

From one hiring manager to another – hiring veterans

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It's true organizations want to hire veterans, but often the reality of *why* they do is lost in the appeal of the patriotic notion. Most companies will not admit it, but they continue to struggle with how to hire the right talent—regardless of the source. When you combine a desire to hire veterans with a lack of understanding about their military experience, you have an extremely challenging hiring scenario for both the hiring manager and the veteran. As a result, veteran recruiting can often become a victim of its own good intentions as candidates with military backgrounds unknowingly complicate hiring for both themselves and hiring managers. The combination of reluctant hiring managers (naive or ill-equipped to translate military experience and backgrounds) and a hiring process designed to help employers find the best applicants already entrenched within the civilian job market means the deck is not necessarily stacked in a veteran's favor. Instead, the hiring process is designed for the ninety-two (92) percent of the workforce who are not veterans. Unfortunately for veterans, the hiring process is built to attract either recent college grads (who generally lack experience) or employees having just left a similar position at another company (with years of working in an almost identical role).ⁱ As a result, veterans are often faced with a process not designed to effectively comprehend, evaluate, and understand their military experience.



Food for Thought

Every year, approximately 200,000 service members leave the military – this is an untapped sourcing opportunity many organizations either do not understand how to access or are reluctant to invest in for fear of the often-stereotypical, less-than-positive outcomes. According to one LinkedIn Report on Veteran Opportunities,ⁱⁱ thirty-eight (38) of the top fifty (50) industries employ veterans at a proportionally lower rate than nonveterans. There is a clear disconnect between interest and actual hiring follow-through—it is just not as transparent as we think. So, let's talk about the elephant in the room—why is it such a challenge for many organizations to hire veterans?

- Organizational attitudes
- Stereotypes and bias against military
- Candidate preparation and readiness
- Reluctant hiring managers

It will take a village (employer)—what we as organizations and hiring managers can do differently – let's also discuss what are some tools and resources available to hiring managers to help address these challenges for both them and veteran jobseekers. This includes leveraging your organization's Veteran's ERG, recruitment pairing, veteran recruitment events, vet-on-vet interviewing, and developing a hiring manager resource center, to name a few.

Organizational attitudes

Feeling positive about hiring veterans is an uphill battle within many organizations, but why?

- ✓ **FOBH (Fear of bad hire).** According to one study, forty-four (44) percent of veterans leave their first post-transition job after only twelve (12) months.ⁱⁱⁱ What most hiring managers and organizations read from this statistic is that many veterans cannot make the transition and as a result are a high risk, low return hire. The reality, from the veteran's standpoint, is that organizations hiring veterans (a) do not cater to their career development needs, (b) under-employ them, and/or (c) do a poor job of tapping into the veteran's overall skills, potential, and role-alignment. In fact, veterans who leave a first hire likely do so for a better aligned position and better career potential.

What hiring managers fail to realize is employers who do hire veterans tend to see them advance within the organization more quickly than non-veterans, when given the right career development support, guidance, and direction. In addition, thirty-four (34) percent of hiring managers, according to one study, reported lower turnover rates among their veteran employees than their non-veteran employees.^{iv} In addition, veterans' loyalty and employment longevity may counterbalance younger employees whose tenure tends to be shorter.

- ✓ **Emotional-social stability.** There is a blanket perception that even though veterans are calm under pressure, they are devoid of flexible emotional capacity and have a single-minded, get-it-done attitude. They are perceived as more robotic rather than creative. As a result, when faced with choosing between two equally qualified candidates, most hiring managers prefer the candidate without military experience due to the misconception veterans lack the desired interpersonal skills and emotional capacity.^v In fact, most veterans possess high emotional IQ combined with situational awareness and strong people-first mentality. Remember, they were and are in the people business.
- ✓ **Failure to understand.** Many organizations, despite their best intentions, struggle with translating military experience and skills to determine if the candidate aligns with what they need. In addition, many organizations just do not recognize or even value any transferrable skills from a veteran's time in uniform. This fuels the perception that what veterans did in the military is also what they want to do when they get out of service, and nothing could be further from the truth. According to the Office of Veteran's affairs,^{vi} fifty-five (55) percent of veterans in transition want to do something totally different than what they did in the military. They are a highly motivated, eager-to-learn group of individuals just waiting to prove themselves.
- ✓ **Industry-specific experience missing.** This is a favorite of mine. Veterans do not have industry-specific experience. Well, neither do recent college grads, and we still hire them at a rate of eighty-six (86) percent.^{vii} What many organizations fail to realize is

many veterans *are* college grads AND they also bring years of management, leadership, organizational and operational experience. They have proven their metal, just in a very different environment with different objectives and outcomes. Like each one of us, veterans will have to learn about an industry and organization, but they already bring years of organizational, operational, management, and leadership experience and know-how.

