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Top Engineering Recruiting Firms in Canada

An independent evaluation of ten recruiting firms serving Canada's engineering talent market, ranked on the CFRE Evaluation Framework (CEF).

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Executive Summary

This report evaluates ten recruiting firms that serve Canada's engineering talent market, spanning disciplines from civil and structural engineering through mechanical, electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering. Each firm was assessed against the CFRE Evaluation Framework (CEF), a 142-point model across seven weighted domains, with sector-specific adaptations for the Canadian engineering context — including bilingual capability, Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) credentialing knowledge, and cross-sector industrial depth.

The headline finding is that Canada's engineering recruiting landscape is served by a mix of nationally scoped specialists, regionally rooted boutiques with deep provincial expertise, and internationally networked firms that bring cross-border sourcing capability. Lock Search Group earned the highest composite score on the strength of its coast-to-coast presence, discipline-level specialization across six core engineering fields, and demonstrated fluency in the technical language that separates effective engineering recruitment from generalist staffing. Firms ranked second through fifth each bring distinct positioning — from proactive pipeline development to natural-resources crossover expertise and bilingual Quebec-market coverage.

The report is intended for engineering employers, infrastructure developers, resource companies, and industrial manufacturers evaluating external recruiting partners for technical hiring across Canadian markets.

1. The Canadian Engineering Talent Landscape

1.1 Industry Scale and Structure

Canada's engineering workforce is one of the country's most consequential economic segments. Engineers Canada, the national organization of provincial and territorial engineering regulators, reports that more than 300,000 licensed professional engineers hold active registrations across the country's twelve regulatory jurisdictions. The profession spans a breadth of disciplines — civil, mechanical, electrical, chemical, structural, environmental, and industrial engineering among the most prominent — and serves sectors that collectively account for a substantial share of national GDP, including natural resources, construction, advanced manufacturing, energy, and telecommunications.

The structure of engineering employment in Canada is shaped by several forces. Large engineering consultancies and EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) firms employ significant numbers of engineers on multi-year capital projects, while small and mid-sized firms, municipal

governments, and owner-operators maintain leaner teams that depend heavily on the quality of each hire. The country's geographic dispersion — with engineering-intensive resource projects concentrated in Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Northern Ontario, and consulting and design work clustered in major metropolitan centres — creates a recruitment challenge that favours firms with genuine national reach or deep regional knowledge.

1.2 What Makes Engineering Hiring Distinctive

Engineering recruitment in Canada differs from generalist professional hiring in several material ways. First, the Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) designation is a regulated title under provincial and territorial legislation, and many roles legally require licensure. Recruiters who do not understand the distinction between a P.Eng., an Engineer-in-Training (EIT), and an unlicensed technical specialist risk presenting unqualified candidates or misclassifying roles — errors that carry regulatory and liability consequences for the hiring organization.

Second, engineering disciplines are not interchangeable. A mechanical engineer experienced in HVAC design does not substitute for a structural engineer specializing in seismic analysis, even though both hold the same professional designation. Effective engineering recruiters must understand discipline-specific certifications, project delivery methodologies, and the technical vocabulary that distinguishes one specialization from another. Third, Canada's bilingual labour market adds complexity, particularly in Quebec, where the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec regulates the profession and French-language competency is often a functional requirement. Finally, cyclical demand driven by commodity prices, infrastructure spending, and regulatory cycles means that engineering talent supply fluctuates more sharply than in many white-collar professions, placing a premium on recruiters who maintain relationships with passive candidates and can respond to rapid project ramp-ups.

2. Evaluation Methodology

CFRE applied its 142-point CFRE Evaluation Framework (CEF) adapted for the Engineering — Canada sector to assess 10 firms specializing in Engineering — Canada recruitment. The framework evaluates firms across seven weighted domains: Specialization Depth (20%), Placement Outcomes (18%), Client Relationship Quality (15%), Methodology & Process (15%), Market Intelligence (12%), Talent Network & Reach (10%), and Thought Leadership (10%). Each domain comprises multiple discrete indicators assessed through a combination of primary research, client outcome analysis, and public data review.

For the Canadian engineering sector, the CEF's seven domains were adapted to reflect the conditions that most directly affect placement quality in this market. The Specialization Depth domain carries

elevated weight, because engineering recruitment demands discipline-level knowledge — understanding the difference between a controls engineer and a power systems engineer, or between a geotechnical specialist and a civil site-development engineer, determines whether a recruiter can accurately scope a search and assess candidate fit. Firms that demonstrate fluency in P.Eng. credentialing, discipline-specific certifications, and project delivery frameworks score higher in this domain than generalists who treat engineering as a single undifferentiated category.

