now expect to trim their workforces, in the private sector because squeezed by a combination of tougher trading conditions and higher costs and in the public sector because being required to make further efficiency savings and cope with tighter budget settlements.

With net recruitment activity still positive, signs of mounting employer pessimism shouldn't be read as evidence of a jobs market approaching meltdown. But it does suggest that the UK is entering a period of slower employment growth and somewhat greater job insecurity than in recent years."

Recruitment difficulties worsen

Despite the economic slowdown and greater availability of migrant workers the winter LMO survey finds employers even more dissatisfied with the pool of labour available to them. More than half (54%) of employers surveyed anticipate recruitment difficulties this winter, up from just below half (49%) in the autumn.

Pay outlook benign

Pay expectations remain benign and have barely changed in recent LMO surveys. Almost 1 in 5 employers (19%) surveyed planned to conduct a pay review in the winter quarter. Thirty per cent of employers conducting a review expected the pay of their staff to increase on average by between 3% and less than 3.5%. 1 in 5 expected increases of 4% or more. The median expected increase is 3% in all but the public services where the figure is lower (2%).

John Philpott continued: "The main risk to continued pay moderation this year would seem to be increased difficulty in recruiting skilled and experienced staff. But in the context of a slowdown in demand for labour a significant increase in pay inflation seems unlikely."

Andrew Smith, Chief Economist at KPMG, said: "The survey reflects the general uncertainty about the economic outlook. The number of companies expecting to make redundancies has jumped – but the majority still expect to employ the same or a higher number of staff in 12 months time. And although more companies report recruitment difficulties, pay expectations are broadly the same as a year ago, suggesting that wage inflation concerns are overdone. Overall, the survey supports the view that the economy is on course for a soft landing – and that there is scope for the MPC to pave the way with further rate cuts if necessary."

STUDENT LOANS COMPANY PIONEERS 'PHONE RAGE' TRAINING

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is leading the way in tackling the 'phone rage' problems faced by telephone operators. The organisation, which employs 1400 people, has pioneered a new cutting edge training course for call centre operators. SLC has seen its operators' morale improve, fewer calls escalated to team leaders and the number of customer service complaints down by 10% since it introduced the psychological approach to handling difficult calls.

Major organisations including London's Metropolitan Police, the Scottish Government, NHS and local councils, are now looking to adopt the approach. SLC trainer Alexis Farndell, who developed the course, said: "We have taken recognised techniques and added another layer - the 'why'. We change the mindset of the operator from victim to controller, get them to recognise the signs of anger and accept that it is not their fault.

"Our no blame culture approach allows people to think about their own behaviour, to be introspective and apply their own boundaries. We are talking about emotional intelligence and that depends on many things - our upbringing, and our cultural and religious backgrounds. We are all different and find different things offensive. We empower our people to decide the boundaries of the behaviour they will accept and to end a call if they feel they have to. Some companies might put the blame on the operator. If our people hang up, it is because they are in charge."

Ms Farndell explained that, for example, swearing upsets some people, but not others. She said: "Swearing in itself is not a 'rage call'. Many companies have an 'end call' policy if a caller starts swearing, but there are many more subtle ways of bullying."

The SLC training shows staff how to recognise the signs of aggression and to distinguish between anger and aggression. Ms Farndell said: "The vast majority of our customers act very reasonably. But at times, people have a right to be angry - we might have made a mistake. This training helps our staff deal with the small proportion of calls that are difficult to handle - when a caller becomes aggressive and makes a personal attack on the operator. That is when anger, which may be perfectly acceptable, becomes rage and is unacceptable."

SLC chief executive, Ralph Seymour-Jackson said: "There are many other training programmes for call centre operators, but it is our approach that sets us apart and identifies us as 'best in class'. It is an unexpected bonus that it has been recognised and is appreciated by other organisations."

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IS STILL BROAD

The diffusion of information and communication technology (ICT) in developing countries is growing, but except for East Asian nations that straddle the line between "developed" and "developing" status -- notably the Republic of Korea and Singapore -- such countries lag far

behind the industrialized world in the application of ICT and its use by businesses, a new UNCTAD report says.

A chief obstacle is lower rates of access to broadband Internet service, which allows forms of rapid communication, e-finance and e-banking that greatly increase business productivity and efficiency, the Information Economy Report 2007-2008 notes.