- ✓ **PTSD or other mental illness.** According to a study by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM),^{viii} almost forty-six (46) percent of hiring managers were concerned about the impact of PTSD and other mental illnesses as a factor in hiring veterans. Due to the high-stress, life-and-death nature of their work in the military, many veterans carry a lot with them when they take off their uniform. But this does not mean they are dysfunctional and cannot be an effective member of your team or organization. Let's look at the bigger picture across corporate America. Today, thanks to COVID-19^{ix}, up to forty-six (46) percent of workers are struggling with mental health issues and up to fifty-five (55) percent have indicated a mental health issue has impacted them since the beginning of the pandemic. We can all relate in some way, so let's cut veterans a bit of slack in this area.

What organizations fail to wrap their collective hiring heads around is that veterans stay with their initial organization longer when properly aligned, are highly educated, are solid and dependable performers, and bring a more robust array of management, organizational, and leadership experience than most candidates.

Stereotypes and biases

One of my favorite quotes is, *"If you have a brain, you are biased!"*^x Yep, we are all biased, whether we want to admit it or not. Many of the biases against military candidates are grounded in misunderstandings, lack of awareness, or unfounded stereotypes. A vast majority of the American population has little-to-no direct interaction and/or connection with military personnel, including among friends, family (close or distant relatives), or even neighbors or professional associates. Only point four (0.4) percent of the U.S. population is currently on active duty,^{xi} and only approximately twenty (20) million adults (roughly eight [8] percent of the population)^{xii} are veterans. These low percentages also extend into the hiring and recruiting ranks across corporate America. Most hiring managers understand neither military service writ large, nor the specifics of what veterans did while in the military. As a result, they have a difficult time interpreting how a veteran's experience and background translate into what they need for their open positions. Combine this with their limited, hyper-action-hero perception of the military and military service from Hollywood (think *Call of Duty* and *Outpost*-like action movies), and you encounter a very disconnected and misinformed view among recruiters and hiring managers. What some hiring managers do know is most veterans are highly-trained leaders—even having more training and responsibility than they do as managers—and this can, in some cases, be intimidating for even the most experienced hiring manager. Because of the

lack of knowledge and understanding of military occupations and military service, there is often an unrecognized but persistent bias against military candidates.

Here are some misconceptions veterans encounter during their job search. Unfortunately, there is not much veterans can do about the actual bias (whether simply misinformed or outright wrong), but veterans can show hiring managers and recruiters these misperceptions of veterans in general simply do not apply to them. Common misconceptions include:

- ✓ **Problem-solvers wanted.** Some employers avoid veterans because they are perceived as not being able to think outside the box—they simply execute without creativity.
- ✓ **Not taking the initiative.** There is an often-false stigma associated with veterans that they simply cannot think on their own and will never introduce new ideas or solutions.
- ✓ **Culture contrast.** There is a stark contrast between military and corporate cultures. Corporate culture is often defined by less-rigid standards including relaxed attitudes, casual dress, and an environment where rules are often intended to be bent, and, if need be, rewritten, to achieve business objectives. In contrast, military culture is perceived as more formal, bureaucratic, and full of protocols because of the proximity to life/death scenarios in day-to-day activities. In addition, managers with no military background or experience have expectations of more flexibility with their employees' behavior, such as being out for a sick day or having irregular hours. There is concern among recruiters and even hiring managers that military candidates will not be comfortable adapting to the laxer culture and will not be able to exhibit the same leniency when in a management position, resulting in unfounded concerns about corporate morale taking a hit due to hiring a veteran.
- ✓ **Diversity excluded.** Many in the civilian work force think the military is mostly white males, when in fact the military has both ethnic and gender diversity. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, approximately thirty (30) percent of total DoD military members identify as a racial minority and nineteen (19) percent are women.^{xiii} And this may not reflect the same level of gender diversity as civilian sector, but the military is becoming increasingly diverse and a reflection of the overall U.S. population over time. And along with this increasing diversity comes another differentiation – disabilities. Remember, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately twenty-seven (27) percent of veterans are disabled.
- ✓ **Lacking soft/softer skills.** Veterans, just like every other candidate have developed soft skills: leadership, organization, prioritization, performing under pressure, etc. But there is another set of what I like to call “softer” skills tied to emotional abilities such as empathy, compassion, inclusion, and emotional intelligence. Veterans are often wrongly judged as lacking these softer skills.

