

European companies cut jobs as economy sputters

DECADES-HIGH inflation and the impact of war in Ukraine have forced companies across Europe into lay-offs or hiring freezes. Here are some of the companies that have announced cuts since April:

AUTOS

• **AUTOLIV:** the Swedish airbag and seatbelt maker said on June 8 it plans to cut around 8,000 jobs.

• **CONTINENTAL:** the automotive parts supplier plans to phase out business activities at its Gifhorn, Germany plant by the end of 2027, initially affecting 450 out of 900 jobs at the site, it said in May.

• **STELLANTIS:** the car-maker said on June 28 it plans to close its mechanical gearbox plant in Austria, impacting 300 jobs.

• **VOLVO CAR:** the auto-maker on May 4 announced 1,300 additional layoffs in Sweden, 6% of its workforce in the country.

FOOD, RETAIL AND CONSUMER GOODS

• **ANHEUSER-BUSCH IN-BEV:** the Dutch brewer will lay off hundreds of corporate staff in the US, CNN reported on July 27.

• **CARREFOUR:** the French retailer said on June 26 it could cut up to 979 jobs in France on voluntary basis.

• **HALEON:** the Sensodyne toothpaste-maker is looking to cut hundreds of jobs in Britain

and worldwide, *The Guardian* reported on July 13.

INDUSTRIALS AND ENGINEERING

• **MARSHALLS:** the British building and roofing products supplier said on July 31 it plans to cut 250 jobs.

• **SSAB:** the Swedish steel maker said on June 16 it has started furlough talks concerning 850 of its 4,700 employees in Finland.

• **VARTA:** the German battery maker said on June 30 it would cut 88 jobs through a volunteer programme.

TECH

• **BT:** Britain's biggest broadband provider said in May it would reduce its total workforce by up to 55,000 jobs by 2030.

• **DORMAKABA:** the Swiss security group said on July 3 it expects to reduce its full-time equivalent positions by around 800.

• **NOKIA:** the Finnish telecom equipment maker said on May 3 it plans to cut up to 208 jobs in Finland.

• **VIRGIN MEDIA:** the British mobile operator is planning to lay off 2,000 employees, *The Telegraph* reported on July 24.

• **VODAFONE:** the British telecoms group on June 15 reached an agreement with unions over 1,003 job cuts in Italy and 11,000 jobs globally over three years. — *Reuters*

Transport costs, from S1/1

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed the weight of diesel and gasoline to the overall consumer price index basket stood at 0.6% and 1.8%, respectively.

Meanwhile, the recent increase in fares for the Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2, as well as the implementation of higher toll fees in some expressways are less likely to affect inflation.

Single-journey tickets at LRT-1 and LRT-2 now cost as high as P35 a ticket.

Mr. Tsuchiya said the LRT fare hikes and higher toll fees might not have a significant impact on headline inflation due to their small weight in the CPI basket.

“Based on a back-of-envelope calculation, we estimate the combined effect of the LRT fee and NLEX toll hike on monthly inflation rate to be around 0.01 percentage points, which is almost negligible,” he said.

He noted that the second-round effects from the fare adjustments might not cause inflation to quicken in the coming months.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort likewise said the fare adjustments might lead to a slight uptick in inflation, but not as much.

“Toll rate hikes are fundamentally spread thinly on truckloads/jeeploads of products passing through NLEX. Same goes with train fare hikes, limited passed on effects on the prices of other goods and services in the economy, a slight effect on prices and overall inflation,” he said.

Transport inflation has been on a downward trend since rising by 18.1% in July last year. Latest data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed transport inflation decelerated to -3.1% in June.

“The usual option by the government would be to provide subsidies to help keep fares down. The government could opt to lower taxes on fuel to help offset costs but that would be at the expense of internal revenues that in turn can go to subsidies,” Mr. Rocas said.

OTHER RISKS

Despite rising transport costs, analysts said inflation could face risks from the increase in rice prices.

“Given recent measures by India to ban its exports of a certain type of rice, daily rice prices in

the Philippines have been rising recently,” Mr. Tsuchiya said.

“Rice accounts for almost 10% of CPI, meaning if rice prices rise by 10%, it could translate to about one percentage point increase in CPI inflation,” he said, adding that this warrants further monitoring.

Based on Aug. 2 data from the Department of Agriculture, prices of local well-milled rice rose to as much as P49 per kilogram on Thursday, while special and premium rice went to as high as P62 and P55 per kilo, respectively.

An El Niño dry spell in the fourth quarter could also lead to a reduction in rice production and other agricultural products, which would drive up prices, Mr. Ricafort said.

El Niño will likely persist until the first quarter next year, according to the state weather agency. The weather pattern may cause dry spells and droughts in some areas of the country.

Mr. Rocas said recent weather disturbances could affect the cost of food production and transportation.

Data from the Department of Agriculture showed Typhoon Egay (international name: Doksuri) brought about P3.17 billion in agriculture damage. About P1.34 billion worth of rice damage was recorded.