Among the forms of ICT, mobile phones are most widely used in developing countries. Mobile phone subscribers have almost tripled in such nations over the last five years, and now make up some 58% of mobile subscribers. Developing countries in Asia and Africa had the highest growth rates in mobile phone penetration worldwide. For example, from 2005 to 2006, the number of mobile phone subscribers in Nepal grew from 1% to 4% of the population, while in Ghana growth was from 8% to 23%. "M-commerce," the buying and selling of goods and services using wireless handheld devices, is expanding. And the climbing use of mobile payments and banking are likely to bring growth to m-commerce, provided there is an enabling regulatory environment.

Internet use and penetration continues to increase around the world, the report says, but developed countries still account for the majority of Internet users and have the highest penetration. In 2002, Internet availability in developed countries was 10 times higher than in developing countries; in 2006, it was 6 times higher. Countries with economies in transition had the highest compound annual growth rate in Internet penetration between 2002 and 2006. Belarus and Croatia have higher Internet penetration rates than several developed countries, at 57% and 35% respectively. Several developing countries are taking active steps to expand Internet use through policies to improve ICT access and skills, regulatory reforms to increase competition and the availability of services at competitive prices, investments in ICT infrastructure, and encouragement of production in the ICT sector.

While available data show that the number of broadband Internet subscribers has grown rapidly worldwide, developed countries still account for the predominant share of subscriptions, and the gap with developing countries in terms of broadband penetration has widened since 2002. Seven of the top 10 countries in terms of broadband penetration were in Europe, and two (Republic of Korea and Hong Kong, China) are exceptions among developing countries in terms of their level of ICT diffusion. Broadband access to the Internet enables the adoption of applications that have beneficial impacts on business productivity, and because of the fast-changing technology it is important for developing countries to catch up, the report says.

The use of ICT for business can greatly contribute to income generation and can increase the productivity of enterprises. On average, 34% of European enterprises have automated integration of internal business processes. However, wider adoption of ICT by developing country enterprises is still very limited: few firms have intranet or extranet, which are often the first steps towards the automated integration of business processes. For example, an enterprise can use ICT to manage its supply chain. By improving information sharing with its suppliers, including through systems that allow for automatic replenishment, a business can maintain optimum inventory levels. Faster and more comprehensive communication enables firms to make more accurate production plans and sales forecasts in the short and long term.

To illustrate the beneficial use of ICT by firms in developing countries, UNCTAD and the Thai National Statistical Office jointly conducted the first analysis in developing countries that assesses quantitatively the impact of ICT use on labour productivity in manufacturing by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The study found that use of ICT by Thai enterprises is associated with significantly higher sales per employee. Unlike in developed countries, the use of basic ICTs -- such as the basic employment of computers -- can account for large differences in labour productivity. Variations in the intensity of computer use in Thailand were reflected in large productivity differentials between

firms. A 10% increase in the share of employees using computers was associated with 3.5% higher labour productivity (compared with 1.8% in the case of Finnish firms). Internet access and website presence were found to be correlated with higher sales per employee in Thailand, with a coefficient similar to those found in developed countries: an increase of from 4 to 6% for Internet use in Thailand, compared with an increase of 5% in the United States.

The Thai example confirms the hypothesis that enterprises in developing countries can benefit as much as businesses in developed countries from the use of ICT, the report says.

WORK OPPORTUNITIES

MARKET RESEARCHERS

The Survey Shop is recruiting experienced market research telephone interviewers for both daytime or evening work.

The rate of pay is £6.24/hr for consumer surveys (evening and weekends), £8.32/hr for business surveys (carried out during normal office hours) plus holiday allowance.

All the work is market research only - asking people their opinions, there is no canvassing or selling. Full support is given, and the hours are very flexible.

The Survey Shop conducts both UK and global research for a wide-range of blue chip and government clients.

You should be someone whom others are happy to talk to, have a clear voice, and good communications skills. You will be home based and will need a landline phone.

Apply online at www.thesurveyshop.com/online or call 0800 849 7170

TELESALES

We are looking for enthusiastic, target driven, confident people to join our sales team to promote our brand to new clients. You will be **working from home** contacting companies via telephone and email to talk about the benefits of using our services. You will be negotiating terms and agreeing vacancy opportunities to work on with a view to joining their PSL lists.

Candidates must be experienced in telesales, computer literate and have the ability to use their own initiative to source leads and convert them into opportunities, Recruitment experience would be an advantage but not essential.

