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Uncertainties and Tensions Aside, Canadian Search Market Remains Robust



Executive search firms in Canada reflect the country's diverse economy, geography, and culture, with a mix of global players like Korn Ferry, national firms, and boutiques. Major cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal serve as key hubs, each with distinct market characteristics—Toronto's financial prominence, Calgary's ties to oil and gas, and Quebec's French-language emphasis. Firms prioritize both industry-specific expertise and a deep understanding of local markets, often assembling teams that blend regional knowledge with specialized functional skills to meet client needs.

Recruiters tell **Hunt Scanlon Media** that the executive search landscape is shaped by Canada's complex immigration framework, labor market regulations, and shifting economic conditions. Work permits, permanent residency requirements, and processes like the Labor Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) add administrative hurdles when hiring international executives. Economic uncertainty due to geopolitical tensions and the pending election of a new Prime Minister has led many companies to adopt cautious hiring strategies. However, sectors like AI, natural resources, and healthcare continue to drive demand for top talent, with a growing focus on diversity, inclusion, and technology-driven leadership.

Canada's smaller market size and concentrated business hubs foster a relationship-driven approach to executive search, requiring firms to build strong connections with clients and candidates. The relatively limited talent pool and geographic challenges demand creative sourcing strategies, especially for senior roles. Bilingualism, particularly in Quebec, can be another thing recruiters are faced with.

"Executive search firms in Canada, much like the country itself, mirror its diverse economy, geography, and culture," said Cleo

Kirkland, managing partner of Toronto for **Korn Ferry** and head of the firm's legal center of expertise for North America. "The Canadian landscape is home to a wide array of firms, ranging from large global players like Korn Ferry to regional and national firms, as well as smaller boutique agencies. Most executive search activity is concentrated in key cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal. Each of these markets has its own distinct characteristics—Quebec's emphasis on the French language, Calgary's strong ties to the oil and gas sector, and Toronto's prominence as a hub for financial institutions."

Across the country, a common thread in the executive search landscape is the crucial importance of both industry-specific expertise and a deep understanding of the local market, Mr. Kirkland explained. "Canadian clients often prioritize search partners who not only possess specialized knowledge of the relevant industry, but also demonstrate a strong grasp of the specific province, region, or city," he said. "To address these needs, we frequently assemble teams that combine local expertise with industry or functional leaders to deliver tailored solutions. Our search consultants often help clients refine their strategies by identifying candidates with regional ties and those who have a proven track record of relocating for professional opportunities."

BY THE NUMBERS

Canada

Canada's average unemployment rate
for 2024 was **6.28%**...

...marking an increase from **5.41%** in 2023.

Source: CEIC Data

Canada's immigration framework offers several work permit and visa categories, with executive-level positions typically requiring either a work permit or permanent residency application, according to Mr. Kirkland. "The process, however, can be time-consuming and complex, involving various specific requirements," he said. "For example, the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) mandates that employers prove there is no qualified Canadian citizen or permanent resident available for the role before hiring a foreign worker. This requirement often entails significant administrative effort, costs, and potential delays, making expertise in this area all the more important when securing top executive talent from outside the country." *(cont'd. to page 2)*

IN THE NEWS

Odgers Berndtson Aligns U.S. and Canadian Businesses

Odgers Berndtson has announced that their businesses in the United States and Canada will implement a unified go-to-market strategy, further enhancing the firm's ability to offer industry-specific expertise and market

intelligence for clients operating on both sides of the border. As part of this alignment, the firm will continue to offer a full suite of integrated leadership solutions including board and executive search; interim management; leadership & team assessment and coaching; succession management; and DEI advisory.

"Going to market as a North American firm is another way that we are prioritizing clients, candidates, and colleagues," said Kennon Kincaid, CEO of Odgers Berndtson U.S. "We understand the modern leadership challenges our clients are dealing with, and we recognize that by further aligning the U.S. and Canadian businesses we will be poised to offer the best leadership solutions in the market delivered by the most talented experts in the industry."

"The job market for senior executives in Canada in 2025 remains uncertain due to geopolitical tensions and economic volatility," Mr. Kirkland said. "This uncertain environment has prompted some companies to adopt a more cautious stance on executive hiring. Provinces with strong ties to industries such as manufacturing and agriculture are facing more pronounced challenges in attracting senior executives. The outlook for the senior executive job market in Canada will become clearer once a new Prime Minister is elected and the economic environment has more clarity. Until then, many organizations and executive search firms are adopting a wait and see approach, carefully monitoring developments before making strategic hiring decisions."

Adaptability to Regional Nuances

"Executive search firms in Canada are distinguished by their adaptability to regional and industry-specific nuances, their commitment to diversity and inclusivity, and their role in supporting industries like AI that drive global innovation," said Karen Swystun, CEO of **Waterford Global**. "Search strategies in Canada need to be customized across provinces, firms, and industry sectors due to differences in labor market regulations, organizational culture, the client's competitive landscape, and the relative mobility of the talent pool. Offer negotiations are further shaped by the systematic use of monetary and non-monetary incentives related to hiring, pay, promotions, and terminations, and tailored to align with regional and industry-specific needs."

Canada's diversity in both clients and candidates creates a unique environment for executive search firms, according to Ms. Swystun. "With highly diverse candidate pools, clients are increasingly aware of the importance of unbiased selection systems, resulting in heightened focus on equitable and inclusive hiring processes during candidate evaluations," she said. "Canada has emerged as a global leader in AI-driven enterprises, supported by a growing cohort of AI talent, which has outpaced many leading nations. The annual 38 percent growth in Canada's cohort of AI talent in recent

years highlights Canada's commitment to innovation and addressing real-world challenges. This trend has positioned executive search firms to specialize in sourcing top talent for technology-driven and technology-aided industries, particularly in AI and related fields."

