

Let's Hire A Vet!

Build Your Word-of-Mouth Network



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Are you placing job ads, but not attracting veterans? You're not alone if you are having this problem. In a national survey of employers by nonprofit Center For America (CFA), a majority of employer respondents cited the challenge that their job advertisements are not attracting those with military experience.

A good first step is finding a veteran – maybe someone already in your organization, or among your retirees and suppliers. They can put you in touch with good candidates in their veteran network. Veterans want to help other veterans find good full-time jobs.

There are many effective nonprofits, state agencies and military employment transition organizations in your area that can help, so make sure to reach out to them. However, your own networking with the veteran community may be a faster way to find good candidates that match very well to your requirements and culture.

Most veterans maintain close contact with other veterans through a wide range of organizations and events. They know friends and acquaintances who are looking for good jobs. They also have good instincts about who in their network would have an interest in a given job and the skills and experience to fit in well.

Start internally

Tapping into this network isn't hard: Start by identifying veterans among your employees, your retirees, your suppliers. Give them an up-to-date written description of the job and the qualifications so they can pass this along to their contacts and get the word out.

Developing a "word-of-mouth" network works better when you explain to your veteran contacts why your jobs and your company offer a good fit for people with a military background. This can empower your contacts to make a good case for you. Veterans making a transition to a civilian job often know very little about most industries and less about specific companies.

While many veterans go online to research jobs, you should take the time to explain the aspects of your jobs and your company that should be especially attractive to veterans. Your military-friendly attributes would include: future career growth supported by training or in-house mentoring, an emphasis on teamwork and your commitment to diversity. Since veterans are accustomed to these topics while in the military, the more specific you can be, the better.

Expand the effort

There are many national veterans' organizations that have local affiliates you can contact for referrals. Although these organizations are not specifically in the business of providing referrals, veterans who belong are always interested in helping their members find good career jobs.

You can contact the local affiliates of these national organizations by visiting the national web sites listed with each:

- Team Red, White & Blue: www.TeamRWB.org
- Team Rubicon: TeamRubiconUSA.org
- The Mission Continues: MissionContinues.org
- Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA): iava.org
- Marine for Life: www.MarineForLife.org
- Soldier for Life: SoldierForLife.army.mil/employment
- Joining Community Forces: www.jointservicesupport.org/communityforces

The time you spend developing a word-of-mouth network among veterans will have growing benefits. The more your veteran contacts learn about you and your company, the more they will want to recommend candidates to you. The more you learn about the veterans you are in touch with and the issues and



Skills required to examine the intake of an F-16 Fighting Falcon can be transferred to many civilian occupations.

concerns they have, the more effectively you can gain their help. You'll also get feedback about your jobs that will help you position them more effectively or address aspects of your offers that are turning veterans off.

If you would like to learn more about hiring veterans, National Guard members and Reservists, visit our web site at www.CenterForAmerica.org. You'll find many free guides, articles and video presentations on recruiting military candidates. Also, on the CFA home page, post your jobs through the American Jobs for America's Heroes campaign to have them distributed directly to military employment counselors where your jobs are located.

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