

Veteran Hiring Guide:

How to Recruit and Retain America's Best



It's no secret that today's economy has created a talent shortage: America has more jobs than skilled workers to fill them. In one analysis, the current talent shortage ranked first among emerging risks for organizations worldwide going forward.

But there's a pipeline of talent continually adding skilled workers to the available pool—the *military*.

Every year, more than 200,000 service members transition out of the military, and the vast majority (94%) of them look for jobs after completing their service, according to Monster's 2018 Veteran Hiring Survey. They're interested in pursuing jobs in fields that range from information technology to health care to customer service, and they're highly trained.

In this guide, you'll hear from leadership at some of Monster's Best Companies for Veterans 2019 on how they're supporting veteran hiring—from getting job opportunities in front of veterans to creating an inclusive culture for their veteran employees. Additionally, you'll learn how to apply these tactics of attracting, recruiting, and retaining veterans and military-family hires to your organization, where they'll add diversity, leadership, and loyalty to your ranks.



By all accounts, veterans exit the military with great mission focus, work ethic, integrity, passion, and drive, along with leading-edge training and skills. “They bring experience and responsibility beyond that found in most civilian jobs,” says Charles Miles, director of military-employment programs for PenFed Credit Union and a retired U.S. Marine major.

Reaching that market takes work. Together, Monster’s decades of recruiting expertise and Military.com’s market reach and trust within the military and veteran community set our solutions apart. We make it our mission to improve the lives of service members, veterans, and their families—and to transform the way employers and veterans connect.

“If you’re not in the military-recruiting space, particularly at this time, when unemployment is so low and there’s a real battle for talent out there, you’re putting your company at a distinct disadvantage.”

— Charles Miles, director of military employment programs for PenFed Credit Union



Some companies are already doing this really well. In fact, the following firms won Monster’s accolades in the recently released fifth annual **Monster/Military.com Best Companies for Veterans 2019**:

1. *DynCorp International*
2. *Intelligent Waves, LLC*
3. *American Systems*
4. *CACI*
5. *LMI*
6. *PRISM*
7. *MSA Security*
8. *U.S. Customs and Border Protection*
9. *IntelliDyne, LLC*
10. *AbleVets, LLC*

Why veteran hiring?

As stated earlier, veterans offer strong soft skills that are in high demand in a cross section of industries. According to [Monster's 2019 State of the Recruiter survey](#), recruiters say they struggle to find candidates with skills in communication, problem solving, managerial leadership, and teamwork. Veterans and transitioning military are well versed in a wide variety of abilities like these.

When asked what work-related skills they have that their civilian counterparts may not have, veterans list: _____

In addition to gaining talent that possesses a high skill level, hiring veterans offers the following benefits, regardless of the size of your organization:

They're natural leaders

Sixty-three percent of veterans believe they have leadership skills that you may not find in the civilian population, according to Monster's Veteran Hiring Survey. "They have received training that compares to no other," says Andrea Hall, diversity and inclusion senior manager for General Dynamics Mission Systems. "They have more life experience when it comes to leadership and building teams at an earlier age."

They contribute to a diverse workforce

Diversity is a hot topic for companies today, and veterans are a great way to diversify your team. When asked about their overall diversity and inclusion strategies, 24% of recruiters say they focus on veterans and military spouses. By nature of the diversity of the military—**racial and ethnic minority groups make up about 40% of active-duty military**, according to Pew Research—veteran hires will naturally contribute to your diversity initiatives and help to create an inclusive company culture. "America is made up of a diverse population, and the military is a representation of the diversity of all of America," explains Darren Sherrard, US Army Retired, associate director of recruitment marketing and workforce recruitment and retention services for the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.



You're making a difference

Transitioning from military to civilian work life can be a big change. Making an effort to include this population as part of your workforce can add tremendous value to your company—and to that employee, whether they stay for a year or stay forever. “You’re literally changing these families’ lives,” says Melissa Stirling, senior director of U.S. military and youth programs at Hilton Hotels & Resorts. “We have thousands of stories of veterans and military spouses who have built robust, exciting careers at Hilton, when they’re transitioning out and they don’t know exactly what they want to do.”

They've got built-in security clearance

If your company works with clients in a field that handles secure information (IT, cybersecurity, defense contracting, management consulting), military employees are a natural fit. “A great majority of our work requires the security clearances, the mission familiarity, and the sense of purpose that veterans bring to the table,” says Gary Patton, MG, U.S. Army (retired) and current CACI vice president and director for military and veterans affairs. “It’s a win for veterans because of career opportunities, it’s a win for CACI, and it’s a win for our clients. It really helps us deliver exceptional support.”

