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# Classified Power

The SCMP has built one of the most successful classified advertising businesses in Hong Kong, largely on recruitment advertising and business notices. The SCMP is committed to strengthening this business with greater market reach and enhanced online products.

Classified Post is widely regarded as a key indicator for the Hong Kong economy. Following the economic recovery of 2004, and boosted by GDP growth of 7.3% in 2005, classified advertising maintained its expansionary trend. This was particularly true in the first half when companies expanded operations and hiring programs accelerated with job openings across all sectors.

*From taxis to tram shelters, the Classified Post spreads the word across Hong Kong that it is the number one advertising vehicle for recruitment*





Classified revenues rose 11% over 2004, with an 8% increase in recruitment revenue and a 21% increase in notices revenue. A weekly average of 82 classified pages was achieved in 2005 against 77 pages in 2004. This result was particularly notable given a 31% drop in available management positions, according to a recruitment survey by SCMP/Nielsen Media.

**Recruitment Expands**

As the first recruitment publication in Hong Kong, Classified Post has over 20 years of history as a market leader. Though a number of competitors have entered the market, Classified Post leads the way when it comes to senior and mid-level executive recruitment in Hong Kong due to high quality readership and a solid brand name. In addition, leading companies advertise with Classified Post to recruit for China.

In 2002, the Classified Post's niche at the middle and upper end of the market was complemented by Jiu Jik, a free recruitment magazine targeted for junior executives with exclusive distribution rights at MTR stations. Jiu Jik goes head-to-head with Chinese language publications to secure market share at the junior level. Revenues showed improvement over 2004, but were slightly below expectations due to competitive pricing for education ads as more publications entered the market in third quarter 2005.

Classified Post and Jiu Jik increased recruitment ad volume by 4%, with a 2% and 7% ad yield rise, respectively. Recruitment comprised 55% of total classified revenues, down from 57% in 2004 as a result of strong notices revenues. An SCMP/Nielsen Media survey showed total positions advertised in 2005 to be similar to 2004.



*Jiu Jik, a recruitment magazine distributed in MTR stations, launched a promotional campaign to reach junior executives*

**Market Positioning**

Classified Post enhanced editorial coverage of key sectors to include hiring and salary trends as well as career development opportunities. At the same time, partnerships were established with several professional associations to produce industry-focused recruitment supplements that provide a targeted and effective platform for advertisers to promote their employment brand.

SCMP conducted market research and readership surveys to establish its position as a recruitment authority. In 2005, Nielsen Media Research was commissioned to produce quarterly surveys. The results were published in Classified Post and in quarterly newsletters to advertisers. A readership survey conducted by Taylor Nelson Sofres confirmed the breadth and depth of the Classified Post recruitment reach. The survey showed the education level, experience and career track record of readers to be unmatched in Hong Kong.



*Classified Post events and seminars attract thousands of job seekers*

Classified Post organized and sponsored conferences, seminars and events to reinforce its market position. In January 2005, the first HR conference was organized with the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management and an HR handbook was published to coincide with the event. The conference and handbook were well received and demonstrated market expertise. Plans are afoot to make this an annual event to reinforce market leadership and demonstrate a commitment to human resource development.



*Special reports and supplements provide value added ways for advertisers to reach their target audience*



**Online Recruitment**

SCMP is committed to print and online options to cross sell recruitment with its “print plus” offering. classifiedpost.com and jiujiik.com had 13.8 million page views per month from registered users.

classifiedpost.com was provided with a new look, enhanced features and added functionality to improve interactivity. Job seekers can now share questions, views and experiences with peers. With six discussion topics added online – Job Hunters, Career Advice, Interviews, Graduates, Money Talk and Afraid to Ask – people can participate in an interactive discussion on all aspects of job hunting.

Presently, advanced search functions enable users to select targeted jobs with one click. The new Hot Courses section introduces programmes from leading educational institutions. With enriched editorial content job seekers enjoy professional career advice and market analysis from editors and columnists. New functions provide easy text formatting for clients to create and format ads.

In September 2005, jiujiik.com was redesigned in tandem with a facelift for Jiu Jik magazine. Jobseekers can apply for jobs online by uploading resumes into the database using a customized resume format and use resume matching services. Advertisers can benefit from candidate search tools.

**Notices**

Notices posted a 21% year-on-year gain. Despite strong competition, SCMP secured 54 out of 62 Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), which accounted for 43% of business notices revenue. The market share of main board listings increased to 87% in 2005, a ratio that has climbed from 38% in 2002 to 68% in 2003 and 78% in 2004. Revenue generated from IPO bookings exceeded the 2004 amount by 38%.

Company announcement ad revenue grew 20% over 2004 figures. One factor for revenue growth was a strong effort from the sales team, which signed 87 contracts with 60 clients committed exclusively to the SCMP while 27 clients signed on to higher volume.

With the possibility that listed companies will no longer be required to publish announcements in newspapers, the strategy is to build innovation into the product line. In this regard, the SCMP published two business notices special supplements in glossy magazine format in May and September 2005. These products generated additional revenue and created a new vehicle for investor relations programs.

**2006 Outlook**

With changes in listing rules on company announcements pending, the SCMP must respond with innovation and new products to maintain or grow revenues. SCMP plans to offer more advertising options across print and online platforms to retain notices revenue and an effort will be made to improve Jiu Jik brand awareness and ad response.

In addition, by the end of 2006, the classified division will have completed two major projects:

- classifiedpost.com revamp: An enhancement of the recruitment website will improve user interface, provide a powerful search engine, add functionality and expand the content offering.
- Re-development of companies.scmp.com: If the change in listing rules regarding announcements is approved, more companies will publish results and other announcements online, either on the Hong Kong Exchange website or on credible third party sites. SCMP plans to offer options and packages to minimize revenue loss from this sector. The strategy is to offer a suite of products to add value for print advertisers.



*Bus advertising created visibility for Classified Post after Chinese New Year, the most active recruitment season*