



Military-to-CEO Inspirational Career Transition Success Stories for Veterans



A.G. Lafley
Navy Officer
Former CEO & Chairman
Proctor & Gamble



Bob McDonald
Army Officer
CEO
Proctor & Gamble



Dave Grange
Army Officer
CEO
PPD, Inc.



Joe Grano
Army Officer
CEO
Centurion Holdings

Being a CEO is a tremendous honor, but it is a great deal like being a Soldier, Marine, Sailor, or Airman. CEO's are confronted with a lack of resources, competing demands, multiple groups to report to with ever increasing expectations of improved results, a demand for perfection, a 100% of time spent in the spotlight, and an ever shifting competitive landscape that requires innovation, adaptation, leadership, people development, and perfection. A significant portion of what made these four military leaders successful commercial leaders was that they were able to leverage key aspects of their military training to improve and advance their civilian career success.

The key points are as follows:

1. **A.G. Lafley** – Understand The Business and How to Succeed.
2. **Bob McDonald** – Values Based Leadership is Essential.
3. **Dave Grange** – Be a Role Model for Your Community's Success.
4. **Joe Grano** – PLOC –Planning, Leading, Organizing, and Controlling Are What Leaders Do.

(1) **A.G. Lafley – Understand The Business and How to Succeed.** A.G. Lafley, as a junior Navy officer, planned, operated, and ran the Base Exchanges (BX) and associated business on a Navy base in Japan. In this position, Lafley had to understand grocery, dry cleaning, concession, food service, and the hundreds of supporting functions such as inventory, budgeting, and new product development in order to be successful. As a new Navy Officer and without any retail experience, this was an exceptional challenge for Lafley. However, Lafley dove into the business learned all that he could about how to operate them successfully, and, most importantly, what customers wanted. Lafley's success at Proctor & Gamble was founded in his first retail experience to learn all that he could about a business and using customer preferences to be and remain successful.



- (2) **Bob McDonald – Values Based Leadership is Essential.** CEO Bob McDonald states, “At West Point I also learned to “choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong.” Have you ever noticed how it is easier to do wrong things than right things? A leader who lives by his or her word can be counted on to do the unpopular thing when it is right. To always follow “the harder right,” a leader must truly believe that a life directed by clear personal values promises deeper and richer satisfaction than a self-serving, self-absorbed life. Living up to this ideal of character requires courage, determination, integrity, and self-discipline. You must live by your word and actions, and know that is the most powerful demonstration of leadership.” Bob McDonald, a former US Army Infantry Officer, was clearly influenced by small unit leadership in the US Army where character, ethics, and teamwork are absolutely essential to success.
- (3) **Dave Grange – Be a Role Model for Your Community’s Success.** Dave Grange, prior to taking over PPD, Inc. served as the CEO of the McCormick Foundation in Chicago, IL. Grange in his role at the McCormick Foundation was exceptional. He was a regular speaker at the Chicago Police Academy where he helped inspire and instruct Police Officer’s on the importance of ethics, service, and understanding the strain of a life of intense, professional public service. Grange also was instrumental in using the US Army’s School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), the school for teaching US Army Strategy and Operational Art, to use the “Art of Design” to seek solutions to combat gun, violence, and health issues in Chicago. Grange is an incredible example of someone translating military leadership, organization, planning and motivation to community efforts.
- (4) **Joe Grano – PLOC – Planning, Leading, Organizing, and Controlling Are What Leaders Do.** Joe Grano was an Army Special Forces Officer (*Green Beret*) in Vietnam and a decorated, combat wounded veteran. He rose to become the Chairman and CEO of UBS Paine Weber and then as CEO of Centurion Holdings. Joe Grano believes that the PLOC or Planning, Leading, Organizing, and Controlling with a special emphasis on Leading and ethical practices are the foundation of what a leader does in an organization. Joe Grano also states, “Great leaders, however, are born, not made. They naturally possess several indisputable qualities that define them: They care about people, They are optimistic by nature, They are generally good communicators, They have a natural charisma, They have a winning attitude and philosophy, They are decisive, They are good managers, They have vision, They are, to some degree, manipulative and selfish, and They seek psychic income as much as, if not more than, real income.” Joe Grano used his military planning and leadership experiences as an effective foundation to his success in leading financial service organizations.

Veterans need to determine what their greatest accomplishments were in the military and how they can translate these military successes to their organizations. Do not forget those common military skills such as counseling, coaching, war gaming, standard operating procedures and more all play a vital role in what veterans can do for an organization.