- ✓ **Not highly educated.** There is a misunderstanding most transitioning veterans do not have a college degree, and, as a result, hiring managers have a difficult time relating to highly trained, non-degreed candidates. Nearly two-thirds of veterans have completed at least some postsecondary education. In fact, veterans are on par with non-veterans in terms of the percentage of each group who have associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees.^{xiv}
- ✓ **Uncomfortable.** A few months ago, a veteran candidate may very well have been deployed overseas, even in combat engaging in firefights or dealing with death and destruction. While it may not be likely, this is what recruiters and hiring managers may be thinking. The candidate is sitting in front of them discussing a job opportunity and all of this can scare the hell out of some hiring managers as they are used to interviewing candidates fresh out of college or coming off a previous (often similar) civilian job. Unfortunately, while hiring managers simply cannot comprehend what goes on in the military, they do understand the college experience or civilian job transitions. As a result, they form a mental bias regarding what they do not know about the veteran and their experiences, and this steers them away from the unknown veteran candidate and toward the known—what they are comfortable and familiar with when it comes to a candidate's background.
- ✓ **People skills.** Research from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business^{xv} suggests during the hiring process veteran candidates are considered unemotional and are often overlooked for positions where emotional intelligence, interpersonal, and leadership skills are critical. While this comes across as completely backward because leadership is often equated with and referenced in military terms and experience, many hiring managers often show a tendency to relegate veterans to roles with more emphasis of working with things and processes versus people.

Candidate preparation and readiness



Goals

In my book [Operation Lily Pad](#), I advocate that veteran candidates need to translate their skills and showcase their underlying potential. I recommend they do not water down or dismiss the context of their experience, skills, and capabilities in the military when presenting themselves. Where necessary, they should remove the jargon, acronyms, and ranks/rates from both their LinkedIn profile and resume. Here are some specifics transitioning military candidates need to consider when translating their resume. Note, as a hiring manager, you still may come across military acronyms, jargon and speak in resumes.

- ✓ **Rank does not matter out here.** The candidate should forget about selling their rank. They had a distinguished military career, but now it is time to hit the reset button.

Instead, they should be selling you on their experience, leadership potential, and the uniqueness they can bring to your organization.

- ✓ **Redefine who they are.** While a veteran's military service highly influences who they are (or were), many veterans struggle with their transition out of the military, and the reality that who they are is independent of their military persona. Instead, they need to redefine themselves by what they accomplished, and the skills they bring, but in civilian terms. They need to adjust, tweak, and replace the jargon with job-specific and civilian-equivalent language.
- ✓ **Deep six the acronyms.** I push veterans to purge their resume of any non-organizational military acronyms, especially the everyday, slang-related ones—nope on YGFBKM.¹ And, if they need to use an acronym for the organization, they should spell it out (e.g., DIA—Defense Intelligence Agency or ARMY—Ain't Ready for the Marines Yet)².
- ✓ **Resume is not a history of their career.** They should avoid listing EVERY duty assignment. Instead, they should tailor their resume to only list the relevant ones or, more specifically, only the relevant skills, accomplishments, and experiences. They need to keep their audience in mind as you may not share or understand the same level of interest in specific skills, experiences, or accomplishments from their military days.



One aspect of military careers many civilians are not aware of is the fact that most military members have little say in the WHERE of their military career – where they get stationed, what roles/positions are available – this is often at the need of the respective service. Keep in mind, most military members are required to change jobs every 2 to 3 years as part of the normal military personnel rotation requirements for force readiness.

- ✓ **Longevity means more jargon.** Typically, the longer they were in the military, the more military lingo, acronyms, and jargon will likely define their military career.
- ✓ **Market the military experience and leadership.** Expect them to market the soft skills honed in the military like leadership, teamwork, dedication, grit, and adaptability. But they should do so with their audience in mind. In some cases, recruiters or hiring managers may not fully realize the significance of specific military experience or even what the candidate accomplished while in the military. For example, while in the military the candidate may have been given significantly more responsibility regarding people and materials compared to someone roughly the same age/years in job in the civilian world. Transitioning veterans often fail to translate the magnitude of their level of accountability and responsibility as well as what they accomplished, leaving hiring

¹ "You've Got to F*cking Be Kidding Me!"

² A little Army-Navy humor – IMHO!

managers unable to fully understand both the breadth and depth of what they can bring to a position.

