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A Great Year for Transitioning Military to Get a Job

by *Shaun Bradley*

For military personnel facing a transition to the civilian world in 2006, the news is good. According to CareerBuilder.com, studies released in January 2006 indicate that the majority of hiring managers plan to increase their total number of employees as well as their initial salary offers.

The outlook is good for this year, but in fact, military-experienced talent is always in demand as long as job applicants follow a few simple steps that are equally true for both officers and enlisted personnel.

Be confident, but translate skills. The military is one of the best corporate training grounds in the world. Military personnel have had more responsibility, earlier, than the vast majority of their civilian counterparts. They are attractive candidates to corporate America and must demonstrate confidence in that fact.

However, applicants with previous military experience must translate that background in civilian terms. The use of military acronyms is a nonstarter. Sharing stories about how they improved processes and performance in their units without focusing on military-centric descriptions is important. They must be ready to tell how they helped motivate fellow team members to beat the odds and accomplish a task that was important to the unit.

Veterans also must look like they understand that they are now in the civilian world. Dressing for success in a nice, dark and conservative interview suit is a cliché, but it is an absolutely critical part of landing a job. In short, military personnel must rely on the five "Rs" to prepare for a job interview: right time, right place, right equipment, right uniform, right attitude.

Be flexible with living and work locations. Some people must live in a certain place because of issues such as family commitments. However, nothing can increase the chances of finding a job

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more than having flexibility in location.

By the time members of the military leave the service, there are three variables concerning a job: their military training/academic experience and skills match with a particular job, their availability match with the job opening in relation to their transition window and their interest in working in the location where the job is available. By the time a service member becomes a job candidate, the first two variables are out of the applicants' control; however, they are in full control of the third. The more flexibility job candidates have in the area of location, the greater the number of job opportunities.

Consider using the no-cost job search tools available. Some placement services deal exclusively with transitioning military personnel. They are a good source to find position openings and information about salaries and translating military skills to the civilian world. When desired, they can help place veterans in a new job.

Service members also can take advantage of military-focused job boards on the Web where resumes can be posted and employers who are searching for military-experienced talent can view them. In either case, it is important to steer clear of any placement service or job board that charges a fee or limits opportunities by asking for an exclusivity agreement.

There is always a job market for those who have served honorably in the military. This year is certainly no exception and should be one filled with opportunity.

Shaun Bradley is the chief executive officer of [Bradley-Morris Incorporated](#). He also leads the Board of Advisers for [MilitaryResumes.com](#).

AFCEA International provides a free online resume service at www.afcea.org/careers.

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