Canada's executive search landscape reflects ongoing generational shifts in management and leadership, Ms. Swystun explained. "These transitions demand adaptive search strategies and an emphasis on identifying leaders equipped to address modern challenges in dynamic, diverse environments," she said. "Canada's openness to newcomers, banking stability, access to global markets, and highly skilled workforce enable its executive search firms to draw from international best practices. This allows Canadian search firms like Waterford Global to maintain high efficiency in their search processes while catering to the local and global needs of clients."

Ms. Swystun also noted that as an executive search firm with a long-standing history of recruiting international talent for leadership roles in Canada, key success factors have included being vigilant regarding changes in labor laws (nationally and provincially) and immigration policy. "Given the various immigration routes available to foreign talent, being mindful of the different options to immigration and their associated requirements and timelines are other critical success factors in meeting the timelines of an executive search process," she said. "The sophistication and complexity of the immigration process also demands that a search firm not try to go it alone without the aid and assistance of a recognized, credible, and experienced immigration law firm."

Significant Opportunities Across Canada

"The job market for senior executives in 2025 is shaping up with significant opportunities across various sectors in Canada," said Ms. Swystun. "Canadian companies are entering the year with a positive outlook for executive search, particularly in key industries such as manufacturing, natural resources, healthcare, logistics, information technology, and construction. These sectors are actively recruiting talent at the mid-to-senior level for both existing and newly created roles, emphasizing strategic growth and future-readiness. Employers are spending significant time and energy on training and development for mid-level employees, as well as long-term succession planning across executive levels and functions."

"We find that Canada's smaller market size with an economy concentrated in natural resources, financial services, healthcare, and technology has resulted in a more generalist approach in executive search," said Tracy Posner, co-founder of Toronto-based executive search firm **Ivy Group**. "While search firms have practices and services aligned with industry and/or functional expertise, it is not unusual for consultants to specialize in more than one area. Head offices for companies tend to be clustered around Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver. This economic concentration has created a heightened emphasis on a relationship-driven approach to business development, requiring firms to build deep, trust-based connections with both clients and candidates."

"Search strategies in Canada are influenced by the relatively smaller talent pool created partly because of a (cont'd. to page 3)

subsidiary economy with an increasing consolidation of ownership,” Ms. Posner said. “This injects the need for creativity in candidate sourcing, particularly for senior C-suite roles, where firms need to leverage international networks to identify top talent. For most executive search firms dealing with small to medium sized enterprises, which comprise 99.8% of the Canadian economy, sourcing candidates requires a heightened awareness of their interest in moving from a larger organization to a smaller one.”

While effective use of technology is required, sourcing top candidates still requires a high personal touch, given the need for alignment with organizational values in smaller to medium sized enterprises, Ms. Posner explained. “Local knowledge of the structure of the talent pools is key to effective talent identification and attraction,” she said. “Canada’s vast geography does deter candidate mobility, and increasingly, as return to office policies take hold, location is once again, becoming a limiting factor. Bilingualism, particularly in Quebec, adds another layer of complexity, as firms must ensure candidates meet language proficiency standards for certain roles.”

Poised for Transformation

“As we enter 2025, the Canadian job market for senior executives is poised for significant transformation,” Ms. Posner said. “Not only are the requirements for leadership transforming, but organizations are also increasingly seeking executives who can navigate the complexities of technological innovation, environmental challenges, and evolving workplace dynamics. The need for leadership in small to medium-sized enterprises, often founder owned and run, is becoming more pronounced as these founders/owners seek exit strategies. We expect to see increased demand from this sector given the age demographic nearing retirement.”

“At its core, the Canadian market reflects both the concentrated nature of its business centres and its role as a connector between global markets,” said Chris Beck, CEO of **Caldwell**. “Cities like Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal have become specialized ecosystems where search firms excel in Canada’s key industries: natural resources, financial services, and technology. This is a bit different from the U.S., where firms operate in a broader range of industries across many metropolitan areas. One of the standout strengths of search firms with strong Canadian operations like Caldwell is our expertise in cross-border work, especially with the U.S. Given the close economic ties between the two countries, firms like ours are skilled at finding executives who can thrive in both business cultures.”

“Another layer of complexity in Canada is the need for bilingual leaders, particularly in Quebec and for national roles,” Mr. Beck said. “The requirement for French-English proficiency makes the talent search more nuanced compared to other English-speaking countries, calling for broader international networks and more advanced screening methods to find the right fit. Canada’s smaller market also influences how search firms operate. Unlike firms in larger markets that tend to specialize narrowly, Canadian firms have become more flexible, managing searches across multiple sectors. This versatility is a competitive edge, allowing (cont’d. to page 4)

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them to draw on insights and networks across industries while still maintaining deep expertise where it matters most."

The Canadian executive job market in 2025 is showing good momentum, driven by shifting organizational priorities and changing leadership demands across major sectors, according to Mr. Beck. "It's an exciting but challenging time for senior executives looking to navigate the next steps in their careers," he said. "Workplace flexibility remains a factor, but its prominence is evolving. While some organizations continue to embrace flexible and hybrid work models as a competitive advantage for attracting talent, others are scaling back remote options to focus on collaboration and culture-building in physical offices. Executives who can successfully navigate these differing approaches and balance productivity, employee satisfaction, and organizational cohesion are in high demand."

Mr. Beck also noted that economic conditions also play a big role in executive hiring decisions. Canada's economy is proving resilient, but potential volatility is still a concern. "Companies are looking for leaders who can manage uncertainty while driving growth," he said. "With the Bank of Canada's monetary policy influencing investment strategies, executives need to be agile in how they allocate resources and plan for the future. Adding to this complexity is the uncertainty around U.S. trade policy, particularly the possibility of new tariffs looming. With the U.S. being Canada's largest trading partner, any significant changes in tariff policies could disrupt supply chains and increase costs for Canadian businesses. Executives will need to demonstrate a deep understanding of international trade dynamics and have strategies in place to mitigate risks, maintain competitive pricing, and secure market access."

