



11 Career Planning Tips for Veterans

- 1. What do I Bring to a Company?** Too often, veterans only consider their technical skills and do not leverage their full range of military skills for business. My book, *Combat Leader to Corporate Leader*, gives veterans 20 ways to immediately leverage their military skills for an employer in a format that the employer needs . . . NOW!
- 2. Stay Up To Date.** Stay current on what is happening in business (Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Business Week, and Fortune) so that you have a good idea of the macro economy.
- 3. Build a Network Not Only on Facebook.** A military veteran should seek to contact other mid level leaders in an industry (industries) that they would like to work to learn more about the industry, what it takes to succeed, and to position themselves for employment.
- 4. The Postal System is a Wonderful Thing.** When networking, letters are a wonderful resource to contact specific people in companies (but not only the HR department), because people receive very little “snail” mail anymore. Use a personal direct mail campaign to help build a network.
- 5. Don't Be Static.** Getting a new job is hard work. Look for internships, volunteer for projects at non-profits to demonstrate your skills, help a small business person grow their business, and use your new network to demonstrate all that you will bring to an employer. Hiring a new employee is stressful for an employer – showing that your skills are solid and you are willing to work will make you stand out.
- 6. Look Beyond ACAP and TAP.** The DOD provided programs of ACAP and TAP are a good introduction to the transition process and are staffed by very dedicated individuals, but they are not the only resource.
- 7. Do Not Become Over Reliant on the Internet.** The web based application process is a great time saver for both the applicant and the employee, but it is an often times invisible and indifferent process. Get out and meet people in companies that you are interested in, read a great deal about the company, volunteer, and look for ways to leverage your military service to add value to a company.
- 8. Network with Other Veterans in the Work Force.** Seek out other military veterans in companies that you are interested and network with them. Do not ask for a job . . . yet. Ask what made them successful, what they wish they would have done, etc. You can learn a great deal by listening.
- 9. Take Some Classes.** Community colleges offer good overview business classes to improve your baseline knowledge of business in such vital areas as Accounting, Finance, Statistics, or Applied Mathematics. If possible, take them in person because fellow students, professors, and college staff are great resources for networking.
- 10. What's My “Google” Assessment?** Make sure you Google, Bing, and Yahoo! yourself in these search engines to see if there is any negative or potentially harmful information on you in cyberspace. It is a common practice used by HR personnel to use the primary search engines and common social media (Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace) to see if there is any negative or embarrassing information on a prospective employee.
- 11. Plan For Success And Embrace Failure.** In combat, we always planned as best we could for a successful mission, but also planned multiple contingencies and back up plans to account for enemy actions and other possible points of failure so that, no matter what happened, the mission would be successful. When you transition, you should have multiple back up plans and contingencies as you plan your new career. If you are not immediately successful, relax, step back, reassesses, learn, and move forward. This happens to everyone and you need to expect a tough road ahead. A resourceful candidate leverages failure to make them better for the next opportunity and plans multiple opportunities so they are successful in their quest for a new or a better job.