- ✓ **Tone down the raw realities.** You would think this would be obvious, but they need to remove references to battlefield experiences and any violence or raw realities. This does not resonate with recruiters or hiring managers and will most likely turn them off or may even offend them.
- ✓ **Honors, awards, and recognition.** Expect the candidates to include relevant awards, recognition, and training on your resume. The key is *relevant*. Marksmanship awards in almost all cases (excluding law enforcement, for example) are not relevant. If it does not match the needs of a position or come across as directly relevant, they should consider excluding it from their resume.
- ✓ **Training and technical skills.** Anticipate they may not spell out training and technical skills—to include experience or training abroad, languages learned, etc.
- ✓ **Challenges with rank and titles.** Here is a simple way to look at each of these:
 - **Rank.** Rank is not relevant in most cases as most hiring managers or recruiters will not understand the difference between a Staff Sergeant and a Sergeant First Class, or a Master Sergeant and a First Sergeant, for example. What is more important is what they accomplished at various ranks. The military is great in providing opportunities to demonstrate increased responsibility throughout their members' careers.
 - **Titles.** This is where I see one of the largest challenges—keeping the titles honest. If they were a platoon leader or section leader, then state as such. The important factor to is spell out the title-related responsibilities and accomplishments as these are most relevant to the recruiter and hiring manager.



A huge pet peeve of mine is when I receive a resume from a transitioning service member and instead of seeing the typical military titles, I see titles such as “Director” or “Manager.” It is OK to call out their title—Company Commander, Company Sergeant, Command Sergeant Major, for example. This provides some context as to the fact they were in a leadership position. As mentioned above, they need to focus on their responsibilities, contributions, and accomplishments in that position—what and how did they contribute to the organization’s success?

Reluctant hiring managers

Let's face it. As hiring managers, we are all under pressure to perform: hit our number, make our deadline, stay in scope, keep in budget, and deliver on time. Combine this with all the other randomness that is thrown at you, and you want to go with the safe bet, the guarantee, and this includes your approach to hiring. And who you hire will be critical to not only your organization's success, but also your success as a manager. As with all decisions, there is FUD: Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt. And this FUD is even more pronounced when it comes to evaluating candidates who are veterans.

✓ Fears

- **High risk, low return hire.** As mentioned above, forty-four (44) percent of veterans leave their first post-transition job after only twelve (12) months. There is concern that the military candidate, while qualified and possessing potential, will not fit the organization, culture, or even role. As hiring managers, we should hire for fit as we can train up the skills, but we often lack a level of comfort around flexing to consider the potential value-add of bringing a veteran into a group, team, or organization.

For comparison purposes, roughly thirty-three (33) percent of new hires quit within the first three (3) months of being hired, mostly due to a lack of understanding or alignment with the role's responsibilities and day-to-day requirements.^{xvi}



How to help!

As a hiring manager, you can help with this by working with the candidates to better understand the requirements and expectations of the role. Comparatively, the primary reasons why veteran candidates leave so early is (a) they feel their skills and experience are underutilized and (b) they did not understand the role-misalignment.

- **Avoiding the repeat experience of hiring military.** Some organizations have hired veterans in the past and found their fit and performance to be sub-par or poor at best. While this shouldn't taint future hiring considerations, it often does, and organizations (and their hiring managers) simply avoid hiring more veterans. I heard from one frustrated transitioning veteran, that "military" is a generic term, and the stereotypes and perceptions of veterans seem to be incorrectly applied to everyone with prior-military experience. To present this another way, if you had one bad experience hiring someone from Microsoft, does that preclude you from considering or even hiring another candidate from Microsoft? If not, then why do we over-rotate on a negative military stereotype and hiring experience?
- **Veterans will need more training and attention.** Many hiring managers shy away from veterans because they are concerned, they will have to spend more

time training them and give them more attention. The reality is just the opposite with veterans—they are more self-starting and are as eager as any other candidate to learn a role and the business. What they do bring is numerous soft skills that allow them to ramp-up faster, engage quicker, and demonstrate worth sooner. All they need is the right hiring manager to believe in their future potential.

- **Short term outweighs the long term.** We have all experienced this—go with the safe hire that we think (often incorrectly) will bring immediate relief to your staffing woes. This is a myopic approach that trades off the proven longer-term benefits veterans bring to the organization in terms of longevity and outperforming their counterparts overall. The reality of going with the guaranteed “up-and-running” candidate is you are likely trading out that candidate’s long-term loyalty, growth, and commitment for perceived but unlikely differentiating gains.