"As we look ahead, the executive job market in 2025 seems to favor leaders who are adaptable, tech-savvy, and inclusive," Mr. Beck said. "The ability to drive innovation while maintaining operational excellence in a hybrid work setting is becoming a must-have skill. Companies want leaders who can handle complexity, foster sustainable growth, and build resilience in their organizations—all while navigating the challenges of a shifting global trade environment."

"Due to the difference in market scale, with the exception of a few vertices such as finance, healthcare and education, the vast majority of Canadian search firms are generalist in nature, covering a broad range of industries and disciplines," said Sylvia MacArthur, managing partner of **The ExeQfind Group**. "As well, due to geography, population clusters, and cultural nuances, the search business in Canada is much more localized. For example, clients in Quebec prefer to work with French speaking, local firms. In addition, the likelihood of Canadians relocating their families for a job opportunity being much lower than in the US also impacts on this. As a result, clients in Vancouver or Halifax would prefer to work with a firm that is immersed in the local market."

Immigration policies are tightening in Canada, but they are primarily impacting on the broader workforce - generally people brought in on temporary work visas, Ms. MacArthur explained. "Visa renewals and awarding permanent residency

(cont'd. to page 5)

IN THE NEWS

TSI Group Celebrates 35 Years of Leadership in Executive Search



TSI Group proudly marks 35 years of excellence in retained executive search, strategic talent acquisition, and leadership development. Founded in 1990 by Pamela Ruebusch, TSI has grown into one of Hunt Scanlon's Top Executive Search

Firms in North America and Canada's Top 60 Executive Search Firms, recognized for its best-in-class hiring outcomes and commitment to innovation. From its inception, TSI Group has been guided by a clear vision: "Building Relationships...Securing Success." Over the past three decades, the firm has remained at the forefront of sourcing and delivering top leadership talent. TSI has embraced AI-driven talent solutions, becoming the first firm in Canada to partner with Wisnio in 2021. This advanced talent analytics technology enhances leadership hiring, ensuring data-driven, unbiased, and strategic hiring decisions.

"We understand that talent is the foundation of every successful business," said Ms. Ruebusch. "We synchronize our expertise, methodologies, and technology to deliver unparalleled hiring outcomes. We look forward to expanding our footprint across North America to help our clients thrive with transparency and earning your trust. TSI Group continues to set the standard for best-in-class retained executive search. As we celebrate 35 years of success, we extend our gratitude to our clients, partners, and the talented leaders who have been part of our journey—your success is our success."

have slowed significantly," she said. "At the executive level, while you do need to demonstrate that you have thoroughly considered Canadian talent first, Canadian immigration policies, though cumbersome and time consuming, remain pretty liberal. The bigger challenge in recruiting international executive talent is the reluctance of Canadian firms going through the expense and time-consuming process of sponsoring a candidate. An example is a client that hired a CMO from Germany—where it took two years to finally bring the person on board. In retrospect, it could have been cheaper and faster to set up a satellite office in Germany, hire the candidate there and transfer them to Canada."

Ms. MacArthur also noted that momentum and future optimism regarding executive hiring in 2025 was strong in Canada until November 2024. "With the U.S. election and the threat of impending tariffs we have seen a wait and see mentality taking hold, with clients putting even some key hires on hold until the beginning of the second quarter," she said. "As a result, it is pretty difficult to forecast what 2025 will hold overall."

"Executive search firms in Canada often place a significant emphasis on cultural alignment and bilingualism, especially in Quebec, where fluency in both English and French is crucial," said Pamela Ruebusch, founder of **TSI Group**. "Canadian firms also focus heavily on diversity and inclusivity, in line with national values and equity laws. These priorities set Canadian firms apart from their counterparts in other countries, where cultural or linguistic factors may not be as central to the recruitment process."

Canadian Labor Laws and Immigration Policies

At TSI Group, Canadian labor laws and immigration policies have significantly influenced the executive search process. "Canada's labor laws require compliance with employment standards and federal and provincial laws, such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Employment Equity Act," Ms. Ruebusch said. "Employers hiring international talent need to secure a LMIA, which ensures that hiring a foreign executive will not negatively affect the Canadian labour market. Recent changes to the Express Entry system, which eliminate additional points for job offers supported by LMIAs, aim to reduce fraud but may increase complexity for employers. As a result, companies must anticipate longer timelines and more stringent compliance when hiring international talent."

The Canadian job market in 2025 will demand leaders who can successfully integrate AI and automation into business operations, boosting efficiency while maintaining a human-centered approach, according to Ms. Ruebusch. "Addressing widening skills gaps will be a major priority, with organizations investing in upskilling initiatives to future-proof their workforce," she said. "The retirement of baby boomer executives will create a leadership void, making succession planning and the identification of next-generation leaders crucial. Additionally, to meet the evolving expectations of Millennial and Gen Z workers, leaders will need to foster purpose-driven cultures, embrace collaborative leadership styles to effectively manage and inspire these generations. In 2025, the need for executive search firms will continue to be essential as we assist clients in navigating this rapidly changing landscape and securing the right leadership to thrive in the future."

"As the Canadian executive landscape evolves, firms must adapt to changes in labour laws, shifting immigration policies (for firms that need to), and emerging workforce expectations," Ms. Ruebusch said. "By embracing innovation, diversity, and inclusivity, Canadian organizations are well-positioned to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 2025 job market. Leaders who can blend best in class people, processes, and technology with empathy, who also plan for succession, and understand the values of the younger workforce will be the driving force behind success in this dynamic environment."

"Executive search firms in Canada face a challenging market," said Jim Harmon, managing partner, **Boyden Canada**. "With an economy roughly the size of Texas, stretched across a 4,000 mile border, our country has less than 200 public companies with revenues in excess of \$1 billion. On top of this, there has been a decades-long erosion of the number of Canadian offices maintained by multinationals, who prefer to instead include Canada under U.S. regional direction, curtailing the number of senior executives based here. More recently, both federal and provincial governments have been prone to elected leadership that is unfriendly to business, particularly the energy sector, which has been a critical source of excise revenue to underwrite Canada's social entitlements."

