

now you're talking

MARKET TRENDS REPORT 2014



AccountAbility



CONTENTS

About AccountAbility	
2013: The year we waited	
What you tell us about the Market	
The Current Climate	7
Diversity	9
Social Media	10
Speed is the Key to Success	11
Sector Overview	12
Regional Trends	13
Business Support	16
Accounting Support Salary Guide	18
Business Support Salary Guide	19

ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

We're Australia's leading accounting and business support recruitment specialists – and we're proud of it. From humble beginnings as a team of two in 2004, we've grown into an established presence in Sydney, Parramatta, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. Last year we placed more than 450 candidates into permanent roles and over 850 into contract placements.

HOW WE WORK

Conversation is our passion. We listen, we respond. Being truly connected to our clients - from knowing a firm's structure to the culture of those you're looking to hire - is key to our success, and yours. When talking to candidates, we are an extension of your business.

Speed is vital to us and it shows. We fill 80% of temporary roles on the first phone call and 90% of permanent roles within six to eight working days. Working as a team enables us to achieve quality results, fast.

WHAT WE DO

We recruit permanent and temporary staff in Sydney, Parramatta, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth in the following functions:

ACCOUNTING SUPPORT

- Accounts Payable*
- Accounts Receivable*
- Credit*
- Cash Collection*
- Payroll*
- Assistant Accountant
- Bookkeeping
- Accounts Clerk

*Up to and including management level

BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Executive Assistant
- Personal Assistant
- Receptionist
- Office Manager
- Customer Service
- Data Entry
- Administration Assistant

Specialists in our field, we know what drives candidates in accounting and business support roles to change jobs and what clients need to get the people they want. Put simply, we'll get you the best candidates, fast.



2013: THE YEAR WE WAITED

It is hard to deny that 2013 was a fairly tough year for most Australian businesses. The combination of a sluggish global economy and the Federal Election looming in the distance effectively sent most companies into a holding pattern for much of the year. This meant little growth and a reduction in movement at the senior end of the market. That said, candidate movement at the support level both in accounting and administration has created a strong demand for replacement hiring. Since the election, the waiting game that most businesses have been playing has shown signs of coming to an end, with almost 60% of our clients indicating they intend to hire in 2014.

WHAT YOU TELL US ABOUT THE MARKET

From workplace flexibility to an increased focus on hiring contracting staff, our report offers an overview of 2013's accounting and business support trends, in addition to some insights into what 2014 has in store. This year we surveyed over 2000 employers and employees across Australia and this, combined with a detailed analysis of our own work in 2013, has provided us with the following results.

OUR KEY FINDINGS

**HIGHS
AND LOWS
IN 2013**



2013 Findings

- 54% of companies performed as expected.
- 28% performed better than expected.
- 18% did not perform as expected.



2014 Expectations

- 54% of employers anticipate growth in 2014.
- 35% anticipate to maintain 2013 levels.
- 11% expect to shrink in 2014.

THE CURRENT CLIMATE



48%

of employers surveyed have been at their current company for over 5 years.

Only 5% of employees surveyed have been at their current company for over 5 years.

Morale has suffered slightly over the last year.

66%

of employees felt more pressure to work longer hours in 2013 than in previous years.



47%

of employees are planning to change roles in the next 6 months.

Only 37% of employers are expecting the need to hire in the next 6 months.



62%

of employees did not receive a pay rise in 2013.

Almost half of all employees state salary as the most important factor in deciding on their next move.



When looking for a new role, **salary**, **location** and **flexible working hours** remain the 3 key drivers for employees – while employers think the 3 most important factors to attract new talent are instead **company culture**, **brand** and **salary**.

YAS

66%

of employees in support roles have been in their current businesses for less than 2 years.



CONTRACTING IN 2014 – THE YEAR OF THE TEMP

As Generation Y moves up through the ranks we have seen an increase in the 'career contractor', with growing numbers of accounting and business support employees choosing contracting as a career that suits their lifestyle. The flexibility that a contracting career offers is not the only driver, however. Employees are now seeking contract roles that will expand and improve their portfolio of skills as well as giving them exposure to a broader range of industries. Companies who are adaptable enough to make the most of this growing trend are likely to find themselves ahead of the pack in attracting this section of our workforce.

Interestingly, 74% of employees interviewed are either currently in a contracting role or are happy to consider taking one, with the majority of them citing flexibility and the opportunity to broaden their skill-set as key drivers. When it comes to employers, just over 1/3 of all clients surveyed predict a bigger focus on contractors in 2014 than in 2013 which bodes well for those 'career contractors' out there. 2014 could very well become the 'year of the temp' as more and more companies realise the value in hiring contractors for strategic projects, rather than just to cover extended leave or seasonal peaks in workload.

