

The Military Brand

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I've met numerous veterans through working in a college career services center. Many of them come in wondering how to turn their military lingo into civilian language on their resumes.

They've also expressed concern that they won't get hired because employers see military and then automatically dismiss the applicant. This shouldn't happen, but I would be lying to state that it never does. Instead, I recommend that every applicant take time to know their skills and characteristics that are beneficial in a work place and sell those in cover letters, resumes, and interviews.

Here are some of the components to the Military Brand.

Discipline

People with military background are used to receiving orders and following through with them. Discipline is a self-management skill that is ingrained into anyone with a military background, and it should be highlighted as a positive attribute that can benefit an organization. Always look at the organization's structure and mission, plus the job description, and explain how discipline as a part of their organization and the specific job can help improve overall functioning.

Problem Solving

In the military, when an order is given there are no excuses to not execute what is asked, even if the resources are not provided. This is true for both military and civilian organizations. Someone who has already had experience working in a high stress situation with deadlines is more apt to successfully complete a difficult task than someone without that experience. Not only can people with a military background problem solve effectively, but he/she will also do it according to what upper management requests.

Hard Working

This quality may seem redundant after discussing the previous two, discipline and problem solving, but don't forget to sell this component too. Employers and companies will not know about your attributes, skills, and positive characteristics unless you tell them. When you discuss your self-management skills and being hard working, you need to also provide an example with which the employer can identify. Consider what type of business the company does, their mission and customers, and then provide an example that is similar.

Respectful

The concept of being respectful does have similarities with being disciplined, but understanding respect goes farther. People with military backgrounds are not just respectful to authority figures, but to people in general. This will ensure them to be not only a hard worker, but also friendly with an ability to handle customer service duties when needed. Having a respectful nature is a positive attribute that should be explained to employers, using examples that they will understand and find relevant.

Loyal

One thing that a number of employers have expressed to me is a perception that new job seekers don't possess a "loyalty to the company" like *they* do, or their predecessor. This is partly because of the generation gap and the shift in loyalty that accompanies that. Most young job seekers today have loyalties to people and ideas versus companies. This is not true for those with military experience. Many veterans have pride in their military branch and can express loyalty for an organization much like their loyalty for the country. This is a great quality to have and express to future employers who are looking for longevity in their employees; which, in turn, gives the company a return on the training investment they committed to you.

Honest

Integrity is the optimal synonym to use here because it is one of the core values for multiple branches of the United States Military. Integrity is defined by Merriam-Webster as "firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values." Military personnel adhere to a code and thus can transfer this honesty and integrity to a civilian organization that adheres to a code of ethics or morals. This is especially critical to mention when seeking job positions with companies that have confidentiality clauses and security clearances.

Specialized Training

Many military personnel that seek to increase their rank also go through specialized training. Consider what specialized training you received, if any, and how that can translate into civilian job training. If you didn't receive any specialized training but were still in charge of those with a lower rank, then you too have transferable skills that employers seek, leadership and managerial skills. Be sure to state these skills and job duties on your resume and discuss them during interviews.

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