The executive search industry is very much a reflection of these realities, Mr. Harmon explained. "With the exception of the pursuit of several extremely incumbent,

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regulated industries—specifically financial services - the largest global firms have little enthusiasm for Canada,” he said. “Given that the search market is substantially made up of owner-managed and family business, PE-backed and small-cap public companies, and a massive set of organizations that derive funding from taxpayers, fees are lower and search opportunities are highly competitive. Given the lack of client sectoral critical mass, search professionals often remain generalists and many firms offer modified retainer arrangements. Public-sector and institutional search business development is very procurement-centric, requiring significant investments in compliance and infrastructure.”

Recruiting Executives to Canada

Mr. Harmon also noted that the reasonableness of Canadian labor law lies somewhere between that of Europe and the U.S. As a result, interim management is a less sought-after solution given the ability to reasonably terminate an executive. “The regime is nonetheless challenging, however, given that our courts and their precedents are extremely biased to the employee’s position,” he said. “Recruiting executives to Canada is surprisingly simple. Our immigration path to permanent residency and ultimately citizenship can nonetheless be time-consuming and requires organizations to prove no domestic solution was viable.”

“Finally, from an outlook perspective, Canada’s current economic fortunes eclipse all the context described above,” Mr. Harmon said. “Massive amounts of immigration have resulted in never-before-seen pressure on our underfunded social welfare system. Coupled with debt, plummeting investment, and perennial fiscal mismanagement, our economy is in a uniquely weak position relative to fellow G7 countries. Brain drain and demographics are very much in the search industry’s favor, but organizations need to be able to budget our fees. All of this suggests a flat outlook at best.”

“Our experience has been that executive search firms in Canada tend generally to have many similarities to those of other countries, yet some may differ subtly in a few areas,” said Jason Carmichael, founder and CEO of **Oxford+Richmond**. “Canadian executive search firms operate within a dynamic and highly diverse environment, shaped by the country’s vast geography, multicultural makeup, and regulatory frameworks. Unlike many international markets, Canada features robust regional differences: the economic drivers in provinces like Alberta or Saskatchewan center on natural resources, while Ontario and Quebec often lead in finance, software and professional services, and British Columbia hosts a thriving tech sector. This regional variety prompts Canadian search firms to adopt customized, sector-specific strategies that may differ from more uniform approaches seen elsewhere.”

A distinctive national focus on healthcare also influences the way Canadian firms carry out executive searches, Mr. Carmichael explained. “Publicly funded healthcare models ensure that executive roles require familiarity not just with clinical and operational best practices, but with navigating public policy and stakeholder relationships,” he said. “In addition, the Canadian technology ecosystem, especially in urban hubs such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, demands that search firms, such as ours, source

IN THE NEWS

Egon Zehnder Expands in Canada with New Vancouver Office



Egon Zehnder has opened a new office in Vancouver, British Columbia. The expansion comes on the heels of opening a Seattle office last year and reflects the firm’s efforts to serve clients across the Pacific Northwest. “We are thrilled to expand our footprint into Vancouver, a city known for its innovation and unique, vibrant business community,” said Ed Camara, CEO of Egon Zehnder. “As British Columbia continues to grow as a global business hub, this additional Pacific Northwest office will enable us to be even closer to our clients, partners, and the industries we serve in Western Canada.” The Vancouver office will be led by three founding consultants: Constantin von Oppen, the Pacific Northwest region leader along with Chris King-Sidney, and Anne-Laure Brault.

leaders skilled in scaling start-ups, driving digital transformation, and fostering inclusive cultures that reflect Canada’s emphasis on diversity. Overall, Canadian executive search firms stand out through their ability to pivot between specialized local requirements and global market influences. Their strong grounding in regional economies, coupled with an acute awareness of diversity, sustainability, and industry-specific regulations, tends to set them apart from their international counterparts.”

“Immigration policy further influences how Canadian firms recruit globally,” Mr. Carmichael said. “Programs like the Global Talent Stream, Provincial Nominee Programs, and various work permit channels facilitate the entry of highly skilled professionals, including those with specialized expertise in technology and life sciences. For instance, a venture-backed AI start-up looking to rapidly scale in Toronto may find it easier to attract and onboard an international chief technology officer due to Canada’s relatively streamlined visa pathways (though these are constantly evolving). Furthermore, with a potential change in federal leadership following the next election in 2025, there may be a realignment of the country’s immigration strategies and requirements, underscoring the importance of staying informed and consulting legal experts. However, the strict credentialing processes—particularly in fields like healthcare—require comprehensive verification of foreign qualifications and licenses, adding layers of due diligence for search firms.”

When it comes to private equity and venture capital-backed companies, cross-border deals necessitate a robust understanding of both Canadian corporate law and international regulations, especially if the executive hire is relocating from the U.S. or Europe, according to Mr. Carmichael. “Additionally, Canadian laws governing diversity and inclusion, supported by institutional frameworks such as Employment Equity legislation, encourage the recruitment of underrepresented groups, thereby shaping the search process,” he said.

Evolving Industry Demands

As Canada approaches 2025, Mr. Carmichael believes demographic shifts, technological advancements, and evolving industry demands will reshape the executive recruitment landscape. “One significant trend is the increased need for

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leaders adept at digital transformation across sectors,” he said. “Similarly, tech-focused companies—ranging from AI start-ups in Montreal to clean-tech ventures in Vancouver—will seek C-suite leaders skilled at rapid scaling, strategic partnerships, and navigating complex regulatory environments. Though the Canadian private equity and venture capital environment remains sensitive to macroeconomic headwinds, 2025 should still see targeted growth. PE/VC-funded firms will need executives who can manage accelerated timelines, deliver investor returns, and orchestrate cross-border expansions. This includes CFOs with deep expertise in capital structuring, and CEOs adept at disruptive growth strategies.”