Bridging the skills gap

One of the challenges for any organization hiring veterans is that many of the skills they’ve acquired don’t mirror traditional job skills—**81% of veterans say their military level doesn’t translate to civilian jobs.** And for many recruiters and hiring managers, not understanding the skills that veterans bring to the table can cost you the hire. [Skills translators](#) like the one at Military.com can help. When asked what aspects are most important about prospective employers, 79% of veterans pointed to companies that accept military training in place of civilian credentials, according to Monster’s 2018 Veteran’s Hiring Survey. You’re at a clear disadvantage if you don’t know how to translate military skills or explain the translation to your prospective employees.

DynCorp International, for instance, accepts military training for civilian credentials. “We recognize the experience and dedication that veterans contribute to our business model,” the company says. “Our company accepts all training, which affirms our corporate belief in the value of military training.”

How to get started

Make a conscious decision to hire veterans

It may sound obvious, but your company must verbalize your mission of hiring veterans. Building a military-friendly workplace requires commitment, particularly from the top levels at your organization. Having the owner of the company or someone in the C-suite championing the cause can go a long way toward creating a veteran-hiring mindset.

“Having that leadership buy-in was absolutely key, because it made other leaders really pay attention and focus on it,” Stirling says of Hilton’s executive leadership.

Keeping the progress of their strategic goal to hire and retain veterans at the forefront has been imperative for their success at IntelliDyne, LLC.

“Beyond informing the executive leadership team, we report the status of our veteran workforce and outreach efforts throughout the organization. Leadership receives a status report on a semi-monthly basis, management receives monthly updates, and employees receive updates at the quarterly town halls,” says a company spokesperson.” The information includes the percentage of veterans hired, current veteran percentage of staff, speaking engagements, and community-outreach efforts.

Communicate your desire to hire veterans

As much as a strong leadership commitment is essential to a successful veteran-hiring program, the front line of hiring veterans, transitioning military, and military spouses is with your recruiters and hiring managers. The first step in realizing your commitment to veteran hiring is to include veterans on your search committees, in recruiting, or human resources. According to Monster research, **64% of veterans look for companies that have veterans on their recruiting teams.**

In fact, many companies that are doing this successfully have gone one step further and created teams dedicated to veteran hiring. This is huge for veterans—58% look for employers with a dedicated veteran-recruiting team. And 90% of this year’s Best Companies for Veterans have teams devoted to this mission.

“Three of us comprise the veteran-engagement team,” says CACI’s Patton. “We’re a dedicated full-time resource team, and I think that shows our corporate commitment. We actively seek out ways we can bring military into the company.”

CACI’s outreach campaign is called Continuing Your Mission, based on the idea that military recruits can continue building the skills and ideals they were honing in their previous occupation. “That resonates within the veteran and military community,” Patton says. “You separate from the military and you continue that mission with CACI.”

Create a military-friendly culture

It’s not just about reaching out to veterans. You also must create a climate that welcomes them. If you get veterans in the door, but you’re not making an effort beyond recruiting, word will spread within the military community that you’re a company that’s all talk.

“This is a very grassroots audience, and their values and ethics are very strong. If they feel like you’re just doing this for publicity, it will backfire.”

— *Melissa Stirling, senior director of U.S. military and youth programs at Hilton Hotels & Resorts*

Some ways to create a cultural fit include recognition ceremonies in months dedicated to military-service appreciation, such as May and November. Some companies incorporate displays like a Wall on Honor in which they showcase veteran employees and thank them for their service.

At Hilton, the brand team approved the use of service-specific pins that employees could wear on their uniforms to signify that they're a veteran. While this honors your employees, it also sends a clear signal to your clients and customers who are veterans that you recognize their service and commitment.

PRISM Inc. has an internal program called Operation Weekend to incentivize employees to assist veterans and their spouses in finding jobs. "They can earn time off and perks while continuing to help our veterans find employment," the company states.

Companies such as Disney and The Home Depot have made great progress in veteran hiring while also strengthening their market position with veteran and military customers. Disney launched a campaign in 2012 called Heroes Work Here, a company-wide initiative to hire, train, and support returning veterans. Meanwhile, Home Depot has given more than \$315 million to veteran-related causes.

How to connect with veterans

Know with whom you're trying to connect

Connecting with veterans and military families requires targeting three distinct groups, each with their own skillset and values.

1 **Veterans** have previously separated from the military and have additional education and/or professional experience, and are looking for new opportunities to build on their skills and training.

