

Employment offers up, but closely contested election battle makes recruiters hesitate

London's leading pre-employment screening firm for the Financial Services Sector announces its recruitment figures for April 2010.

London, 14 May 2010. A surge in job offers by Hedge Funds is behind a solid overall increase in recruitment activity in the financial services sector, a recent survey has found. The research was commissioned by London pre-employment screening firm Powerchex, and raises expectations within the city that the economic recovery is being sustained.

Powerchex, which specialises in the financial services sector, found that the number of employment offers made in April 2010 was up 12% on the previous month (see figure 1). This growth was driven mainly by Hedge Funds, with a massive 93% increase in offers compared to March of this year. Stockbrokerage and insurance firms also showed moderate improvements, up 23% and 12% respectively.

Alexandra Kelly is a director at Powerchex, and believes that the modest growth shown over the first four months of 2010 would have been even higher, had the threat of a closely contested general election not been hanging over the economy, with financial services particularly affected.

"Many organisations were delaying making strategic and funding-based decisions until after the election. Unpredictability caused by a close election battle was particularly prevalent in the financial services sector, with firms avoiding large-scale recruitment until they could be sure of the intentions of the new administration, especially regarding all the talk of an increase in employers' National Insurance contributions, and the possible break-up of the banks."

Comparing the recruitment figures from April 2010 to the same month 1 year previously, the Powerchex survey shows a dramatic increase, with recruitment activity improving by at least 25% in every industry sector, and total job offers up 87% (see figure 2).

"The figures show an amazing improvement, that things have been getting steadily better since the beginning of 2009," continues Kelly. *"However, we are comparing this to the very depths of the recession, and recruitment activity still has a little way to go to match its pre-recession levels. I understand from our competitors that this improvement is not being matched in other industry sectors; this really is a phenomenon specific to the city of London, and financial services in particular."*

The good news is that with the financial services sector being the heartbeat of the economy, sustained improvement in the city should have some impact across the board.

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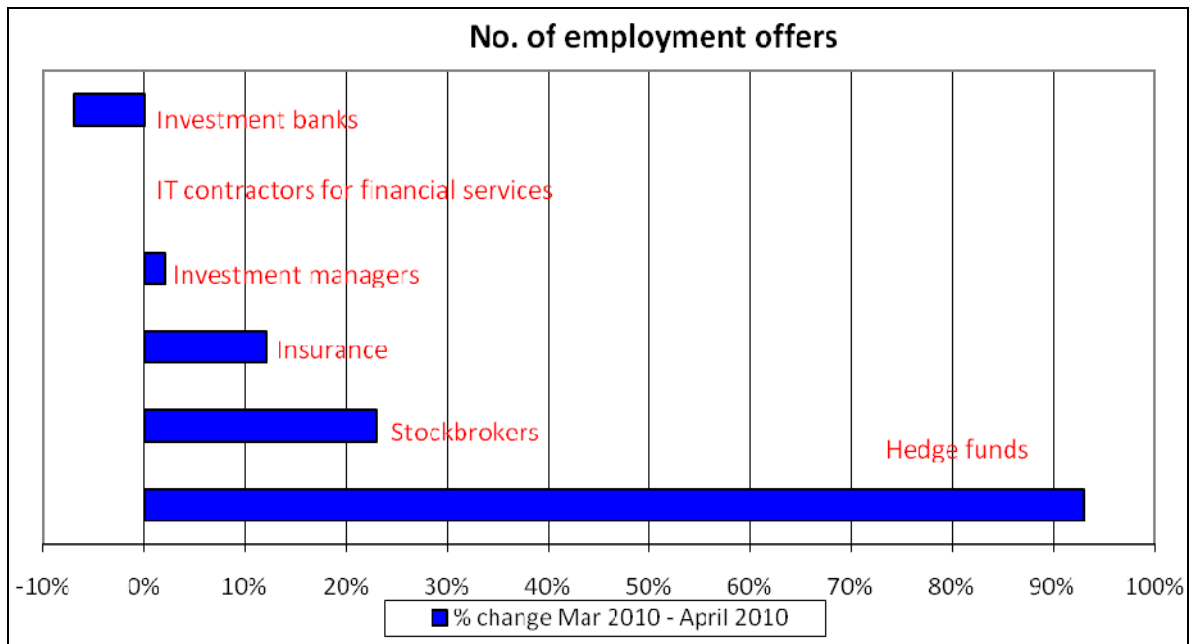


Figure 1. Number of employment offers in April 2010, compared to the previous month.

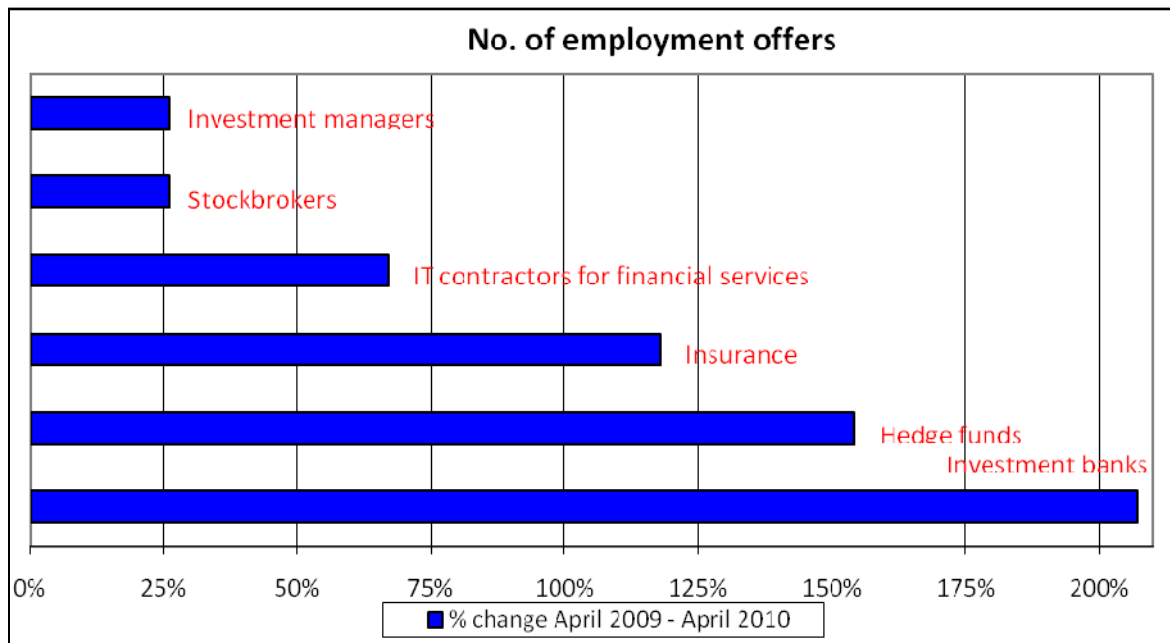


Figure 2. Number of employment offers in April 2010, compared to April 2009.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About Powerchex

Powerchex is the UK's premier pre-employment screening firm for financial institutions. Based in the City of London, Powerchex checks the background, employment history, criminal records and professional qualifications of applicants on behalf of financial institutions. It sets the industry benchmark of 5 days for a background check.

www.powerchex.co.uk.