Still, inflation is on track to hit the central bank's 2-4% target in the next few months, Mr. Rocas said. “But significant upsides are developing which bears monitoring.”

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) expects inflation to further ease and return to the 2-4% target by the fourth quarter this year.

It sees inflation averaging 5.4% this year and 2.9% for 2024, before picking up to 3.2% in 2025.

A *BusinessWorld* poll of 17 analysts last week yielded a median estimate of 4.9% for July inflation, settling at the upper end of the BSP's 4.1-4.9% forecast for the month.

Inflation likely slowed from 5.4% in June and 6.4% in July 2022. July would mark the sixth straight month of easing inflation, and the 16th consecutive month inflation exceeded the BSP's 2-4% target.

The PSA will release its July inflation data today (Aug. 4). — **Keisha B. Ta-asan**

SC rejects illegal dismissal claim versus Steam System Philippines

THE Supreme Court (SC) has upheld the dismissal of a former general manager of a steam engineering company, rejecting claims of illegal dismissal put forward by a former general manager.

In a resolution dated Feb. 1 and made public on Aug. 2, the tribunal ruled that the dismissal of Ronaldo S. Mina was valid, after he established a new company and operated it within Steam System Philippines, Inc., (SSPI) without permission from the company's board of directors.

“We have repeatedly recognized that employers cannot be compelled to retain employees who are guilty of acts inimical to its interests,” according to this ruling.

“It bears stressing that Mina was not sufficiently authorized to establish Ainam Philippines, Inc. (API).”

The High Court upheld a Court of Appeals finding that Mr. Mina's dismissal was legal and valid.

Under the Labor Code, employee dismissals are valid in the event of fraud or deliberate breach of the employer's trust.

Employees in managerial roles are considered to be in positions of trust and confidence.

The company imports, markets, and distributes steam engineering products. It was also the exclusive distributor of Spirax Sarco Private Limited (Spirax) products in the Philippines.

Mr. Mina assumed the role of GM after Charles Moody, one of the company's founders, had to

leave for the UK in 2002 to receive treatment for bone cancer.

Two years later, he formed API with the goal of developing and exploring a market for alternative steam products outside of Spirax.

In 2005, Mr. Moody died and left instructions that Mr. Mina was to be his successor, and left his shares to him and other employees.

Mr. Mina claimed that Mr. Moody's ex-wife and SSPI co-founder, Lilibeth Moody, had been trying to oust him from the company ever since he took over.

That same year, the company suspended Mr. Mina over the risk posed by API to the exclusive distributorship deal with Spirax.

The labor arbiter sided with Mr. Mina in his illegal dismissal

claim and ordered Steam System to pay him back wages and interest.

The National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) overturned the ruling saying Mr. Mina's creation of a new company was an “act of disloyalty and serious misconduct befitting loss of trust and confidence.”

The CA affirmed the NLRC's findings since Mr. Mina failed to show the tribunal that his actions had been approved by the board or Mr. Moody, the late company founder.

“Mina failed to appreciate the significant consequences that could have arisen from SSPI's violation of its exclusive distributorship agreement with Spirax,” the High Court said. — **John Victor D. Ordóñez**

OPINION

Questions to ask when rehiring a former worker

A former employee sent me a text message exploring the possibility of rejoining the company 10 months after his resignation. Our human resource (HR) manager rejected the idea right away in the absence of a firm policy. He claims it could be a bad precedent. I found his reason overly simplistic — a more important factor might be that accepting resigned employees could encourage other employees to resign in the hope of regaining their posts if they didn't like their new employer. What's your view? — Ten Knots.

you develop similar talent using the company's current resources? If yes, how long can you do it? Or, how easy or difficult it can be?

Two, how did this “boomerang” worker perform during his time with the company? Was he consistent and above-average? Did he exceed management expectations? If a “boomerang” person is average, what's the assurance that he'll do much better than before?

Three, what is attracting the “boomerang” person back into the fold? Why is he willing to swallow his pride by accepting the same old pay package? What's the real reason behind his desire to return? Did he have a difficult experience with his current employer? If yes, what kind of difficult experience?

Four, is the “boomerang” person willing to accept a contract from Day One? Will he accept working as a probationary employee? If he performed above average in at least the last three years of his stay with you, then you can opt to make him a regular worker on Day One.

Five, aside from pay, what other issues could affect the “boomerang” person? Better review the result of his exit interview and discover insights from it. If there are no serious issues accompanying his exit, think of what might happen to the morale of other workers who may feel aggrieved should you decide to rehire.

Last, has the company changed in a way that may not be acceptable to the “boomerang” worker? If major changes took place in the company's culture and management style, would they be acceptable to the “boomerang” worker? Why or why not? Discover all this in the interview and onboarding process.

LIVE BULLET

Which of these questions is likely to represent the live bullet that could prove disastrous to your organization? It's question number one: What kind of new experience is a “boomerang” employee offering?

Chances are, he could be offering nothing. What new perspective have gained after a 10-month absence? Could he be bringing confidential information that he stole from the other company? If that's the case, it's a good reason not to rehire that person.