Salary £12,000 to £21,000. <http://tinyurl.com/yoxsq6>

ASSISTANT PROJECT MANAGER CMMI ISO ITIL

Assistant Project manager with experience working within the IT operation processes and IT standards implementation arena is required by large organisation to **work from home** and travel to China. Ideal candidate will have Point Of Sales (POS) experience and have worked within a structured Project management environment (prince 2). Must be fluent in Chinese and have experience training.

Salary £11 per hour. <http://tinyurl.com/24vp49>

AREA SURVEYING MANAGER

My client is a large contractor and they are looking for an Area Manager to manage a team of home based Surveyors who carry out comprehensive insurance surveys and schedule of works for minor and major repairs on domestic properties (and some commercial). The role will be **home-based** and you will be supporting a team of approximately 10 Insurance Claims Surveyors across the South West area.

Responsibilities;

- Training and development
- Performance monitoring
- Team management and motivation
- Allocation of resources within the area
- Complaint resolution

Requirements;

- Excellent staff/people management skills
- Ideally experience in managing remotely - but this is not essential
- Strong technical/construction background - preferably in domestic properties
- Ideally insurance surveying experience but this is not essential
- A building qualification is desirable and a sound knowledge of all building trades.
- All applicants must be able to facilitate a small office set up at home.

Candidates for this role would ideally be based within Somerset as this is a central location for managing the team and visiting the head office. This role will suit someone with previous management experience who has a methodical approach and is process driven. It is also essential that candidates are supportive and approachable.

Salary £34,000 - 38,000 – negotiable. Company Car or Car Allowance £5,000.

<http://tinyurl.com/2hetqj>

CHECK TEAM MEMBER / LEADER

Leading CHECK Information Security consultancy currently urgently hiring for an experienced Penetration Tester, ideally a CHECK Team Member or Leader. SC clearance would be a bonus. You are likely to have strong UNIX / Linux / Windows security testing skills combined with excellent TCP/IP and internet protocol understanding and programming / scripting skills in C, Perl or Java. This combined with strong web application testing experience, probably for a security consultancy, for clients within the following sectors: FTSE250; finance, online gaming, pharmaceutical, government. For this role, the successful applicant could be **home based** if preferred. Attractive salary and package offered combined with rapid training to CHECK Team leader status from Member. Possibly CISSP, CISA, MBCS.

Salary £50,000 to £65,000. <http://tinyurl.com/346xxs>

PRE SALES CONSULTANT - AMSTERDAM

Our client is a World renowned vendor of CRM software solutions. They have experienced steady and ongoing expansion in Europe over a number of years and they are now seeking a Pre Sales Consultant to join their Amsterdam based team in Holland. Ideally seeking an individual from a CRM or Marketing automation environment, they are looking to appoint a self motivated Pre Sales Consultant with excellent communication and presentation skills in both Dutch and English. Whilst this is predominantly a **home based role**, there are extensive opportunities for domestic and international travel, so a flexible approach to business travel is essential.

This really is an excellent opportunity to join a market leader who reward their employees highly both in terms of remuneration and also opportunities for career progression.

Salary to 70,000 Euros + Bonus + benefits. <http://tinyurl.com/28z9rb>

PRE SALES CONSULTANT - CRM TECHNOLOGY - MUNICH

Our client is a World renowned vendor of CRM software solutions. They have experienced steady and ongoing expansion in Europe over a number of years and they are now seeking a Pre Sales Consultant to join their Munich based team in Germany. Ideally seeking an individual from a CRM or Marketing automation environment, they are looking to appoint a self motivated Pre Sales Consultant with excellent communication and presentation skills in both German and English. Whilst this is predominantly a **home based role**, there are extensive opportunities for domestic and international travel, so a flexible approach to business travel is essential. This really is an excellent opportunity to join a market leader who reward their employees highly both in terms of remuneration and also opportunities for career progression. Salary to 70,000 Euros basic + bonus + benefits. <http://tinyurl.com/ywjsm5>

E-LEARNING COLDFUSION DEVELOPER

A wonderful opportunity has arisen for a highly skilled ColdFusion Developer to work with one of the world's foremost e-Learning technologists and architects. You will have the opportunity to increase your technical knowledge and influence the direction taken by future projects. As the team grows, you will be expected to adopt a senior role within the organization.