“As a proud member of **Alto Partners** global we have line of sight on other search firms from around the world,” said Adam Pekarsky, partner at **Humanis Talent Acquisition & Advisory**. “In truth, Canadian firms aren’t that different. However, the reality is that our population just isn’t big enough, nor our country’s industries diverse enough, to offer the level of geographic or industry specialization seen in other parts of the world. Our candidate pool is similarly smaller and the regional difference in cost of living (such as relocating someone from Saskatoon to Vancouver isn’t without some challenges), though that is changing with disappearing borders and our firm’s commitment to the latest technology and tools.”

“Canadian search firms typically emphasize building long-term relationships with clients and candidates,” Mr. Pekarsky said. “This aligns with Canada’s smaller, interconnected professional networks and the high value placed on trust and discretion. A significant number of searches may focus on cross-border roles due to Canada’s proximity to the U.S. and reliance on global talent for leadership positions.”

A Canadian Labour Market Opinion, now referred to as a Labour Market Impact Assessment, (as previously mentioned) plays a critical role in the recruitment of international talent. It serves as a key document that determines whether hiring a foreign worker will have a positive, neutral, or negative impact on the Canadian labour market. In summary, while the LMIA process ensures fairness and protects the domestic labour market, it can introduce delays and costs for employers. However, it also pushes organizations to focus on high-priority roles and skilled workers, ultimately shaping the strategies used to attract and integrate international talent into the Canadian economy.

“Canada has a couple of interesting areas of difference from many comparable countries,” said Esther McGregor, managing partner of **DHR Global’s** Vancouver office. “The sector that I work most in is in the not-for-profit and government sectors. In Canada there are many public-sector ‘businesses’ which would be wholly commercial in the U.S. or Europe. These can include energy and infrastructure providers, insurance, transport infrastructure and both wholesale and retail operations for cannabis, alcohol, and gaming. The multi-billion-dollar corporations providing these services operate much as companies do with the added emphasis on the triple-bottom-line, ensuring they achieve economic, social, and environmental goals.”

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Ivy Group Offices: 1 Consultants: 15	Catherine Graham/Tracy Posner/Emily Murgatroyd , Co-Founders (416) 627-6036	Truenorth Executive Search Offices: 1 Consultants: 49	Bruce North , Managing Director (705) 792-9211
KBRS Offices: 4 Consultants: 20	Kevin Stoddart , President & Managing Partner (866) 822-6022	TSI Group Offices: 1 Consultants: 4	Pamela Ruebusch , CEO (905) 629-3701
Korn Ferry Offices: 4 Consultants: 31	Cleo Kirkland , Managing Partner (416) 365-4018	Venor Offices: 29 Consultants: 17	Ian Sullivan , Partner - Executive Recruitment & Talent Consulting (709) 330-2155
Leaders International Executive Search Offices: 8 Consultants: 14	Tony Kirschner , Managing Partner (604) 688-8422	Verriez Offices: 1 Consultants: 4	Brent Verriez , President (519) 673-3463
Legacy Bowes Group Offices: 1 Consultants: 12	Paul Croteau , Managing Partner (204) 947-5525	Vlaad & Company Offices: 2 Consultants: 5	Bill Vlaad , CEO & Managing Partner (647) 426-3890
Legacy Executive Search Partners Offices: 1 Consultants: 5	Tony Woolgar , Senior Partner (416) 902-2974	Waterford Global Offices: Not listed Consultants: 10	Karen Swystun , CEO (204) 229-5494
LHH Knightsbridge Offices: 3 Consultants: 35	Tim Hewat , Head of Executive Search, North America (416) 526-1084	Waterhouse Executive Search Offices: 1 Consultants: 4	Grant Smith , Managing Partner (604) 806-7715
Lock Search Group Offices: 8 Consultants: 31	Ben Lamarcher/Jack Gawen , Managing Directors (647) 519 8007	Waterstone Human Capital Offices: 3 Consultants: 48	Marty Parker , President & CEO (416) 408-4545
Macdonald Search Group Offices: 7 Consultants: 22	Bruce Macdonald , Managing Partner (604) 687-6464	Wilton & Bain Offices: 1 Consultants: 3	Chris Garvin , Principal (416) 254-1142
Mandrake Offices: 2 Consultants: 23	Harold Perry , CEO/Bill Holland, President (416) 922-5400	Yacoub Elite Search Offices: 4 Consultants: 4	Jocelyn Yacoub , Founder & CEO (416) 861-0882

SPOTLIGHT

Driving Executive Search Success in Canada: Aplin's Approach to Finding Top Leadership



Aplin is a private, family and employee-owned Canadian executive search firm founded in Alberta in 1975. The firm provides temporary, contract and permanent recruiting solutions in professional services and IT across Canada and the U.S.

Jeff Aplin, CEO of the firm, has a management consulting track record in strategy and operations. He is skilled in M&A, talent acquisition, career development, HR consulting, executive search, and executive coaching. Mr. Aplin recently sat down with **Hunt Scanlon Media** to discuss navigating Canada's dynamic executive search market and his firm's finds top leadership for its clients!

Jeff, can you give us a sense of the current executive search climate in Canada?

The climate is dynamic and increasingly competitive. As organizations navigate digital transformation, economic uncertainties, and the push for sustainable growth, the demand for visionary leaders has never been higher. Companies are seeking leadership that not only delivers operational results but also aligns with values like innovation, diversity, and adaptability. At Aplin, we've observed a growing emphasis on candidates with proven track records in navigating change, driving innovation, and building resilient teams.

What sets Aplin apart from other search firms in this space?

What sets Aplin apart in this climate is our industry-first approach. We speak the language of the industries we serve, tailoring our search process to each client's unique needs. Unlike international firms that rely on transactional methods and mass resume submissions, we prioritize quality and client-centric solutions. Whether it's filling temporary, project-based, direct hire, or executive roles, our full-service model ensures we deliver the right talent for every area of a client's business. With 50 years of experience and specialized divisions dedicated to key industries, Aplin remains a trusted partner for businesses seeking senior leadership. By combining our expertise with a commitment to understanding our clients' goals, we help them secure leaders who drive both immediate impact and long-term success.