✓ **Uncertainty**

- **Role / Organizational fit.** Hiring managers are reluctant to have more open-mindedness toward veteran candidates. These are candidates who at first glance seem inapposite but, after peeling back their potential and soft skills, many organizations and hiring managers realize veterans will complement and even positively contribute to their new team and eventually the organization’s culture.
- **Lost in translation.** As mentioned above, the onus is on the candidate to translate their military experience, skills, and background to align with the role. But this is where we, as hiring managers, can consider extending a little help and reaching across to provide some assistance to the veterans. This can be done two ways:



How to help!

- **Phone a friend.** If there is a Veteran ERG (Employee Resource Group) in the organization, reach out to them as a hiring manager and ask for help interpreting the veteran candidate’s resume and how it relates to the position in question. I have often asked hiring managers to provide me the resume as well as the JD (job description) so I can, in return, provide them a fellow veteran’s perspective on how the candidate’s experience will translate to the role, the org, and even the culture.
- **Feedback—regardless.** Here is where I go out on a limb and ask hiring managers to break an often-unwritten rule of hiring: providing candidates feedback on why there is not alignment or even fit for the role. This is an opportunity as an individual to take 5-10 minutes and provide the candidate with some constructive takeaways —e.g., this is how I would think about improving your resume, interviewing, or

personal branding, etc. A hiring manager's opinion is gold for any candidate, and especially for veterans. This is one way you can personally help veterans and give back—remember, they were out there in some desolate and scary places defending our freedoms. Everyone likes to thank veterans for their service; here is a chance to do so in a valuable, 1-to-1, and professional manner.

✓ **Doubt**

- **We reward performance.** Yep, as hiring managers, we tend to reward experiences we can relate to—more specifically, candidates who have “been there and done that” (relative to the job in question) already. Veterans are often at a disadvantage as they may not have direct industry-specific experience, but they often have substantial soft skills—management, accountability, leadership, follow-through, working under pressure, adaptability, communication, resiliency, etc. As a hiring manager, remember, you can hire to the industry in many cases, but it is even harder to hire to fit and soft skills. Veterans are quick learners and will lean in even more than you expect to ramp-up on the organizational- or industry-specific requirements of a role. We (as hiring managers) tend to dismiss or underestimate their future potential.
- **What you don't see.** One additional note on skills. Veterans bring a tremendous work ethic and completely different level of integrity than your usual candidate. These are characteristics that are not taught but are acquired, and are skills that are not only transferrable from their military experience BUT are extremely valued in every industry as experience that demonstrates leadership, strong interpersonal communications, adaptability, team building, etc.
- **Fit, really?** As mentioned above, most hiring managers have zero understanding of military culture. This is no fault of theirs, however. Just like hiring managers likely do not understand professional sports team cultures (even though we love to use sports analogies ad nauseum). Veterans are by default team players and are comfortable being part of a team and wanting to be an active contributor. It is your job as their manager to tap into their potential and leverage it to drive the team, the business and even your success forward.



How to help!

Finally, please keep an open mind about each candidate. Just as not all graduates from the same university or professional training program are created equal, each veteran is also a unique professional who provides their specific set of skills, experiences, and untapped potential.

- **Questionable areas.** I do have to touch on some sensitive, gray areas when it comes to hiring manager doubts about hiring veterans.

- **Reserve and National Guard status.** I've encountered this firsthand at a previous employer. A hiring manager was reluctant to hire a candidate (and promote another) because of their reservist status. You cannot discriminate against them because they hold a reservist status, nor can you ask them if they are going to be deployed. I've advocated treating reserve/military-leave of absence status the same way organizations handled paternity leave.
- **Mental and other health-related issues.** Even though veterans are a protected class (status), many companies shy away from hiring any veterans for concerns about long-term health issues (or even disabilities). This stereotype is what many organizations use as a hiring bias or excuse. While doing so for those sole purposes is illegal, many companies still find another reason not to hire (or even seek out) veterans altogether.

It takes a ~~village~~ an employer



How to help!

Circling back around to the catalyst of this article, what can we do as hiring managers to further veterans' participation, consideration, and eventual selection in the hiring process?

I am not asking for preferential treatment. Veterans are not used to being cut some slack, but they would like a fair shake at being considered, and, if not, some understanding as to why.

Here is a not-all-inclusive list of actions HR (people leaders), recruiters, and even executives and hiring managers can consider as ways to help veterans, and, more specifically, their organizations tap into this qualified (and often exceptional) field of candidates. One additional call-out here: do not forget about military spouses—another great source of hiring.