We require at least 3 years experience of ColdFusion and Web Development, preferably more, as you will be responsible for all aspects of application design and development. You will liaise directly with internal and external company / client staff and provide senior responsibility and support to project teams and junior staff. You have the opportunity to **work from home**. Salary £35,000 to £50,000. <http://tinyurl.com/2grrr8>

C# WEB DEVELOPER - MILTON KEYNES

The role is mainly technical development using the C# language within a web environment and to manage the whole project lifecycle from client specifications to implementation. There is some travel involved with visiting clients so good communication skills and a tidy outward appearance would be required but the role is mainly **home based**. You would be directly answerable to one of the senior developers and the Managing Director. There is also opportunity to experience firsthand the business side of things including Sales and Marketing. This is an exciting role working with the latest web technology and within a dynamic and diverse company.

Required Skills

- C# (2 years minimum)
- Asp.net (2 years minimum)
- HTML (2 years minimum)
- CSS (2 years minimum)
- SQL2000 or above (2 years minimum)
- OO Design (2 years minimum)

Desirable skills

- XML
- Web services
- XHTML
- ASP
- VBScript
- Sharepoint
- Windows mobile solutions

Salary £25,000 to £35,000. <http://tinyurl.com/ypa4u5>

PLANNER UK RENEWABLE ENERGY/WIND FARM DEVELOPMENTS

My client is a leading, entrepreneurial, international wind farm development company based in Germany. Having constructed & developed many successful wind farm operations in Germany, France, Spain & Poland; they are continuing to develop & expand their wind farm business in Eastern Europe as well as the UK & Ireland. With UK satellite offices in Manchester; a key hire is the recruitment of a Planner for Renewable Energy/Wind Farm Developments in the UK

Working independently from home, we are looking for a professional & highly motivated Planner to enhance the existing UK team of project & development managers. The role will involve conducting feasibility studies to assess the potential planning success of future wind farm developments & overall responsibility for the planning application from initial pre-consultation stage through to the submission & granting of planning permission. Key Responsibilities

- Assess & produce feasibility reports outlining the planning potential of wind farm developments throughout the UK.
- Liaise with & manage external consultants to obtain documentation required to enable preparation & submission of planning applications.
- Liaise closely with relevant planning authorities/governing bodies to establish & maintain strong communication links throughout the application process.
- Overall responsibility for the planning application throughout its life cycle.
- Assist with Appeals & Public Enquiries.
- Provide support to colleagues in indentifying & developing new site opportunities & provide specialist advice on planning matters.
- Representing the company to the public.

The Person

- The ideal candidate is likely to be a Chartered Planner (RTPI) with a proven track record in either the private or public sector.
- Experience in the Renewable Energy sector is not essential however it would be preferable that the candidate holds a good understanding of the challenges faced in the industry with regard to planning matters.
- It is important that the candidate displays a sound working knowledge of Town & Country Planning legislation, procedures & practices.
- Be able to communicate effectively & work closely with Surveyors, Engineers, Lawyers & Public Sector etc.
- IT literate with strong & demonstrable organisational, communication, presentation & written skills.
- Current, clean UK driving licence essential.

As this is a **home based role**, it goes without saying that self motivation & the ability to work independently (although there will be huge amounts of support from the UK team & Germany HQ).are essential. Please note that while the UK offices are in Manchester, the successful candidate for this role can be based in a broad geographical area stretching from Manchester/North East/North West/Midlands etc.

Salary circa £35,000pa + Bonus + Car Allowance. <http://tinyurl.com/yrchl>

COLDFUSION DEVELOPER

Our client is one of the world's foremost e-Learning technologists and architects. Their platform for collaboration and control of e-Learning content production is used to create rich media learning programmes for customers across a wide range of sectors including telecoms, banking, consulting, military and education. Used in-house and also licensed to third parties, their platform is designed to maximise productivity while helping customers transform unique knowledge into powerful

learning and support applications, passing information from those who hold it to those who need it.

We require an exceptional ColdFusion e-Learning developer to join a small but expanding team. You will have the opportunity to extend your technical knowledge and influence the direction taken by future projects. As the team grows, you will be expected to adopt a senior role within the organization. The ColdFusion e-Learning Developer will be required to:

- Develop e-learning solutions for high-profile corporate, government and educational organizations.
- Demonstrate a high level of professionalism and willingness to work with designers and developers as part of a team.
- Be responsible for the design and development of applications.
- Ensure current development techniques, designs and best practices are adhered to within their project teams.
- Review the code of other developers within the team.