How does Aplin approach building and maintaining long-term relationships with both clients and candidates? Could you share an example of a successful partnership?

At Aplin, relationships are the foundation of everything we do. We prioritize trust, transparency, and consistent communication to ensure our clients and candidates feel valued throughout the recruitment process and beyond. Our approach is deeply rooted in becoming a long-term partner, not just a transactional provider. Unlike international firms that often prioritize quick placements, Aplin builds lasting connections, treating every client and candidate as an integral part of our network. For example, we've partnered with a national client in the financial services sector for over 15

years, supporting their growth by placing talent across all areas of their business. Our deep understanding of their evolving needs has made us a trusted partner in helping them scale and succeed. Our candidate relationships are built on mutual respect and trust, fostering long-term connections that often come full circle. Candidates who maintain relationships with our recruiters frequently return to us throughout their careers, seeking guidance and new opportunities. In turn, this loyalty allows us to continue supporting their success while strengthening the relationships that define our work. At Aplin, we focus on partnerships that endure, empowering businesses and individuals to achieve sustained success across all levels of their organization.

"As we explore opportunities to secure private growth funding, this family-driven ethos remains central to our strategy."

As a family-owned company, how does that ownership model influence the culture and operations at Aplin?

Being family-owned is fundamental to Aplin's culture, shaping a sense of pride, accountability, and long-term vision across the organization. This ownership model drives collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to delivering meaningful results for our clients and communities. As we explore opportunities to secure private growth funding, this family-driven ethos remains central to our strategy. The funding is a strategic step to accelerate growth, expand our offerings, and meet the evolving needs of the market, all while staying true to the values that have guided us for 50 years—integrity, sustainability, and a people-first approach.

At Aplin, being family-owned is more than a legacy; it's the foundation of our forward-thinking vision. This foundation enables us to build on our achievements while driving innovation and creating lasting value.

What trends or challenges in staffing and recruiting has Aplin observed in the Canadian job market recently, and how is the company adapting to these changes?

The Canadian job market is evolving rapidly, influenced by trends such as increasing demand for industry-specific expertise, technological advancements in recruitment, and shifting workforce expectations around flexibility, diversity, and inclusion. Aplin has adapted by deepening our specialization in key industries and leveraging advanced tools like AI and analytics to enhance our search capabilities. These innovations improve efficiency and help us match talent to roles with precision. Challenges like talent shortages have prompted us to guide clients in creating inclusive, flexible, and competitive workplaces that attract and retain top talent. By fostering partnerships that align with evolving workforce trends, we ensure our clients stay

(cont'd. to page 10)

ahead in a competitive market. At Aplin, our focus on innovation, specialization, and a people-first approach empowers both our clients and candidates to succeed in this dynamic landscape.

With your father starting the firm 50 years ago, can you give an idea of how the market has evolved over the years?

The recruitment industry has transformed dramatically since Aplin's inception in 1975. Back then, the process was entirely manual—job postings were handwritten, resumes were delivered in person, and relationships were cultivated through face-to-face meetings. Success relied on local networks, personal connections, and an unwavering commitment to quality, which became the very fabric of Aplin's approach to recruitment. Today, the industry has evolved into a sophisticated, tech-enabled field. Digital platforms, AI tools, and globalization have revolutionized how talent connects with opportunities. Alongside these advancements, a growing focus on diversity and inclusion has redefined workplace expectations, creating more equitable environments. Aplin's enduring success is built on the foundation of our core values: Self-disciplined accountability, growth mindset, and positivity. These principles guide everything we do, from how we interact with clients and candidates to how we operate internally. Combined with our core purpose—to build a winning culture that drives success, rewards growth, and consistently delivers triple wins (client, candidate, and Aplin)—they ensure we remain focused on delivering results.

*“Digital platforms, AI tools, and globalization
have revolutionized how talent connects
with opportunities.”*

Tell us about your recent acquisitions of Impact Recruitment and CompuStaff.

Our recent acquisitions of Impact Recruitment and CompuStaff reflect our commitment to innovation and growth. Impact Recruitment enhances our capabilities through its industry-specific expertise and tools, including salary guides that provide critical insights for both internal teams and external clients. Internally, these guides empower our teams to offer data-driven advice and negotiate with confidence. Externally, they help clients benchmark roles, craft competitive offers, and attract top talent in competitive markets. CompuStaff, our IT-focused brand, expands our reach in delivering senior-level technology talent to clients across industries. In an increasingly digital economy, this specialization ensures our clients have the skilled professionals they need to innovate and grow. CompuStaff's expertise complements Aplin's broader offerings, enabling us to deliver exceptional results in one of the fastest-evolving sectors. As we celebrate 50 years, we take pride in how the fabric of our values and purpose has woven through every stage of our evolution. From paper-based beginnings to becoming a leader in recruitment, our dedication to creating value for candidates, clients, and Aplin remains at the heart of everything we do.

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SPOTLIGHT

How Canadian Executive Search Firms Are Shaping Talent Acquisition



Marc Giguère serves as the managing partner of DHR Global's Montreal office in Canada and is a member of the global board and CEO and private equity practice groups. He has an extensive background highlighted by senior executive roles in Montreal, Toronto, and across Canada. Mr.

*Giguère's expertise spans organizational growth, value creation, digital transformation, revenue generation, operations, and business development across major technology, communications, media, and entertainment organizations. Mr. Giguère recently sat down with **Hunt Scanlon Media** to offer a look how the executive search market in Canada operates.*

Marc, what are the key differences between executive search firms in Canada and other countries?

Executive search firms in Canada exhibit unique characteristics that distinguish them from their counterparts in other countries, particularly in terms of industry focus and search strategies. Canadian executive search firms often have a strong emphasis on industries that are pivotal to the national economy, such as natural resources, technology, and financial services. For instance, the prominence of the natural resources and energy sectors in Canada means that many executive search firms have developed specialized expertise in these areas. This contrasts with countries like the U.S., where there might be a broader focus on diverse sectors such as healthcare, technology, and consumer goods.

