

TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING VETERANS

#1 – Start preparing early for the transition

Transitioning from the military is a major life change that requires you to step out of your comfort zone, develop your skills, and meet new people. To be successful, we recommend that you begin a year ahead of your official transition date.

#2 – Translate your skills and experiences to reflect the value you bring to an employer

Employers are looking for individuals that can add value to their organization. Learn to explain your military experience and accomplishments (what you did, why, and how it made a position impact) to individuals that haven't served in uniform. Stop using military terms and acronyms and learn to use names versus ranks. Ensure that your resume is current, concise, and clearly demonstrates your value. Practice your verbal communications and rehearse interviewing responses.

#3 – Build relationships and develop your professional network

Networking can both enable your transition and promote long-term success. Start meeting people through community groups, social media, alumni associations, and service organization. Get to know other professionals, attend mixers, and request informational interviews. Networking should be mutually beneficial, so be willing to help those with whom you connect. Align your LinkedIn profile to your resume and make sure all social media profiles are current and professional.

#4 – Invest the time

You should spend an hour each day preparing and more as the transition date approaches. Use this time reading about industries, companies, people, and careers. Build your network, develop new skills, and practice your communications.

#5 – Update your wardrobe

Appearance is critical in your transition. Ensure your wardrobe is current, clean, and aligns with the position you desire.

#6 – Don't limit your job search

You never know where your ideal job might be located, so don't limit your search options. Utilize job fairs, networking events, advertisements, job postings, and personal contacts. Don't forget recruiters and military placement agencies.

#7 – Keep a journal of your activities

During the transition, you'll meet new people, have discussions, and learn many things that are important to remember. Get into the habit of taking good notes following career fairs, networking events, social engagement, and interviews. Review your notes prior to engaging employers (in-person, phone, or email) to ensure all communications are on-target.

#8 – Stay flexible

Throughout the transition process, you should optimize your approach and communications. Gather and apply feedback so that every conversation and interaction is better than those prior. Learn and improve from all transition experiences.

#9 – Don't expect your initial salary to match your current military pay

Compensation is dependent upon the value you bring a civilian employer, not rank and years of service. As a result, your initial salary might be lower than desired. If you focus on adding value, compensation can increase within a short time.

#10 – Maintain a positive attitude

Attitudes are contagious and employers look for individuals who can make a positive impact – be this individual.