



MERITUS
EXECUTIVE SEARCH EXCELLENCE

MERRITT CANFIELD

CEO • Executive Recruiter • Executive Search Consultant



Merritt Canfield brings 20 years of global award-winning executive search experience, leading the future of rail industry executive search, partnering with the industry delivering search excellence, and supporting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Innovation in the industry. Her experience includes the placement of talent in Fortune 25 and Fortune 500, rail, finance, transportation, healthcare, retail, and telecommunications organizations. In 1997, straight out of college, she began her executive search career with the largest recruitment network in the world, winning an award in the first month. Merritt then joined a Fortune 25 team where she recruited, hired, and trained sales and sales leaders, winning numerous local and national awards, relocating three times in four years, landing her in Chicago.

EXECUTIVE SEARCH LEADERSHIP

Merritt's successes include placing the "CEO of the Year" for the nation's second-largest for-profit healthcare system. She was top 5% in the globe in the largest recruitment network in the world, number one in her office, and awarded a 2012 Pacesetter Award. In 2013, Merritt focused her talents on the rail industry, specializing in multiple freight and passenger rail disciplines and driving results as a top performer. She has been an executive search leader in the rail industry for the past several years, and in 2019, she placed approximately twenty c-suite leaders, executives, and industry specialists in six months.

Merritt is passionate about what she does and brings with her both in-depth knowledge and practical experience, along with a commitment to exceptional customer service, quality, and always working in the highest professional manner. Her top priority is to build and provide a partnership with organizations that guarantees they are acquiring top talent that will progress their organization and have long tenures and work with candidates in delivering a detailed executive search experience, unlike others.

With a continued passion and commitment to providing excellence in rail industry executive search, Meritus Executive Search Excellence began. As CEO, Executive Recruiter, Merritt is active and visible in the rail industry, speaking at numerous conferences annually, serving on committees, and authoring articles featured in top rail industry publications. Merritt is globally certified in Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace. She was recognized for her industry contributions by the Tory Burch Foundation being selected to attend the Embrace Ambition Summit in 2022.

EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

She earned a Bachelor of Science, Marketing from Gannon University, a global certification in Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace from ESSEC Business School, numerous coursework in Human Resources Management from Cornell University, and completed the Fundamentals of Rail Freight Terminal, Yards, and Intermodal Facilities from University of Wisconsin-Madison. Merritt has been a speaker/presenter in the rail industry for Railway Age, ASLRRA, NARBW, and LRW on topics including workplace talent market, recruitment and retention, salary, compensation and costs, and DE&I. She has been a contributor to Railway Age 2021 Outlook, Progressive Railroading Rail Prime and Commxtrex. Merritt is an active member of the ASLRRA Human Resources Committee and SHRM, and a past Board Member of The Auxiliary of NorthShore University HealthSystem. Merritt is originally from Erie, Pennsylvania, and Chautauqua, New York, and currently resides with her family in Chicago.



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MICHELLE COLLINS

Chief Talent Officer • Executive Recruiter



Michelle Collins brings over 20 years as an accomplished leader in executive search, talent acquisition, marketing, and management, including serving in Fortune 25, Fortune 500 companies, and private sector organizations as Vice President of Marketing and hiring manager for some of the most “Admired Companies.” She then gained extensive executive search experience in the rail industry, developing years of expertise. In 2021, Michelle joined Meritus Executive Search Excellence as Chief Talent Officer, Executive Recruiter exclusive in freight and passenger rail c-suites, senior executives, finance, sales and marketing, engineering, and other industry specialists, where she continues to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and innovation goals, and drive meaningful results.

EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS & INFLUENCE

She was a top performer in the rail industry in 2019, a vital member of the team that placed approximately twenty c-suite leaders, executives, and industry specialists in six months. Michelle’s extensive and ongoing training in executive search and her years of corporate experience are the foundations of her expertise and success. As a hiring manager and leader of high-performance teams throughout her career, she understands and addresses the importance of hiring the right talent, succession planning, and building bench strength within an organization’s culture to drive organizational excellence. Michelle works successfully with clients and candidates, delivering results that advance organizations and provide search excellence.

Michelle earned a Bachelor of Science, Industrial Engineering degree from Iowa State University and an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. Michelle has been a volunteer, coach, and advisor to engineering students and recent graduates, preparing them with the strategies and skills to be successful in the job search process in their professional fields. You can often meet Michelle at rail industry events and conferences. Michelle lives in the Chicago area with her family.