45%

of employees surveyed cite flexibility as the main benefit of contracting.





DIVERSITY

Diversity continues to be a hot topic in a growing number of Australian businesses, and whilst the conversation has not just been limited to gender equality this is certainly at the forefront of the discussions. 2013 did, as predicted, see a number of large Australian companies implement official quotas in a bid to increase gender diversity. In addition to this we are also seeing a number of companies actively recruiting return-to-work parents and mature-age employees to further enhance the benefits that 'diversity of thought' can bring to an organisation.

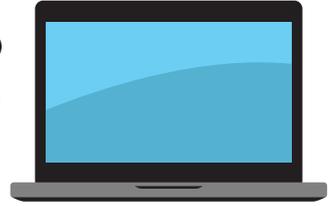


SOCIAL MEDIA

Without a doubt, 2013 further cemented social media as a key part of the recruitment landscape, with an increasing number of companies using LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter for both recruitment and employer branding. Having said that, 58% of accounting and business support employees surveyed do not have an active LinkedIn account, compared to 34% of employers, meaning there is still a large percentage of the Australian workforce who are not easy to engage with through this medium. In addition to this, 78% of all respondents with an active LinkedIn account stated their profile presented a selected snapshot of their experience, rather than a 100% accurate record of their working history.

38%

of employers admitted assessing a potential employee's social media presence before making an offer.



f 68%

of employers have used Facebook as part of their recruitment strategy.
↑4% on last year.

in 34%

of employers have used LinkedIn as part of their recruitment strategy.



71%

of employees are now being offered flexible working arrangements.
↑9% on last year.



50%

of clients offer study leave or training allowances.

An interesting trend in 2013 was the increase in the number of employers who stated they made judgements on making a hiring decision based on a potential employee's social media presence. Key reasons for rejecting potential employees based on social media included inappropriate profile photos, badly-written content and inconsistencies between a LinkedIn profile and CV.

SPEED IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

When it comes to permanent recruitment at the accounting and business support level, time is always of the essence. Those employers whose recruitment processes enable them to move quickly are able to secure the cream of the crop. 73% of employees surveyed cited a prolonged interview process as the main reason for them rejecting a permanent job offer. For support level roles 81% of employees thought a permanent recruitment process should take no longer than 1-2 weeks, whilst for management level roles the expectation was more in the 2-3 week range.

Amongst the main frustrations with the permanent recruitment process were the lack of detailed feedback from an employer after an unsuccessful interview and the stated decision date being pushed back. 72% of employees state that they believe those businesses who do conduct a swift and decisive interview process are more likely to be a better place to work.

On the employer side, 63% felt they had missed out on their preferred candidates due to their inability to move quickly enough with 54% saying they had streamlined their recruitment process to minimise the risk of this happening.



70%

of employees are likely to accept their first permanent offer rather than wait to compare it with a second.

SECTOR OVERVIEW

PAYROLL - As ever, skilled payrollers are in high demand and short supply. With the change in superannuation in 2013 and planned increases over the coming years, the number of payroll project roles has been on the increase. Whilst there is still some preference for industry experience and exposure to awards and EBAs within the payroll recruitment market, we are now finding less of an emphasis on systems skills and more of an emphasis on cultural fit. 77% of employers are happy to train on systems, whilst 65% of employers rank team fit and capacity to learn as being more important than having existing system skills.

CREDIT – With a number of Australian businesses feeling the pinch throughout 2013, employers have taken the opportunity to ramp up their Credit and Collections teams, in order to maintain healthy cash flow. Experienced credit controllers with a proven track record of reducing debtor days and resolving aged debt issues remain in high demand going into 2014 and we predict we will continue to see the usual seasonal spikes in credit and collections contractors that come with year-end and half year-end.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE – 2013 has seen a number of changes in the AP world, with some employers moving to an entirely off-shore model, albeit with mixed levels of success, whilst others have opted to keep the function within Australia but have sought cost-savings through the means of introducing electronic invoice scanning systems. High volume invoice processors with large corporate backgrounds, or indeed from a large shared services environment are in high demand. Salaries for full function AP staff are also on the rise, with large corporates competing for top talent in this area.