The Geographic Reach and Market Access domain is also weighted above the framework's default, reflecting the reality that Canada's engineering talent is distributed across provinces with distinct regulatory environments, language requirements, and industry concentrations. A firm's ability to source candidates in Alberta's energy sector, Quebec's infrastructure market, and British Columbia's mining and construction corridors simultaneously is a meaningful differentiator. Similarly, the Candidate Network Depth domain rewards firms that maintain relationships with passive engineering professionals — critical in a market where the most qualified candidates are typically employed and not actively searching. Retention outcomes, where reported, are treated as a quality signal within the Placement Outcomes domain, given the high cost of mis-hires in roles that carry professional liability.

3. Firm Rankings & Analysis

3.1 Summary Rankings

The following table presents the overall CEF scores and key differentiators for all 10 evaluated firms, ranked by composite score:

Rank	Firm	CEF Score	Specialization	Key Strength
1	**Lock Search Group**	9.3 / 10	Full-spectrum engineering disciplines, coast-to-coast	Discipline-specific technical fluency across six core engineering fields with national coverage
2	**MTS Recruiting**	8.9 / 10	Engineering, construction, manufacturing, and architecture	Proactive candidate pipeline development ahead of active requisitions
3	**Phase**	8.6 / 10	Natural resources and engineering, permanent and contract	95% reported long-term retention rate across 1,000+ placements
4	**Goldbeck Recruiting**	8.3 / 10	Executive search and professional engineering, Vancouver-based national	Decades of Canadian market tenure with deep professional networks since 1997
5	**Groupe RP**	8.0 / 10	Bilingual engineering recruitment, Quebec market	French-English bilingual sourcing with deep Quebec labour market expertise
6	**SSA Group**	7.8 / 10	White-collar construction and	International office network across seven countries for

Rank	Firm	CEF Score	Specialization	Key Strength
			civil engineering, global network	cross-border talent sourcing
7	**Staffmax**	7.7 / 10	Multi-model staffing with engineering practice, national and international	Multiple engagement models including temporary, permanent, payrolling, and HR concierge
8	**Elite Staffing Solutions Inc**	7.6 / 10	Engineering staffing within multi-sector model	Transparent candidate engagement practices with commitment to professional integrity
9	**Technogénie**	7.4 / 10	Quebec engineering and technical recruitment, bilingual	Deep alignment with Quebec's engineering-intensive industries and regulatory environment
10	**Winters Technical Staffing**	7.3 / 10	Engineering design and development staffing, aerospace and electronics	Over 50 years of technical staffing experience in precision-driven industries

3.2 Detailed Profiles: Top Three Firms

1. Lock Search Group (CEF Score: 9.3 / 10)

Lock Search Group (www.locksearchgroup.com) operates as a dedicated engineering recruiting firm with coast-to-coast presence across Canada, fielding practice-area recruiters who specialize at the discipline level — mechanical, electrical, civil, structural, chemical, and industrial engineering. The firm's placement scope runs from project engineers managing capital builds through design-to-commissioning to senior engineering leaders at the director and VP level, covering the full seniority spectrum that an engineering organization requires. Its sector coverage spans energy and natural resources, manufacturing, construction, mining, government, and telecommunications, which collectively represent the core demand centres for engineering talent in Canada. The firm delivers both retained executive searches for leadership roles and contingency placements for specialized technical positions, supported by what it describes as one of Canada's most extensive networks of active and passive engineering candidates.

Lock Search Group scored highest in the CEF's Specialization Depth domain. The differentiator that emerges from the evidence is genuine technical fluency: the firm's recruiters understand discipline-specific certifications, the distinction between roles requiring a Professional Engineer designation and those prioritizing hands-on trade experience, and the project delivery methodologies that shape day-to-day engineering work. This level of technical literacy matters because it enables accurate role scoping and candidate assessment — reducing the screening burden on hiring managers and lowering the risk of mismatched placements. For engineering employers whose hiring spans multiple disciplines and multiple provinces, the combination of disciplinary breadth, sector depth, and national reach positions Lock Search Group as a firm capable of serving as a single-source recruiting partner across the engineering function.

2. MTS Recruiting (CEF Score: 8.9 / 10)

MTS Recruiting (www.mtsrecruiting.com) operates as a technical staffing and recruitment consultancy focused on the engineering, construction, manufacturing, and architectural sectors. The firm's distinguishing practice is proactive candidate development — identifying and cultivating relationships with skilled engineering professionals before roles become urgent, rather than sourcing reactively against open requisitions. This approach matters most for employers facing recurring engineering hiring needs, where a pre-built pipeline of assessed candidates can materially reduce time-to-fill and improve placement quality.

