

Press release  
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## Innovation a high business priority for Hong Kong companies

- 96% of Hong Kong CIOs are implementing measures to boost innovation in their company in the next 12 months.
- Hong Kong companies rate themselves in the upper mid-table of the innovation scale with an average score of 3.7 out of 5.
- 41% will employ IT talent with unique skills to build a more innovative business over the next 12 months.

**Hong Kong, 24 January 2017** – According to an independent survey from specialist recruiter [Robert Half](#), Hong Kong Chief Information Officers (CIOs) are increasingly embracing the innovation trend, with 96 per cent implementing measures to boost innovation in their company over the next 12 months.

When asked to rate how innovative they think their company is on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not innovative; 5 = highly innovative), less than one fifth (13 per cent) of Hong Kong CIOs give themselves a score of 5 out of 5. The majority still believe there is room for improvement as the average score given by CIOs is 3.7 out of 5.

**Adam Johnston, Managing Director Robert Half Hong Kong** said: *“As one of the world’s key commercial hubs, Hong Kong businesses are increasingly adopting innovative methods to drive their company agenda. Moreover, by pioneering innovation, Hong Kong companies are increasing their competitiveness within the global marketplace at a time when many regional competitors are offering lower cost structures.”*

### How Hong Kong companies are boosting innovation

The overall majority of Hong Kong companies are taking measures to boost innovation with an approach that consists of a combination of both technology and people. Data infrastructure tops the list with more than half (53 per cent) of Hong Kong CIOs planning to build more data centres to leverage data more efficiently. Almost half (49 per cent) will reshape network infrastructure to improve operational processes, followed by 41 per cent who plan to hire new IT talent with the unique skills needed to build a more innovative business.

### Measures CIOs will take to build a more innovative business over the next 12 months

Building data centres to leverage data more efficiently	53%
Reshaping network infrastructure to improve operational processes	49%
Employing IT talent with in-demand/unique skills	41%
Developing new technology tools to improve customer experience (e.g. App development)	34%
Developing/enhancing software	31%
Focusing on a more collaborative work environment	26%

*Source: independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 100 Hong Kong CIOs – multiple answers allowed.*

*“The main drivers of IT innovation - mobile, cloud, and Big Data technologies – are giving Hong Kong companies a competitive edge in the delivery of services and improved productivity. Leveraging these technologies and building on them doesn’t only have the potential to enhance the customer experience and reduce costs but it also boost employee productivity which in turn has a positive impact on overall company success,”* **Adam Johnston** said.

With almost all of the Hong Kong CIOs surveyed (98 per cent) saying that it is challenging to find skilled IT staff, having an innovative corporate culture can serve as a point of difference to attract and retain top IT talent.

*“Successfully fostering a culture of innovation calls for ongoing investment in both IT infrastructure and human resources. However, Hong Kong companies face an extremely competitive environment when it comes to*

attracting high calibre IT professionals, and businesses face a notable shortage of IT talent - particularly those with niche skills,” **Adam Johnston** said.

“Skilled IT professionals are actively looking for opportunities where they can make a meaningful contribution to developing and driving innovation. Not surprisingly, the best IT talent is attracted to those Hong Kong companies with a reputation for embracing innovation. This being the case, companies need to send a powerful message to the market that they are focused on this, and maintain a visibly innovative culture, in order to attract and retain the best IT employees,” **Adam Johnston** said.

#### **Robert Half suggests the following tips for encouraging innovation:**

1. **Capture ideas:** By failing to capture and build on creative ideas as they are formed, businesses could miss out on valuable innovative solutions.
2. **Encourage employees to speak up:** Every employee needs to feel encouraged to speak up and contribute their views on how to make innovative improvements to the business.
3. **Create a culture of innovation:** Leaders must foster a culture that supports new ideas. This includes developing clear structures and processes to identify, develop and implement innovative ideas.
4. **Develop the talent in your organisation:** Staff development is integral to innovation. It promotes innovation skills like personal responsibility, understanding of errors and visionary thinking.
5. **Remove the barriers:** Innovation relies on both financial and technological possibilities. IT must support innovation with modern technologies – like data analytics and cloud technology – and remain attractive to IT professionals at the same time.

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#### **Notes to editors**

##### **About the research**

The annual study is developed by Robert Half and conducted by an independent research firm, surveying 100 CIOs/CTOs in Hong Kong. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management and trends in the workplace.

##### **About Robert Half**

Robert Half is the world’s first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy. Founded in 1948, the company has over 325 offices worldwide providing interim management, temporary and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services and technology professionals in Hong Kong. More information on [roberthalf.com.hk](http://roberthalf.com.hk).

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