BUSINESS SUPPORT – We have seen an increase in specific operational administration roles, such as claims, sales support, and facilities co-ordinators. We have also seen an increased demand for industry specific skills. For example in the construction and engineering industries specific skill sets and experience are sought for site, project, bid, tender, general administrators and document controllers, and within the legal industry for legal administrators and secretaries.

REGIONAL TRENDS

VICTORIA:

Most of 2013 was a challenging year for businesses and indeed the economy at large, but there were a number of sectors that continued to provide us with significant talent attraction opportunities courtesy of large change mandates. The retail, FMCG, logistics and utilities sectors have all been reasonable hirers of talent through us during 2013 as they sought to combat the challenging market conditions that they have collectively faced.

For the most part, it is clear that businesses have been tentative around whether they should invest in increased headcount, preferring to focus on risk averse options such as short term contractors and part time placements to alleviate the stress on thinly stretched finance functions. However, the last quarter of 2013 saw a boost in confidence and an improvement in the amount of jobs available in the market place. There is also a sense of optimism across many of our commercial clients with the general consensus being that 2014 will be a better performance year and perhaps time to invest in growth again.

It is worth remembering that it only takes a small improvement in economic confidence to create a sizeable improvement in the employment

marketplace. So as far as we are concerned, wave 'bye bye' to the ghost of 2013 and be pleased that we have hopefully seen out the most difficult of times and no doubt learnt a lot from the experience.

QUEENSLAND:

An already suffering Queensland market attributed to 2012 public sector cuts, combined with a slump in the resources industry, was further injured by an early election call in 2013 leading to a very soft market through the first three quarters. These influences made hiring confidence suffer, increasing trading in short term, low commitment temporary vacancies through the majority of the year. However, weeks before the Federal Election a definite spike in hiring confidence was felt across the industry, with permanent vacancies notably on the uprise. Whilst the increase in confidence has certainly provided a 'shake up' at the officer/processor level, longer hiring process will see Managerial and Supervisor positions feeling similar effect in Q2, 2014. 2014 is set to be a busy year: for employers, retention strategies will once again become a focus, and for those keen to move to greener pastures, 2014 will be the year to keep close to your networks to be considered for upcoming vacancies.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA:

2013 was a challenging year for the Western Australian economy. In August the market saw a slight improvement, primarily due to increased Steel production in China. The increased production has driven the Iron Ore prices which is Australia's, and specifically Western Australia's, largest export. This gave the market a boost in confidence, and workload, so positively affected recruitment, however sporadically through 2013.

In accounting support there has been a notable drop in demand for Payroll candidates. The contracting market remained steady with an increase in temporary to permanent positions which we predict will continue in 2014. Credit positions were scarce however we saw an increased demand for Accounts Payable staff with 1-3 years' experience.

2014 is set to be a more positive year for WA with record population growth continuing which will see exports and housing development play an even bigger part in driving the state's economy. The building and construction industry had pockets of success in 2013 from August onwards and this is set to continue. Retail sales dropped and the labour market softened - broadly a result of falling confidence in spending, which remains the biggest risk for 2014.

NEW SOUTH WALES:

The accounting support market in 2013 followed similar patterns to 2012. Both years made a positive start in Q1, especially for permanent roles but confidence in the market and job creation decreased as the year progressed. General business sentiment and performance suffered under the weight of a high Australian Dollar and waning consumer confidence.

In addition, the calling of the Federal Election so far in advance created an environment of uncertainty. This coupled with mixed international economic data meant that effectively many businesses went into a strategic holding pattern. Local and foreign owned companies were very reluctant to increase headcount until the ramifications of the election were known. This contributed to a comparatively strong contract market as teams were under pressure as they had been 'lean and mean' for the past few years. Many Accounting support staff in NSW worked longer hours, including weekends, and many with little in the way of pay rises.

Outsourcing of some of the more basic elements of accounting support work continued but certainly at a slower rate. Question marks were being raised over some evidence of salary inflation in typical outsourcing locations and the quality of service to local clients.

Due to an almost unique set of circumstances with low job creation, negative sentiment but yet low unemployment rates, those businesses that have been recruiting have still struggled to attract quality staff. Good quality candidates are a rare commodity, especially ones who are prepared to move!

Employers in NSW had to deal with limited availability particularly when it came to Credit Control and skilled Payroll staff.

The tenure of staff in accounting support roles increased beyond the norm due to lack of opportunities to move. These conditions mirror those of 2009 which at that time resulted in a high degree of movement in the following year. This was not necessarily driven by an increase in business performance and we predict this may happen in early 2014 but to a lesser extent.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

In 2012 we saw office support recruitment slow down, and indeed some jobs were lost. 2013 saw organisations recognise the need for a strong administration function to support the operations teams and business growth. Hiring has increased and is expected to continue to do so steadily throughout 2014 - particularly in the SME market.