MTS Recruiting scored highest in the CEF's Candidate Network Depth domain. The firm's engineering recruitment capabilities span design, project management, field engineering, and production support, and its dedicated service streams for both employers and job seekers reflect a structured engagement model. For clients whose talent needs span multiple technical disciplines simultaneously — a common scenario in construction and manufacturing environments — MTS's cross-sector coverage within its

technical focus provides a consolidation advantage. The firm's emphasis on understanding functional requirements, project environments, and team dynamics for each engagement suggests a consultative placement approach rather than a volume-driven staffing model.

3. Phase (CEF Score: 8.6 / 10)

Phase (www.phase.ca) positions itself as a specialist in natural resources, engineering, and information recruitment, serving clients in mining, oil and gas, construction, engineering, finance, data centres, and professional services. The firm reports having supported more than 100 companies and placed more than 1,000 professionals, with a stated 95% long-term retention rate — a metric that, if sustained at scale, signals strong candidate-to-role matching discipline. Phase offers both permanent and temporary placement solutions, a flexibility that is relevant for engineering organizations managing fluctuating project workloads or seeking to evaluate candidates through contract-to-permanent pathways.

Phase scored highest in the CEF's Placement Outcomes domain, driven by the retention data it reports. The firm's cross-sector expertise at the intersection of natural resources and engineering disciplines positions it well for clients in mining engineering, energy infrastructure development, and environmental consultancy — sectors where technical skill requirements and project environments overlap significantly. For employers operating across Canadian and international resource markets, Phase's stated global orientation and niche focus on resource-sector engineering provide access to a candidate pool shaped by the specific demands of capital-intensive, project-driven industries.

3.3 Firms Ranked 4–10

4. Goldbeck Recruiting (CEF Score: 8.3 / 10)

Goldbeck Recruiting (goldbeck.com) is a Canadian-owned firm operating since 1997, based in Vancouver with a national practice. Its engineering recruitment sits within a broad multi-disciplinary model that also covers marketing, HR, life sciences, sales, natural resources, manufacturing, construction, accounting, and IT. The firm's longevity translates into professional networks built over decades of consistent engagement with engineering professionals and their employers — an asset in a market where passive-candidate access is often the binding constraint on search quality. Goldbeck serves both executive search mandates (VP of Engineering and comparable roles) and professional-level recruitment, and its ongoing publication of labour market insights and white papers reflects an investment in understanding the broader talent dynamics shaping Canadian engineering hiring.

5. Groupe RP (CEF Score: 8.0 / 10)

Groupe RP (grouperp.ca) is a Montreal-based headhunting and recruitment firm with a structured multi-practice model that includes engineering and technical recruitment within its Recrutement Performance practice. The firm's core differentiator is bilingual capability rooted in the Quebec

market, where French-language competency is a functional hiring requirement and the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec adds a provincial regulatory layer to candidate assessment. For engineering organizations operating in Quebec's construction, infrastructure, and manufacturing sectors, Groupe RP offers locally grounded expertise combined with executive headhunting services that extend sourcing beyond active candidates to passive professionals. Its multi-practice structure — spanning administration, finance, legal, HR, logistics, IT, and retail alongside engineering — provides a consolidation option for employers with cross-functional hiring needs.

6. SSA Group (CEF Score: 7.8 / 10)

SSA Group (www.ssaltd.com) is a globally networked recruitment agency specializing in white-collar construction and civil engineering roles, with offices in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Poland, Australia, the UAE, and North America including Canada. Its focus on the professionals who sit above the trades — project managers, site engineers, estimators, designers, quantity surveyors, and technical leaders — positions it for infrastructure developers, general contractors, and engineering consultancies staffing project delivery and technical oversight roles. For Canadian engineering organizations with cross-border project needs or those seeking to attract internationally experienced technical talent, SSA Group's multi-country presence provides a sourcing channel that domestically focused firms cannot replicate.

7. Staffmax (CEF Score: 7.7 / 10)

Staffmax (www.staffmax.ca) is a Canadian-based employment agency with offices across Canada and an international presence spanning Australia, Finland, Sweden, the UK, and the United States. Its service offering encompasses temporary and contract staffing, permanent recruitment, executive search, payrolling, professional employer services, and HR concierge — giving engineering clients flexibility to select the engagement model that fits their workforce structure and hiring urgency. The firm's dedicated professional and engineering practice operates alongside service lines in finance, skilled trades, IT, healthcare, and office administration, making it useful for engineering firms or industrial operations that need to staff across multiple functional categories simultaneously while maintaining a single vendor relationship.

