

## **Employers Demanding Skills In Data, Analytics And Digital, As Employees Become More Risk Adverse**

With many multinational and local companies reducing headcount in the Middle East, candidates looking for new opportunities have become increasingly risk adverse, with culture and leadership overtaking higher salary as key considerations before a move, according to specialist international recruitment consultancy, PageGroup.

At the same time, organizations are today looking increasingly for digital skills in new candidates, as well as corporate governance and financial professionals, able to manage reducing costs while maintaining productivity.

“Clients across all sectors have made headcount reductions throughout the last three years (post the oil price decline). The organizations which made proactive strategic decisions are now hiring again, whereas those who delayed or made the wrong call are still in wait-and-see mode,” says Steve Ingham, CEO of PageGroup. “The common feel across the private sector is about getting your organization in the right shape for the new era.”

PageGroup’s profits for the Middle East & Africa rose by 19% in 2018, with profits for the UAE alone rising 46%. The CEO attributes this in part to increasing market confidence and recent efforts by Saudi Arabia to transform the country.

However, candidates remain cautious. And as a result, the outlook for expats is becoming longer.

“Originally most expats had a horizon of 2-3 years, now most will see 3-5 years and 5-8 years as a preferred timeframe,” says Ingham. “Overall, the region is less transient and more stable, with both candidates and clients looking long term.”

With future employers currently on the lookout for candidates with proven results, career progression and subject matter expertise, job hunters should more than ever aim to be the best in the market.

“Pick your area of specialization, then look to deliver results over a three-year period in each position,” Ingham advises.

Present in 36 countries globally, UK-based PageGroup is a FTSE 250 company, with a current market capitalisation of over \$1.9 billion. It recorded a gross profit of over \$1 billion for 2018, an increase of 15.9% from 2017.

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