General Skills:

- Liaise directly with internal and external company/client staff
- Work to develop/script documents
- Adhere to recommended coding standards
- Write and document code
- Provide senior responsibility and support to project teams and junior staff
- Provide accurate time estimates for work

Technical Skills

3+ years experience of ColdFusion and web development

1+ years experience with 3 of the following:

- DHTML
- JavaScript
- CSS
- XML
- Learning Management Systems
- Flash
- ActionScript 2
- Director
- SQL databases

Would be advantageous:

- Knowledge of Adobe Flex 2
- Knowledge of Allaire Spectra
- Java development
- Understanding e-learning technology
- Relevant degree

Personal Skills

- The candidate should have experience of full life cycle project work and be able to deliver projects on schedule and to the highest quality standards.
- Creativity, good teamwork and good communication skills are also essential.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- A creative approach to technical problems
- Experience with design and project methodologies
- Drive and self-motivation
- The ability to handle pressure and meet deadlines
- Mentoring skills and technical expertise to share within their team and the company as a whole

Home based. Salary £35,000 to £50,000. <http://tinyurl.com/2epf2h>

PROJECT MANAGER - ERP MANUFACTURING

Our client is a global ERP solutions provider who are now seeking a Project Manager who has experience of deploying ERP solutions into the Manufacturing sector with experience of working for a supplier or consultancy. The role of the Project Manager is to manage projects from pre-sales handover through to successful implementation. The Project Manager must interact with both internal staff and customer representatives at all levels to ensure that the project is delivered to budget, agreed scope, deadline and to the customer's satisfaction. Also the Project Manager will act as "key point of contact" with an assigned portfolio of existing customers.

The role requires that the Project Manager

- Gain a comprehensive knowledge of the Customer's business in order to advise them on their requirements.
- The ability to recognise when a technical expert should be consulted to ensure that accurate technical and delivery expectations are set. Arrange and chair Pre-Installation Meetings.
- Write or critique detailed modification specifications as required and ensure that all cost elements have been taken into account such as project management, testing and documentation.
- Define project roles and responsibilities and have these clearly communicated to both client and staff. Mediate and resolve intra-project / team conflicts should they occur.
- Field any queries or problems presented by the Customer and ensure that these are dealt with efficiently and quickly.
- Manage the financial elements of a project ensuring that invoicing for all work visits is carried out promptly and that costs are monitored closely, specifically those from 3rd parties which must be invoiced onto the customer.
- Creation and maintenance of all project documentation. This includes, but is not limited to: contract monitor schedules, highlight reports, work breakdown structures, project plans, risk assessments and project closure documents. The Project Manager is responsible for creation of a directory for a customer and submission of all customer correspondence to that directory.
- Maintenance of Issues Lists for all Live Projects and management of those issues to successful resolution.

Performance Criteria

- Utilisation performance of consultants and delivery staff within a project
- Utilisation performance against individual target
- Achievement of relevant end project goals by budget and time - "live date" or completion of development

Essential Experience

- Understanding & ability to interpret the business needs of a software application in the ERP marketplace.
- Previous Project Management experience - ideally in the software sphere
- Previous management experience - project or team management
- Ability to work to aggressive deadlines
- Proven track record in management of project budgets
- Good written skills for both technical and non-technical material.

Experience of:

- Customer service
- Order processing
- Inventory control and purchasing

- Production planning and scheduling
- Manufacturing production
- Cost management
- Financial administration
- Human resources and payroll
- Return product administration

Desirable Experience

- First hand experience in the delivery of ERP, or consultancy activity
- Knowledge of & or previous experience, working to a Project Management framework - e.g. SCOPE, PRINCEII or company specific.
- Software for Project Tracking - e.g. Microsoft Project
- Previous employment in customer service / management role

Personal Qualities

- Strong leadership skills - able to effectively manage and motivate others
- Be of an organised manner, and portray an organised and scheduled environment
- Ability to follow and offer development of Project Management procedures
- Focus on quality and customer management - ability to pay attention to detail
- Technology literacy - ability to "translate" technology to the customer
- Have the flexibility and adaptability as necessary as situations arise from one project to another.
- Ability to manage multiple complex tasks / projects simultaneously
- Ability to present solutions / manage challenges at all levels in the customer organisation.

Home based. Salary £40,000 to £55,000. <http://tinyurl.com/2hhl2q>