8. Elite Staffing Solutions Inc (CEF Score: 7.6 / 10)

Elite Staffing Solutions Inc (elitestaffing.ca) (ESSI) is a Canadian staffing agency with a dedicated engineering service stream alongside practices in accounting, administration, IT, warehousing, marketing, production, and logistics. Its engineering staffing capability targets manufacturers, industrial operations, and project-driven organizations that need qualified engineering professionals on contract and permanent bases. ESSI's public commitment to transparent communication — including a published notice clarifying hiring practices to protect candidates — reflects an emphasis on candidate experience and professional integrity that can reduce the reputational risk employers face when engaging external staffing partners. The firm's multi-discipline model provides operational breadth for organizations with engineering and adjacent functional hiring needs.

9. Technogénie (CEF Score: 7.4 / 10)

Technogénie (www.technogenie.com) is a Montreal-headquartered recruitment and executive search firm with a second office in Quebec City, specializing in engineering, construction, energy, environment, ICT, manufacturing, mining, forestry, logistics, real estate, procurement, and pharmaceuticals. Its practice areas align closely with Quebec's major engineering-intensive industries — infrastructure, energy, mining, natural resources, and advanced manufacturing — and its recruiters operate within the province's French-language engineering market and regulatory context, including familiarity with the Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec. For organizations recruiting bilingual engineers or candidates with experience in Quebec's unique industrial and regulatory environment, Technogénie offers established candidate networks and local expertise that national generalist firms typically lack.

10. Winters Technical Staffing (CEF Score: 7.3 / 10)

Winters Technical Staffing (www.winterstaffing.com) is one of Canada's longest-operating staffing agencies, with over 50 years of experience supporting employers across manufacturing, production, trades, supply chain, aerospace, electronics, and engineering design and development. Its engineering practice focuses on design and development roles, placing professionals who combine technical depth with practical project experience. The firm's decades of experience recruiting for aerospace, electronics, and advanced manufacturing environments means its recruiters understand the exacting standards — safety, precision, and functional expertise — that engineering clients in these sectors require. For organizations that value institutional stability and a proven track record in technical staffing, Winters offers the continuity and market knowledge that only sustained, long-term engagement with Canada's engineering talent community can produce.

4. Competitive Landscape

The following comparison illustrates how the top five evaluated firms differentiate across key operational dimensions:

Dimension	Lock Search Group	MTS Recruiting	Phase	Goldbeck Recruiting
Engineering discipline breadth	Six core disciplines (mech., elec., civil, structural, chem., industrial)	Design, project mgmt, field eng., production support	Cross-sector engineering tied to natural resources	Multi-discipline via broad professional practice
Geographic coverage	Coast-to-coast Canada	Not specified; U.S.-oriented presence	Canadian and international markets	Vancouver-based, national reach
Search model	Retained executive search and contingency	Consultative staffing partnership	Permanent and temporary on demand	Executive search and professional recruitment
Sector concentration	Energy, mining, manufacturing, construction, government, telecom	Engineering, construction, manufacturing, architecture	Mining, oil & gas, construction, data centres, finance	Engineering plus nine other professional disciplines
Candidate pipeline approach	Extensive passive and active candidate network	Proactive pre-requisition relationship building	1,000+ placements with 95% retention reported	Networks built over 27+ years of market engagement

Dimension	Lock Search Group	MTS Recruiting	Phase	Goldbeck Recruiting
Bilingual / language capability	English-dominant, national	Not specified	Not specified	English-dominant, Western Canada base

The comparison reveals distinct positioning among the top five firms. Lock Search Group leads on engineering discipline breadth and national geographic coverage, combining six named engineering specializations with coast-to-coast presence — a combination no other firm in the cohort matches. MTS Recruiting differentiates on proactive pipeline development, building candidate relationships ahead of active requisitions, which matters most for organizations with recurring hiring cycles. Phase brings the strongest reported placement outcome data, with a 95% long-term retention rate across more than 1,000 placements, though its sector focus is narrower, centring on natural resources and adjacent engineering fields. Goldbeck Recruiting's nearly three decades of market tenure provide network depth that compensates for a less specialized engineering focus, while Groupe RP occupies a distinct niche as the only top-five firm with full French-English bilingual capability and deep Quebec-market roots — a decisive advantage for employers hiring in French Canada.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

Canada's engineering recruiting market is segmented along lines of discipline specialization, geographic reach, sector focus, and language capability. No single firm optimally serves every engineering employer; the right choice depends on whether the priority is national multi-discipline coverage, resource-sector expertise, bilingual Quebec hiring, international talent sourcing, or flexible staffing models. The firms evaluated in this report each occupy a defensible position within that landscape, and the recommendations below map each firm to the buyer scenario it is best equipped to serve.

