Connecting Businesses With Their Most Important Resource

Job fairs held by the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman help foreign investors find the employees they need.

Last month, my department, the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman, held the 10th annual Job Fair for Foreign-Invested Companies, which connects young Korean talents and global companies operating in Korea. Many participating companies, despite their global presence, were mostly B2B businesses not widely known in Korea and suffering from a labor shortage. As for the young Korean job seekers who attended, they lacked sufficient information about foreign-invested companies and had difficulty finding job opportunities with them. The job fair has aimed to bridge this gap since 2006.

The Job Fair for Foreign-Invested Companies 2015, held at the COEX on Oct. 15 and 16, drew 103 foreign-invested companies and about 14,000 job seekers. The event included an R&D Pavilion, EU Pavilion, North America Pavilion and Asia Pavilion as well as a recruiting seminar, employment know-how special lecture and tailored consulting services for job seekers. Twenty-three of the companies that participated were Fortune Global 500 enterprises, and many others were hidden champions who are not very well known to the general public but market leaders with technological prowess. With the job fair having been held for a decade, some foreign companies release recruiting advertisements in conjunction with it.

The labor demand of foreign-invested companies has changed, too. In the past, foreign-invested companies’ recruiting strategy was centered on entering the Korean market. But with Korea’s rising standing in the international community, the role and importance of Asian regional headquarters are growing, which means foreign companies are looking for people who can perform international duties, such as managing regional headquarters. Also, in order to respond to Korea’s fast-changing business environment and trends, many foreign firms here are increasing the share of entry-level recruits who are in their 20s and have proactive and innovative ideas.

Thirty-three percent of the companies participating in this year’s job fair were looking for local talents in provincial areas. As many foreign-invested companies are manufacturing businesses, demand for local talent abounds. In addition to the job fair, the Office of the Foreign Investment Ombudsman has held five rounds of Campus Recruiting for Foreign-Invested Companies in local hub universities. These events are held jointly with relevant local governments, and this year, we visited Soon Chun Hyang University in South Chungcheong Province, Chonbuk National University in North Jeolla Province, Chungnam National University in Daejeon Metropolitan City, Pusan National University in Busan Metropolitan City and Daegu University in North Gyeongsang Province. Students both in the region and neighboring areas participated in the event and showed great enthusiasm.

I believe the Job Fair and Campus Recruiting events play an important role in liaising between global foreign companies and job seekers. The Ombudsman’s Office will continue to identify and develop projects necessary for foreign-invested companies and support Korean talents seeking to work globally.

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