Quarter 3 saw a heavy focus on temporary recruitment. With many organisations going through restructures and changes, new roles were created, but often organisations preferred a tentative approach in terms of recruitment - hiring temporary cover with the opportunity to offer a permanent role longer term. This approach may continue to be necessary for many international organisations, where sign-off for new or even replacement roles is often a struggle, causing many contractors to remain ongoing on a temporary basis.

Moving to 2014, companies are being extremely selective about their hiring choices, seeking proven candidates, with specific experience, who can make an immediate impact to the business; this is where the temp-to-perm model has been utilised most - to determine how quickly a candidate can assimilate into the role, and to ensure a good culture fit.

The permanent market also picked up in Quarter 4 2013, and there was still an extremely quick turnaround for top talent, especially in areas of high demand where we have seen instances of counter offers and increased salaries.

Generally the administration function within organisations remains fairly lean, and in a drive to control costs, we have seen rise to organisations combining reception and administration positions, or more general administration positions now including aspects of finance, HR, or other areas.

Areas that remain tough to recruit remain those where an organisation is looking for longevity in the role, rather than a candidate seeking an 'entry' or 'stepping stone' into a business – such as corporate reception and junior administrator positions.

ABOUT AMBITION

Ambition is AccountAbility's sister company who access hard to find, high calibre professionals within Banking & Financial Services, Finance & Accounting, Technology and Human Resources.

They are a leading global boutique recruitment business operating in key cities including; Sydney, Parramatta, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo and London.

Ambition are best known for their specialisation with in-depth knowledge and expertise, well established networks and relationships.

SPECIALIST TEAMS

Banking & Financial Services



- Finance & Accounting
- Funds Management
- Treasury
- Operations & Settlements
- Risk, Audit & Compliance
- Insurance
- Broking
- Superannuation
- Credit & Lending
- Client Services

Finance & Accounting



- Controllership & CFO
- Treasury
- Tax
- Audit & Risk
- Group Accounting
- Financial & Management Reporting
- Strategy & Planning
- Commercial Finance
- Corporate Finance

Technology



- Infrastructure
- Software Development
- IT Support
- Project Services
- Business Process & Data Analysis
- ERP
- Architecture & Strategy
- Testing & Quality Assurance
- Mobile Application Development
- Change & Transformation
- Digital & Web Design
- Business Analysis

Human Resources



- HR Generalists
- HR Business Partners
- Remuneration & Benefits
- Training & Development
- Recruitment
- OH&S
- Employee Relations

BEACON FOUNDATION

We are passionate about building better futures for our community and have subsequently partnered with Beacon Foundation, a non-for-profit organisation working with around 130 secondary schools across Australia.

Beacon Foundation help inspire and motivate students to enable the successful transition to further education, training or employment.