2 **Transitioning service members** are in the process of separating from the military and are looking for a civilian career and may need assistance in job-search strategy and skills.

3 **Military spouses** are highly educated and are looking for flexibility and mobility to allow them to continue their careers even if they move due to their spouse's deployments.

Reach out to connected organizations

While you want to focus your outreach on organizations that specialize in helping veterans, transitioning service members, or military spouses, you also want to take an approach that is both national and local in scope. National organizations can provide excellent resources for outreach, whereas a local or regional branch can help make direct connections to potential candidates in your area. In other words, use your resources to cast a wide net while narrowing your engagement in a more localized manner.

For veterans, look for local and national Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), such as Hiring Our Heroes, Hire Heroes USA, AMVETS and the American Legion. There are often opportunities for employers to partner with local branches as a resource—for example, by participating in career fairs and providing information on job opportunities.

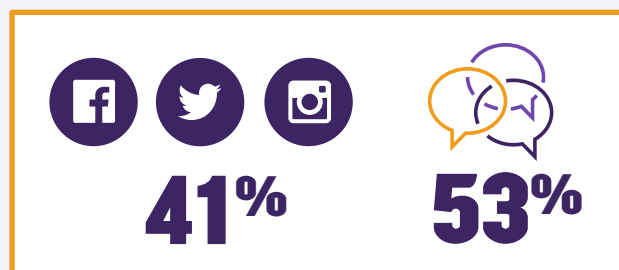
For transitioning service members, utilize the Transition Assistance Programs (TAP) on local military bases. These help service members transition to civilian life via a series of classes and programs. “We sponsor employer days where we meet with these service members in transition and provide coaching on their resumes, their network, and their interview skills, and we attend regular career fairs on military bases,” Patton says.

Ryder System, a transportation and logistics company, partners with the U.S. Army’s Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program at five army bases to offer a skills-training course for soldiers exiting military service. The program, called Pathway Home, gives participating soldiers hands-on diesel-technician training during their final 180 days of service, and upon completion, participants are placed into a diesel technician position at one of Ryder’s locations.

CACI puts together monthly flyers of high-priority jobs that align with military occupational specialties and sends it out digitally to its network of veteran-organization partners and to those in the transition programs. “Nearly every TAP office on a military base is in our network, and they receive our monthly flyers that they can circulate across internal networks and across the population of transitioning servicemen,” Patton says.

Military spouses are reachable via national and local groups as well, such as the Military Spouse Advocacy Network or military spouse programs run by bases. Attend military spouse hiring events and share that information on your social media channels. According to the Monster Veteran Hiring Survey, military spouses believe recruiters (57%), company-sponsored

military-hiring programs (57%), and networking opportunities specifically for military spouses (50%) would make it easier for them (and other military spouses) to find jobs.



According to a 2018 Monster survey of military spouses, **41% are using social media to find jobs, and 53% are searching through word of mouth.** Use your existing marketing tools to become part of the conversation.

Military bases in general are good resources. “It’s hard sometimes to make those contacts, but when you do, you’ve always got a fresh pipeline of talent, and a large part of them don’t know what they want to do,” Stirling says. “If you present your opportunity, they’re really appreciative of knowing what’s available and what’s going on.”

Support local military organizations and events

Putting your corporate sponsorship or volunteer efforts toward military organizations can get the word out that you’re a military-friendly company and that you’re walking the walk—not just talking the talk. “We recently sponsored the Army Ten Miler as a large corporate sponsor,” Hall says of General Dynamics’ efforts. “There are something like 100 different organizations we contribute to.”

The Logistics Management Institute, or LMI, is a charter member of several organizations and community-driven programs that support veteran employment. And LMI serves the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Navy League, and Student Veterans of America – Industry Round Table, among others.

Provide job assistance

Keep in mind that although many candidates will have strong experience and skills, they may not be practiced in job-search techniques. They may need assistance in preparing a resume, competing for an employment opportunity, going online to search for jobs, or having to go through the interview process.

“We host annual Veteran Career Transition Days and IT Awareness Days to open our doors to the military community, and we support hiring events on bases through our VSO partners (Onward to Opportunity, Vets in Tech, NC4ME, USO),” says Gena Pirtle, military and veteran programs manager, talent acquisition, people and communities at Cisco, Inc. “We have also launched a military spouse outreach effort to build stronger bridges between Cisco and our Milspouse community.”

“They’re entering the workforce in their 20s and maybe even their 30s without the life experience of what it means to get a job, which can be very difficult and daunting,” Hall says. “We try to make the process as simple as possible.”

