



TFSA CASE STUDY ROBERT WALTERS

Specialist Professional Recruitment

ROBERT WALTERS

With the opening of their Toronto office in 2016, recruitment consultancy Robert Walters now has a presence in 27 countries. As a growing financial hub, Toronto is an important new market for Robert Walters, offering a highly skilled workforce and a dynamic business environment.

Founded 30 years ago, Robert Walters specializes in connecting top calibre professionals with exceptional employers, drawing on a global network to find the right candidate for a role. Headed by Toronto native and experienced Robert Walters finance recruitment specialist Martin Fox, their Canadian business specializes in placing accountancy and finance professionals into roles in the greater Toronto area.

Martin Fox grew up in Toronto but left more than 14 years ago to attend university at McGill in Montreal and then to join Robert Walters PLC in the UK.

Now, after Robert Walters PLC opened its Canadian office in Toronto in 2016, Fox has returned to the city as the company's Managing Director, Canada.

"The city has progressed since I was here last," he says. "Restaurants, sports, the arts – there's an energy here that makes it a great place to live."

Toronto also makes an ideal base for Robert Walters Canada to tap into the contingent recruitment market, focusing on mid-level professionals and managers. "We think Toronto is under-served for a market this large," Fox says.

Before opening its Toronto office, Robert Walters had operated for more than 30 years, specializing initially in placing accountants in corporate positions in London. Since it began, the public company has expanded into 27 countries and now employs more than 3,000 people.



“Toronto is punching above its weight”, Martin Fox says.
“Toronto is a welcoming city for business and offers exciting opportunities to scale up. Compared to many other cities, you’re only one or two places from the head-office decision-makers.”

Until 2016, Robert Walters served the northeastern U.S. and Canada from its New York office. But by late 2015, Toronto had emerged as a North American financial centre, and the company sent Fox to the city to investigate the possibility of opening a Canadian office.

“I met with a number of organizations,” Fox says. “Invest Toronto was helpful with incorporation procedures, and I also got an idea of the price of office space.”

The Toronto Financial Services Alliance introduced Fox to some of the key players in the city’s financial community. “I talked several times to [TFSA President and CEO] Janet Ecker,” he says, “and met three or four times with TFSA staff members.”

The London High Commission at Canada House also provided Fox with useful information about the country’s business and regulatory environment, while a local commercial real estate company helped him to locate potential office space. “I saw 25 units at five different addresses during my initial visit,” he says.

In April 2016, Robert Walters went ahead with its plans for a Toronto office. Five months later, Fox moved to the city, and the office was open for business.

With his company’s extensive global network, Fox has access to a lengthy roster of professionals who regard Toronto as one of the world’s more desirable places to live and work and would jump at the chance to move to the city.

“It’s an English-speaking market,” he says. “It has the second-biggest financial services sector in North America. It’s the financial powerhouse of the country, and it’s simply the place you want to be.”

In particular, Fox says, chartered accountants from the UK, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland all have transferrable skills, he says.

For Robert Walters, Toronto offers a number of opportunities to further the company’s growth. “Based on the number of educated professionals here, Toronto is punching above its weight,” he says. “Toronto is a welcoming city for business and offers exciting opportunities to scale up. Compared to many other cities, you’re only one or two places from the head-office decision-makers.”

Finally, he says, “with changes in immigration regulations and federal government plans to bring more professionals to Canada and Toronto, it’s just a good time for us to be here.”

Fox also appreciates the concentration of financial services and related companies within a relatively small area of downtown Toronto. “It makes it easy to navigate around the city’s financial core.”

Fox and his wife have settled in the city’s west end. Not only is their home a few subway stops from downtown Toronto, he says, “it’s only a few blocks from where I grew up.”