Visit their website to find out more: www.beaconfoundation.com.au

ACCOUNTING SUPPORT SALARY GUIDE

State	NSW		VIC	
Size of company	SME	Multinational/ ASX listed	SME	Multinational/ ASX listed
Salary	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
National Credit Manager	80 - 100	100 - 140	80 - 100	100 - 130
Credit / AR Manager	75 - 90	80 - 100	70 - 80	80 - 100
Credit / AR Supervisor	65 - 75	70 - 90	65 - 75	70 - 85
Credit / AR Officer	50 - 60	55 - 65	50 - 60	55 - 65
Collections	50 - 60	50 - 55	45 - 50	45 - 55
National Accounts Payable Manager	80 - 90	90 - 120	80 - 90	90 - 120
Accounts Payable Manager	70 - 80	80 - 110	65 - 80	80 - 110
Accounts Payable Supervisor	60 - 75	75 - 85	65 - 75	75 - 85
Accounts Payable Officer	48 - 60	50 - 60	47 - 52	45 - 60
National Payroll Manager	90 - 120	120 - 180	90 - 120	100 - 150
Payroll Manager	80 - 100	90 - 120	80 - 100	85 - 110
Payroll Supervisor	65 - 75	70 - 90	65 - 75	70 - 90
Payroll Officer	50 - 65	60 - 70	50 - 60	55 - 70
Accounts Officer	40 - 50	45 - 55	40 - 50	45 - 55
PQ Assistant Accountant	55 - 65	65 - 70	55 - 65	60 - 70
Bookkeepers	60 - 70		55 - 65	
State	QLD		WA	
National Credit Manager	75 - 95	100 - 140	75 - 100	100 - 140
Credit / AR Manager	65 - 80	75 - 90	65 - 80	75 - 90
Credit / AR Supervisor	60 - 75	65 - 80	65 - 75	65 - 85
Credit / AR Officer	45 - 55	55 - 58	45 - 55	55-65
Collections	45 - 50	45 - 50	45 - 50	45 - 55
National Accounts Payable Manager	70 - 80	90 - 120	80 - 90	90 - 120
Accounts Payable Manager	65 - 75	70 - 90	65 - 80	80 - 110
Accounts Payable Supervisor	60 - 70	65 - 80	60 - 75	75 - 85
Accounts Payable Officer	45 - 50	45 - 55	45 - 50	45 - 55
National Payroll Manager	80 - 100	100 - 140	90 - 120	120 -180
Payroll Manager	75 - 85	80 - 100	70 - 90	90 - 120
Payroll Supervisor	60 - 70	65 - 80	65 - 75	70 - 90
Payroll Officer	50 - 60	55 - 65	50 - 65	60 - 70
Accounts Officer	40 - 50	45 - 55	40 - 50	45 - 55
PQ Assistant Accountant	55 - 65	60 - 70	55 - 65	60 - 70
Bookkeepers	55 - 65		55 - 65	

BUSINESS SUPPORT SALARY GUIDE

State	NSW		VIC	
Size of company	SME	Multinational/ ASX listed	SME	Multinational/ ASX listed
Salary	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Data Entry Officer	40 - 50	45 - 60	40 - 50	45 - 60
Receptionist	45 - 55	50 - 65	45 - 55	50 - 65
Administration Assistant	38 - 50	45 - 60	38 - 50	45 - 60
Office Manager	55 - 80	65 - 90	55 - 80	65 - 90
Executive Assistant (Manager level)	60 - 75	70 - 85	60 - 75	70 - 85
Executive Assistant (C-Suite)	70 - 90	90 - 120	70 - 90	90 - 120
Personal Assistant	60 - 70	70 - 85	60 - 70	70 - 85
Junior Admin	37 - 44	40 - 50	37 - 44	40 - 50
Team Assistant	45 - 60	55 - 70	45 - 60	55 - 70
Customer Service	38 - 55	40 - 55	38 - 55	40 - 55
Mailroom Clerk	35 - 40	40 - 50	35 - 40	40 - 50
Claims Administrator	40 - 50	45 - 60	40 - 50	45 - 60
Project Administrator	50 - 65	55 - 75	50 - 65	55 - 75
Legal Secretary	55 - 70	65 - 80	55 - 70	65 - 80
State	QLD		WA	
Data Entry Officer	37 - 49	44 - 59	38 - 50	45 - 60
Receptionist	39 - 53	49 - 59	40 - 55	50 - 60
Administration Assistant	37 - 49	44 - 59	38 - 55	45 - 60
Office Manager	53 - 78	74 - 88	55 - 80	75 - 90
Executive Assistant (Manager level)	58 - 68	69 - 83	60 - 70	70 - 85
Executive Assistant (C-Suite)	68 - 87	88 - 118	70 - 90	80 - 110
Personal Assistant	58 - 68	69 - 83	60 - 70	70 - 90
Junior Admin	35 - 40	35 - 40	35 - 40	35 - 40
Team Assistant	45 - 53	53 - 65	55 - 65	55 - 70
Customer Service	35 - 40	40 - 50	35 - 45	40 - 50
Mailroom Clerk	35 - 40	40 - 48	35 - 40	40 - 48
Claims Administrator	40 - 50	45 - 56	40 - 50	45 - 55
Project Administrator	50 - 65	55 - 70	50 - 65	55 - 70
Legal Secretary	50 - 60	55 - 75	50 - 60	55 - 75



AccountAbility

T: 1300 795 155

SYDNEY CBD

T: +61 2 8296 5300
Lvl 5, 55 Clarence Street
Sydney NSW 2000

PARRAMATTA

T: +61 2 9633 7300
Lvl 4, 3 Horwood Pl
Parramatta NSW 2150

BRISBANE

T: +61 7 3009 6100
Lvl 7, 410 Queen Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

MELBOURNE

T: +61 3 8629 1300
Lvl 36, 140 William Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

PERTH

T: +61 8 6210 8200
Lvl 24, 77 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

www.accountability.com.au