- ✓ **Veteran ERG.** First, if your organization does not have a Veterans ERG (Employee Resource Group) AND there are veterans in the organization, then HR should reach out to find a leader among the veterans to take the helm and kickstart the Veteran ERG. Even better if there is an executive sponsor willing to step in and help to spin up a Veterans ERG. If there is a Veterans ERG, they should get involved with the hiring process and help promote or participate in some of the following suggested actions.
- ✓ **Veteran aware organization.** Regardless of whether the organization has a Veteran ERG, each organization should make a commitment to acknowledging veterans (even if it is just a message from the top on Veterans Day), to contributing time, resources, and

funds to veteran-focused organizations, to showcasing veteran employees, and/or to organizing events or activities to help with veteran awareness and recruitment.

- ✓ **Veteran-friendly hiring.** Another opportunity for recruitment to tap into current veterans within the organization is to regularly get input reviewing job descriptions (JDs). Work as a team to ensure both the job and the organization come across as “military-friendly.”
- ✓ **Pairing with recruitment.** Recruiting should spend time understanding the veteran-sourcing landscape, which can be done by pairing a representative from the Veteran ERG with recruitment to identify these sources and then having an employer’s veterans act as organizational “poster-children” at various veteran hiring events.
- ✓ **Veteran recruitment events.** If looking for specific talent that reflects the experience, skills, and backgrounds of veterans, encourage recruitment to participate in veteran-unique hiring events and even develop a hiring process that is veteran-friendly (e.g., circumvent the usual ATS process and flag veterans for initial review by a team comprised of current veterans, hiring managers, and recruiters).
- ✓ **Veteran on veteran interviewing.** As a hiring manager (or even a recruiting screener), reach out to an employee who is a veteran (or your Veteran ERG) and see about including them (preferably a veteran-manager) as part of the interview process. This accomplishes two goals: First, it allows for the candidate to connect with a fellow veteran at the organization and helps not only “sell” the veteran-friendliness of the organization but provides the candidate with another source to determine fit. Remember, job-searching and interviewing are two-way streets as the candidate is also evaluating the organization. Second, by adding a veteran as an interviewer, the hiring manager can get the additional help they need to better understand the candidate’s background, experience, and potential fit. To quote John Phillips, a former artillery officer and author of *Boots to Loafers*, “There is not a better person to vet a vet than a vet!”
- ✓ **Hiring manager training and resources.** Consider developing veteran-hiring resources and even training so hiring managers are more comfortable with what to look for in transitioning military candidates. Again, the ERG can help contribute to, validate, and even provide training for hiring managers. This resource center can also include profiles of existing veteran employees to be shared with candidates and veteran organizations, and to drive awareness within the organization of who amongst the employees are veterans.

Two immediate areas of awareness to tackle:

- Familiarity and legal risk-minimization in dealing with veterans as a protected class as well as hiring manager's obligations (military leave of absence) for reservist-employees.
- Training on identifying signs of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and implementing practices such as flexible work hours, counseling, and co-worker support.

It does not stop at hiring. Your organization's retention policy should be veteran friendly as well. By this I mean there are commitments as an organization you can make to help them have a meaningful career. Besides active involvement with your Veteran ERG, consider a veteran-on-veteran mentoring program where more senior, established veteran employees provide mentoring and guidance to newly hired veterans. These established veterans can help the new veterans better understand the organization's culture and career advancement options.

Veterans have tremendous value to add to an organization and are an untapped candidate-sourcing option for many organizations IF they are willing to adapt their opinions, understanding, and desire to hire and recruit veterans. Veterans within an organization are in the best position to initiate changes to hiring attitudes, processes, and outcomes—work with HR and recruiting to start small but start making changes. Future veteran hires will thank you, and your organization's culture and performance will also benefit.

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^{viii} https://www.va.gov/vetsinworkplace/docs/veterans_in_workplace_final_report.pdf

^{ix} <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/10/half-of-us-workers-suffer-mental-health-issues-since-covid-19-hit.html>

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^{xiii} <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2020-demographics-report.pdf>

^{xiv} Emily Rolen, "A closer look at veterans in the labor force," *Career Outlook*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 2017.

^{xv} <https://www.fuqua.duke.edu/duke-fuqua-insights/how-military-service-can-hurt-some-job-seekers%E2%80%99-prospects>

^{xvi} <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/platform-success/201903/why-33-percent-new-employees-quit-in-90-days>