

# Expressing Interest

Engaging Veterans for Employment in Job Clubs

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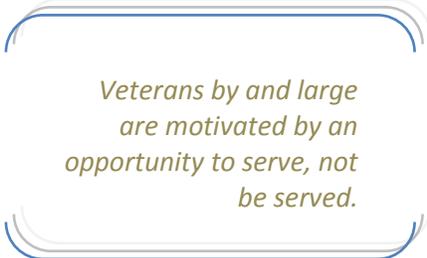
# How to really hire a veteran

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## Summary

As an HR professional, you understand that looking for talent is different than hiring for skills. Military veterans shine at their best when evaluated on their talent and potential, not skills. Skills are something that most veterans rightly believe they will obtain quickly in order to meet the challenge of the opportunity. In their military service, veterans were provided the skills training and gained real world work experience, but they understand that through their persistence they will gain the necessary skills to solve your business problems.

Unfortunately, virtually all hiring models today tend to dis-enfranchise the veteran because they ask primarily (or exclusively) about skills and experience, not talents and motivation. Asking veterans to list their skills cause them to 'not brag' and tell a 'lie' to you that they don't have those skills. They're not being untruthful so much as managing your expectations by under-promising and over-delivering. In their culture, this is how veterans were rewarded and recognized, by going above and beyond expectations and delivering results, not by displaying a list of credentials and skills.



*Veterans by and large are motivated by an opportunity to serve, not be served.*

In addition, during formal 'briefings' (such as an interview or presentation to a vets group), veterans are encouraged by their culture to not brag and to be concise and factual in their answers, not offer opinions unless ***asked specifically***. It's clear that veterans may not interact as expected because of the cultural differences in expectations. Here's how you can help 'bridge the cultural divide' and help veterans explain their real value and capabilities when you present employment opportunities to them.

## Keys That Count To Veterans

These keys are the essence of getting top veteran talent engaged in helping you solve your company's challenges. You can find out if a veteran has the talent, experience and motivation to help you solve your challenges by asking the right questions.

**Talent:** Talent is an individual contribution that each veteran brings in their own unique special blend. Many veterans will approach the same problem in different ways, using their unique talents and strengths and often, relationships.

**Experience:** Core to your hiring is does the veteran have the exposure to situations that are relevant to your needs. This exposure/experience will not come with a degree or a certificate of completion, so they will have a difficult time claiming a skill or experience if they cannot independently verify it with a certificate, therefore it's easier to say 'I don't have that skill' than explain why they don't have the certification or how they obtained the experience.

**Motivation:** Veterans by and large are motivated by an opportunity to serve, not be served.

If you want to get a veteran to respond positively to your opportunity, explain who they will be serving and how it matters.

Veterans that are skilled and experienced do not respond to typical job postings because there is no explanation of how they will be serving, who they will be serving, how it will make a difference to them and what will happen if we don't succeed.

Motivation for a veteran is based on "who" and "why" not 'what' or "how".

Veterans need a challenge, not a handout.

*If you want to get a veteran to respond positively, explain who they will be serving and how it matters*

## Setup – What is the Problem?

Although they are called different things in different organizations, there are only 5 key problems in business:

| Challenge | Also called   |
|-----------|---|
| Cheaper   | revenue growth, sales expansion, cost savings                 |
| Faster    | efficiency, speed, production times                           |
| Better    | Quality (products, goods, services)                           |
| More      | Expansion, increased functionality, repurposing               |
| People    | Increased morale, decreased turnover, skill training programs |

If you want to engage a veteran for employment – ask them questions instead of giving them a job posting. Here are some questions to think about as you approach a veterans group:

- Right Question #1: **CHALLENGE**: What is the top challenge you need resolved from the list above?
- Right Question #2: **SOLUTION**: What do you see as solutions? What needs to be done in order to succeed? Is it new sales growth? Is it operational efficiency, customer communication?
- Right Question #3: **MOTIVATION**: Who will benefit as a result of this challenge: Your employees? Your customers? Who are they? Why do they need your services?
- Right Question #4: **BENEFIT**: How does the people you are serving benefit directly from what you do or what you sell? Do they get to enjoy the outdoors through safe recreational products? Do they get financial security? Do they experience fun and adventure or playful escape?

## How To Ask A Veteran For Help – Dig Deeper

Here is a 'fill in the blank' template for you to use in helping vets make a difference in your workplace. These will create engagement from the first meeting if you are presenting to a veterans group, being sensitive to their unique culture. This will give you the response you need to hear, how their skills, experience and training fit into your current employment needs.

### Template:

"Today we're looking for people skilled in solving (**CHALLENGE**) challenges. We're looking for people who have experience with (**SOLUTION, SOLUTION**) and (**SOLUTION**) to help (take us to the next level/stabilize operations, transform logistics).

We are / we serve (**MOTIVATION**) (i.e., customer segment or stakeholder) to (**BENEFIT**) (ie, live cancer free, have more time with family, enjoy free time) and we're looking for people to bring their talents to help (**MOTIVATION**) have (**BENEFIT**)."

For when you have a veteran express interest: “Tell me about a time when you successfully dealt with (**CHALLENGE**) in a (**SOLUTION**) setting? Give examples of how you dealt with it. What was the problem, what was your solution?”

### **Example:**

“Today we’re looking for people skilled in solving (**Growth**) challenges. We’re looking for people who have experience with (**Sales, Recruiting**) and (**Customer Retention**) to help (expand our services in the Twin Cities).

We serve (**Young Families**) to (**enjoy the first time home buyer experience**) and we’re looking for people to bring their talents to help (**Young Families**) have (**a better future in a neighborhood they love**).”

For when you have a veteran express interest:

“Tell me about a time when you successfully dealt with (**Market Growth**) in a (**Sales Development**) setting? Give examples of how you dealt with it. What was the problem, what was your solution?”

### **Conclusion**

This will help you go beyond simple responses to your questions and build connections with veteran groups and individuals that will get them talking about their experience in a way that helps you as an employer understand that they have the skills and experience you’re looking for. More importantly, it will start a real conversation with the veteran(s) and give them an opportunity to open up and explore the possibilities of how their experiences fit even if they don’t initially claim to meet the exact requirements of your job postings.

We’d welcome the opportunity to discuss this more with you in person, please contact your local representative at the WorkForce Center. We’re here to help ensure your success!

Thanks!

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