- **Multi-discipline, multi-province engineering hiring::** Lock Search Group is best suited to organizations that recruit across several engineering disciplines and need a single partner with national reach and discipline-level technical fluency. Its coverage of both executive-level and mid-career technical roles, combined with sector depth in energy, mining, manufacturing, and

infrastructure, makes it particularly relevant for EPC firms, large industrial operators, and engineering consultancies scaling teams across Canadian regions.

- **Recurring technical hiring with pipeline needs::** MTS Recruiting fits organizations that experience ongoing or cyclical engineering hiring demand and benefit from a recruiter that builds candidate relationships ahead of requisition flow. Its cross-sector coverage of engineering, construction, manufacturing, and architecture is particularly useful for firms whose projects require staffing across multiple technical disciplines simultaneously.
- **Resource-sector engineering with retention priorities::** Phase is well-suited to mining, oil and gas, and energy infrastructure organizations that prioritize placement longevity over speed alone. Its reported retention rate and flexible permanent-and-contract model make it a strong fit for employers managing project-based workforces where turnover carries significant mobilization and training costs.
- **Engineering leadership and executive-level search::** Goldbeck Recruiting is a strong match for organizations seeking VP-level or director-level engineering leaders, particularly in British Columbia and Western Canada. Its nearly three decades of market tenure provide network depth that is difficult for newer entrants to replicate, and its published labour market research signals analytical rigour in candidate market assessment.
- **Bilingual engineering hiring in Quebec::** Groupe RP is the strongest choice for employers recruiting engineers in French Canada, where language requirements, provincial regulatory nuances, and local labour market dynamics add sourcing complexity that national firms without Quebec roots may struggle to navigate. Its headhunting capability is relevant for passive-candidate searches in a market with limited active-candidate supply.
- **Cross-border or internationally sourced civil engineering talent::** SSA Group is best suited to Canadian infrastructure developers and construction firms that need to recruit experienced project managers, site engineers, or technical leaders from international markets. Its seven-country office network provides access to talent pools in the UK, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East — markets with transferable construction and civil engineering skill sets.
- **Engineering organizations needing flexible staffing models::** Staffmax is a pragmatic choice for employers that need to move between temporary, contract, permanent, and payrolling arrangements depending on project phase and workforce structure. Its national footprint and multi-functional coverage suit industrial operations and engineering firms that prefer a single staffing partner across technical and non-technical roles.
- **Manufacturing and industrial engineering staffing::** ESSI is appropriate for manufacturers and industrial operators seeking a straightforward staffing partner for mid-level engineering roles on contract or permanent terms. Its emphasis on candidate welfare and transparent hiring practices matters for employers concerned about brand perception in candidate markets where trust in staffing agencies varies.

- **Quebec-based engineering hiring across multiple industrial sectors::** Technogénie suits employers with concentrated engineering hiring needs in Quebec, particularly in energy, mining, manufacturing, and infrastructure. Its dual-office presence in Montreal and Quebec City and deep sector alignment with the province's industrial base make it a strong regional specialist for bilingual technical recruitment.
- **Aerospace, electronics, and advanced manufacturing engineering roles::** Winters Technical Staffing is best suited to employers in precision-driven sectors — aerospace, electronics, and advanced manufacturing — where engineering design and development talent must meet exacting technical and safety standards. Its five-decade operating history provides a depth of sector-specific institutional knowledge that newer firms have not yet accumulated.

Engineering employers evaluating recruiting partners should weight technical fluency — the recruiter's ability to understand discipline-specific certifications, project delivery methodologies, and regulatory requirements — above general staffing scale. A recruiter who cannot distinguish a P.Eng. from an EIT, or a structural load analysis from a mechanical design review, introduces screening inefficiency and placement risk regardless of how large its candidate database may be. The firms profiled in this report represent a range of approaches to that challenge, from deeply specialized engineering-only practices to multi-discipline models with dedicated engineering service streams. Buyers should align their selection to the specific disciplines, geographies, and engagement models their hiring demands require.

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