You can never predict the consequences that could get your organization in big trouble later on. Therefore, if you're in doubt, then don't. Better be safe than sorry.

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1=SCRUM MASTER

QUALIFICATION AND JOB DESCRIPTION

- BS in computer science or equivalent combination of education
- Hands-on experience in Jira or Clickup
- Experience working with multiple Scrum Teams in a variety of different contexts (different team sizes, different organizations, different cultures, co-located vs. distributed, etc.)
- 3-5 years professional experience in IT industry
- 2-4 years of experience conducting projects using Agile frameworks such as Scrum or Kanban (including requirements)
- Must be proficient in speaking in Bilingual language and other foreign language

JOB OPENING

Company Name:
American Power Conversion Corporation (A.P.C.) B.V.
Address: Lot 1 Block 5 Phase 2, Cavite Economic Zone, PEZA, Rosario Cavite
Contact details of the Company: Micaela TAN Micaela.Tan@se.com

Job Position: French Customer Service Representative

Job Description:
The Customer Service Representative (CSR) will be responsible for ensuring a high level of Customer Satisfaction. The role will provide customers with post-sales support for APC's core product line and advise potential and existing customers on product selection. This will require an understanding of system availability concepts and for APC's solutions for providing uptime. CSRs are required to interpret policies and make business decisions under pressure, based on customer and company needs to meet deadlines with minimal supervision. Opportunity for growth and advancement that is limited only by drive, desire, competitive spirit, and aptitude for learning.

What will you do?

- Provides post-sales support via the phone/chat/e-mail
- Coordinate with other team/support to ensure that every interaction creates the optimal customer experience
- Assists potential customer with product select and configuration
- Identifies and routes large opportunities to sales teams for follow up and closure

Basic Qualifications for the Position:

- Candidate must possess a Bachelor's degree preferably in Business Studies/Administration/Management, Computer Science/Information Technology, or equivalent
- Required skill (s):
 - Strong probing and problem-solving skills
 - Good communication skills (French and English) – written and oral
 - Keen attention to details
- At least 1 year of working experience in the related field is an advantage
- Fresh graduates are welcome

Salary Range (monthly): PHP 32,000 to PHP 87,000

JOB OPENING

SENIOR SALES MANAGER

In this role the main responsibility will be to build and maintain active long-term relationships with key decision makers at customer site level, and continuously promote Metso's value adding offering.

- Create a healthy business with high customer satisfaction with the site accounts
- Responsible to deliver profitable business growth from allocated sites
- Responsibility to create the relationship with the key people at the site and share those with the organization, connecting key interfaces
- Focuses on aftermarket business, yet is able to identify the investment/capex opportunities and is responsible to convey the customer requirement to capex sales
- Plans and has full visibility to the activities of any Metso function at the site
- Seeks and coordinates for best resources and channels to be used for customer facing activities
- Understands customer business and is capable to argue Metso's added value
- Drives site sales activities together with cross organizational site account team and understands customer's capex and opex related decisions and buying timetable
- Work with Business Line's and Site Account Manager's to develop key regional growth plans and strategies
- Drives account planning and implementation (strategy, relationship, site level budgeting, activity plan, sales roadmap and plan)
- Maintains and shares information of installed base, performance and shutdown schedules and plans
- Orchestrates Customer satisfaction surveys and closed loop activities and ensures continuous improvement activities
- Supports Accounts Receivable and payment collections

Qualifications and Skills:

- Good problem solving and analytical skills to be able to define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions.
- Minimum of five years of experience in a sales and/or engineering role and at least five years' experience in the management and supervision of employees.
- Qualifications or training in Sales & Marketing field and Personnel Management courses.
- Proven track record in achieving sales target.
- Develops and implements sales objectives and action plans to accommodate the region's strategic plans.
- Basic understanding of accounting procedures including profit and loss, budgets and gross margins.
- Must be able to travel up to 60% of the time by motor vehicle and commercial flights.
- Excellent negotiation and persuasive skills.
- Excellent selling and presentation skills.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent time management skills.
- Ability to work in a high-pressured environment.
- Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from groups of managers, clients, customers and the general public.
- Ability to calculate figures and amounts such as gross margins, discounts, interest, commissions, proportions, percentages, area, circumference and volume.
- Understanding of accounting procedures including profit and loss, budgets and gross margins.

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PROJECT TECHNICAL MANAGER MIGRATION PROJECT

Job Description

- Lead a team of technical sales in formulating solution and approach strategy for access network.
- Responsible for design and implementation of the technical solution for wireless products.
- Analyze network performance, resolve complex network problems, and optimize network architecture of the project
- Engage directly with the marketing team, project team, and customer for the purpose of promoting and delivering strategic services that are beneficial for the project

Qualifications

- With 4+ years work experience as Project Technical Manager
- Can perform proof of concept (POC) and knowledgeable in HD, DDD planning and design
- Possess skill in any of the following RAN products
- Preferably with Bachelor's Degree in Communication Engineering, Bachelor's Degree of IT in Security or related courses
- Highly proficient in Chinese and English language