Are there different strategies that firms use to find senior talent?

The search strategies employed by Canadian executive search firms are also tailored to the unique needs of the market. One notable difference is the emphasis on cultural fit and bilingualism. Given Canada's multicultural landscape and the importance of both English and French, especially in regions like Quebec, executive search firms often prioritize candidates who are not only highly skilled but also culturally adaptable and bilingual. This is less of a focus in countries with more homogeneous linguistic and cultural environments. Moreover, Canadian firms tend to adopt a more collaborative approach, working closely with clients to understand their specific needs and organizational culture. This partnership model ensures a higher alignment between the candidate and the company, reducing the risk of a poor fit. In contrast, executive search firms in other countries might adopt a more transactional approach, focusing primarily on the technical qualifications of candidates. In summary, the key differences between executive search firms in Canada and those in other countries lie in their industry focus and search strategies. Canadian firms' specialization in key economic sectors, emphasis on cultural fit and bilingualism, and collaborative approach to client relationships set them apart in the global executive search landscape.

How does Canadian labor law and immigration policy impact

the executive search process, especially when recruiting international talent for leadership roles?

Canadian labor law and immigration policy significantly influence the executive search process, particularly when recruiting international talent for leadership roles. Canadian labor laws are designed to protect workers' rights and ensure fair treatment in the workplace. Key legislation includes the Employment Standards Act, the Labor Relations Act, and the Human Rights Code. These laws mandate fair hiring practices, non-discrimination, and equitable compensation, which executive search firms must adhere to when recruiting candidates. For example, the Employment Standards Act sets minimum standards for wages, working hours, and other employment conditions, ensuring that all candidates, including international ones, are offered fair terms. Moreover, the emphasis on diversity and inclusion in Canadian labor law means that executive search firms often prioritize candidates who can contribute to a diverse and inclusive workplace. This focus aligns with the broader societal values in Canada and can be a key differentiator when attracting top international talent.

"Canadian labor laws are designed to protect workers' rights and ensure fair treatment in the workplace. Executive search firms must navigate these regulations effectively to successfully recruit international talent for leadership roles."

Recruiters have told Hunt Scanlon Media that immigration policies also factor in.

Canada's immigration policy is known for its openness and emphasis on attracting skilled workers. The Express Entry system, for instance, facilitates the immigration of highly skilled professionals, including those in executive roles. This system allows executive search firms to access a global talent pool and recruit individuals with the necessary skills and experience to fill leadership positions. However, the immigration process can be complex and time-consuming. Executive search firms must navigate various regulations and requirements, such as obtaining work permits and ensuring compliance with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). Additionally, recent policy changes and political shifts can impact the ease with which international candidates can be recruited. For instance, changes in government priorities or immigration targets can influence the availability of visas and work permits. In summary, Canadian labor law and immigration policy play crucial roles in shaping the executive search process. Labor laws ensure fair and equitable treatment of all candidates, while immigration policies provide access to a diverse and skilled global talent pool. Executive search firms must navigate these regulations effectively to successfully recruit international talent for leadership roles.

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Key Hiring Trends For 2025

As we are now well into 2025, the future of hiring is shifting quickly, according to a report from Ontario-based executive search firm **Verriez**. “To stay competitive, companies must engage passive talent, offer attractive salaries, and invest in career development,” the firm said. “Smart employers are adapting by prioritizing skills over traditional qualifications, focusing on both technical and interpersonal abilities. And with AI playing a bigger role in recruitment, transparency will be key. The organizations that adapt to these changes will thrive in 2025 and beyond.” Verriez lays out trends not just effecting Canada but the global search industry.

Employers are increasingly shifting toward skills-based hiring, prioritizing candidates’ technical and interpersonal abilities over formal qualifications alone, according to the report. “To adapt workforce hiring strategies, organizations should focus on identifying and recruiting talent with the right mix of hard and soft skills needed for success,” Verriez said. Additionally, offering employees opportunities to develop new skills and pursue internal career growth can help build a more dynamic, adaptable, and capable workforce while fostering long-term employee retention.

Career Development Will be a Key Component of the Recruitment Process

- **Focus on Employee Growth:** With rapid technological changes, employers must decide whether to reskill existing employees or hire new talent, according to the Verriez report.
- **Building Reskilling Programs:** Offer employees opportunities to transition into new roles and upskill to remain relevant in the changing job market.
- **Balanced Hiring Approach:** Smart organizations will blend internal reskilling with external recruitment to create a more adaptable workforce.
- **Candidate Expectations:** Top candidates will increasingly want to know how they can develop their skills within the organization, placing a greater emphasis on potential growth over past accomplishments, the Verriez report explained.

Salary Will Be a Primary Factor in Attracting Talent

- **Salary as a Major Motivator:** Many are still seeking higher pay, with salary being the leading reason they might change jobs.
- **Impact on Recruiting:** Companies will use salary offers to entice top talent, while also using salary increases to retain current employees, creating upward pressure on wages.

Attracting Passive Talent Will Be Crucial

Verriez highlights the growing significance of the passive talent pool, as more professionals adopt a “wait-and-see” approach to their careers but remain open to better opportunities. Engaging passive candidates is becoming increasingly important, with 83 percent of recruiting professionals predicting it will be a critical focus over the next five years.

To attract this talent, employers can adopt proactive engagement strategies by maintaining regular, personalized (cont'd. to page 13)

communication to keep potential candidates interested, according to Verriez. The firm notes that by strengthening the employer brand by showcasing organizational culture, values, and growth opportunities is equally vital. Additionally, leveraging employee networks for referrals can be effective, though it's important to avoid over-reliance on this approach to minimize potential bias.

"In today's dynamic economic landscape, organizations must prioritize attracting exceptional talent to thrive in 2025 and beyond."

Transparency Around AI in Recruitment Will Increase

- **AI in Hiring:** Most candidates are comfortable with AI speeding up recruitment but still value human judgment to assess their unique qualities and potential, according to the Verriez report.
- **Transparency in AI Usage:** Employers should be upfront about how AI is integrated into recruitment to ensure fairness and reduce the risk of bias in hiring processes.
- **Balanced Recruitment Approach:** While AI will help streamline recruitment, human recruiters will remain essential in making final decisions.

"The central focus of future recruitment will be on skills—engaging passive talent, offering competitive salaries, prioritizing development, and ensuring transparency in AI-driven hiring," the Verriez report said. "Companies that adapt to these evolving trends will be better positioned for success in 2025 and in the coming years."

"In today's dynamic economic landscape, organizations must prioritize attracting exceptional talent to thrive in 2025 and beyond," the Verriez report explained. "Senior leadership plays a critical role in steering a company's direction, making the recruitment of top-tier executives a vital step in ensuring sustained growth and success. Whether your organization is expanding or seeking replacements for key roles, decisions surrounding senior hires have a profound impact. These individuals not only address immediate operational needs but also shape organizational culture, influence strategic choices, and set the stage for future achievements."

Founded in 1985 by Paul Verriez, The Verriez Group has grown to become a trusted boutique executive search firm in Ontario. The team at Verriez offers retained executive search services for all types of C-Suite and senior finance roles. The firm has specialized in finding CFOs and other senior financial officers since its founding.

As an executive search specialist in senior management and executive level accounting and finance disciplines, Mr. Verriez has built relationships in markets including the U.K., Canada, the United States and Mexico. Some of his searches have identified candidates located in Belgium and Ireland. His firm has recruited Canadian senior financial executives who were looking to get back to Canada for these specific roles. One of the positions was located in Yellowknife, NWT. One of Verriez Group's most recent searches was for an operations manager in Acuna, Mexico. Other senior searches outside of finance have included VP and general counsel searches for clients located in the GTA.

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Top Canadian Searches Making News...

The Alberta Real Estate Foundation Retained Leaders International to Find New Leader



Leaders International, an executive search firm with eight offices across Canada, has been selected by the Alberta Real Estate Foundation to lead its search for an executive director. Patti Morris has announced that she is retiring in June. Leading the assignment for the Toronto-based search firm are partner Anurag Shourie and search associate Deepthi Koshy. Reporting to the board of governors, the executive director is accountable for the overall management of the foundation and provides strategic leadership and direction to the staff. This executive coordinates foundation activities with outside entities and provides highly responsible and complex administrative support to the board of governors.

Massey Henry Recruits CFO for the Building Ontario Fund

Toronto-based **Massey Henry**

has placed Inna Kravitz as CFO of the Building Ontario Fund, a new, independent, board-governed, crown agency that will enable public-sector pension plans, other trusted institutional investors, and Indigenous communities to further participate in large-scale infrastructure projects across the province. "Inna brings a proven track record of driving financial strategy, optimizing operations, and fostering innovation in highly regulated environments," Massey Henry said in a LinkedIn post. "Her expertise spans treasury, IT, procurement, risk management, project management, and payroll. With a passion for aligning financial objectives with organizational vision, Inna will play a pivotal role in supporting BOF in its mission to finance and build critical infrastructure projects across the province. Congratulations and all the best in your new role, Inna."



Griffith Group Recruits New CEO for the Public Policy Forum



Following an extensive national search, Toronto-based executive recruitment firm **Griffith Group Executive Search** has assisted in the recruitment of Inez Jabalpurwala as president and CEO of the Public Policy Forum. Jane Griffith, managing partner and founder, and Caroline McLean, partner, led this important assignment. Ms. Jabalpurwala succeeds Edward Greenspon, who over the past nine years helped build PPF's reputation as one of Canada's most respected and established think tanks. "As one of Canada's sharpest policy minds and most creative, inspiring leaders, Inez Jabalpurwala will help this organization scale new heights," said André Beaulieu, chairman of PPF's board of directors. "We are thrilled she has agreed to lend her considerable talents to this important work."

...More Canadian Searches Making News

PFM Executive Search Seeking CEO for Bright Health



PFM Executive Search has been retained by Bright Health to lead in its search for a new CEO. Reporting directly to the chair of the board, the CEO is responsible for the overall strategic

direction of the organization including the development and ongoing refinement of organization strategy, business development and revenue generation, structure, product development, partner and client relations, and other organization-wide growth and evolution initiatives. Bright Health, formerly known as the Applied Informatics for Health Society, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing healthcare through the development and support of innovative digital health solutions. Founded in 1992, Vancouver, B.C.-based PFM Executive Search serves a wide range of industries, working with private, public, and not-for-profit organizations to fill senior-level executive positions.

Humanis Talent Acquisition & Advisory Leading Executive Director Search for NAIOP Edmonton

Edmonton, Alberta-based **Humanis Talent Acquisition & Advisory** has been retained by NAIOP Edmonton to lead in its search for a new executive director.



The executive director will be responsible for leading and managing all aspects of the organization to fulfill its mission and objectives. Reporting to the board of directors, the executive director provides strategic vision, operational leadership, and advocacy for the industry while fostering strong relationships with members, partners, stakeholders, and government representatives. The ideal candidate is an experienced leader, with a deep understanding of commercial real estate trends, challenges, and opportunities. This individual should have exceptional communication, negotiation, and interpersonal skills, complemented by a proven ability to build and maintain relationships with diverse stakeholders.

Royer Thompson Recruits CEO for the Canadian Association of Recycling Industries



After an extensive search, **Royer Thompson** has assisted in the recruitment of Jacqueline Lotzcar as the new president and CEO of the Canadian Association of Recycling Industries (CARI). "Jacqueline brings a wealth of experience and industry recognition to the role,

positioning the organization for continued success in the dynamic world of recycling," CARI said. "A highly respected leader in the recycling industry, Jacqueline was recently named one of Recycling International Top 100 of most inspiring and innovative recyclers." Ms. Lotzcar brings significant recycling experience to this position and is well-known throughout the world of recycling. The Canadian Association of Recycling Industries represents over 200 companies in the recycling sector.

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