“We don’t just have a military outreach person who’s responsible for going out and casting the widest net possible, we also have folks who formerly served in the military as part of our talent acquisition teams who can help translate skills on a veteran’s resume.”

— Andrea Hall, diversity and inclusion senior manager for General Dynamics Mission Systems

Each month, the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol runs a CBP Day at a different military installation. This is an opportunity for CBP recruiters to provide transitioning service members and veterans with workshops that highlight career opportunities with CBP, information on resume writing, and the CBP hiring process.

Some companies also offer special programs for onboarding and training new veterans. Union Pacific, for instance, offers internships, on-the-job and managerial training programs, and apprenticeships to help veterans transition into the civilian workforce.

Onboarding and retention best practices

Create an inclusive culture

One of the keys to keeping veterans at your company is making them feel like part of the team. That means recognizing their contribution to the firm, acknowledging their history in the military, and celebrating their achievements.

Intelligent Waves, for instance, focuses on transitioning new veteran hires into dedicated employees. “We make them feel welcome and engaged,” the company says. “Our human resources, finance, and operations teams hold an orientation to introduce hires into the culture. We provide any necessary training needed for the position and offer a professional development program that encourages our veterans to continue to grow, learn, and expand their skill sets.”

At American Systems, many of their senior leadership, such as senior HR workers, pursue training on veteran issues, employment, training, and retention. “We also host military birthdays that our executive leadership attends,” the company says. “There we have our own veteran employees share their experiences in the service and how it translated outside of the service.”

General Dynamics Mission Systems raises awareness internally by participating in the 22 Pushup Challenge, a campaign designed to promote awareness of the high number of veteran suicides and mental health issues among this population.

Pair them with a mentor or buddy

In general, veterans may struggle with cultural immersion, with only half (46%) saying they felt accepted right away in their new company, and another 42% saying it took a few months. Many companies team new hires up with a “buddy” who can help them adjust to civilian workplace culture. “This is a person you can just reach out to-, to ask a question like, ‘How do I put my time in?’ or, ‘Do we have to log out for lunch?’” Hall says. “Those things you may not necessarily want to ask your hiring manager.”

“We have a robust veterans Employee Resource Organization (ERO) that actively engages with transitioning service members through mentoring and coaching. For example, our Military in Sales Leadership (MISL) program is specifically designed to match new hires within the sales organization with veteran employees,” says Pirtle.

At Hilton, each hotel identifies a “commander” who gets information about new team members who are veterans or military spouses. That person can either mentor the new employee themselves or they can assign another mentor. This mentor is a person you can go to and ask questions without feeling insecure,” Stirling say.

Create a group dedicated to veterans

CACI has an active Veterans Employee Resource Group, or VERG. “We represent all the services at every level of leadership in the company,” Patton says. “Our mission in the VERG is to keep our veteran employees informed and help us make impactful contributions to the company.”

Hilton has a nationwide military team member resource group that meets quarterly via webinar. “That’s a four-times-a-year touchpoint for the whole company in the U.S.,” Stirling says.

Support their endeavors

In addition to creating internal resources, help your military hires connect with outside opportunities as well. For instance, PenFed points new hires toward the Onward to Opportunity program at Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans and Military Families. The program provides free career-skills training and professional certifications in various categories.

Flexibility is important to most employees today (96% say they need it), but it’s especially crucial if you’re going to support your veteran and military-family workers.

“Military spouses are very highly educated and skilled but may be required to relocate frequently based on their spouse’s deployments, which makes it hard for them to form a strong foundation on which to build a career. This makes it essential for companies to offer them flexibility and mobility as a way of keeping extremely valuable employees at your firm,” advises Sarah Blansett, director of operations, Military.com.

“In terms of military spouse employment, that’s one of the most important challenges that we have,” Miles says. “One of the directors of our branch operations is a military spouse and I think she started with us in northern Virginia and has since continued to work from Texas and New Mexico, and now she’s in Maryland. She continues to maintain her career with us.”

Conclusion

Creating a framework to bring veterans into your organization can benefit you in so many ways. For the best chance of success, it's important that you commit to your mission, that leadership supports veteran- and military-family hiring goals, and that you've nurtured a military-friendly work culture. Finding ways to connect with the military community and showing them what you have to offer will bolster your impact and reputation within the veteran community.

To a certain extent, this is about understanding and marketing to your audience. "On the employer brand side, we just completed an employer value proposition exercise to understand what's important to transitioning military or veterans, so we can make the right connection," says Tamsin Bencivengo, employer brand and social media manager for Penske Truck Leasing. "We want to understand what makes them tick, what's important to them at different stages in their career."

That's going to vary, depending on the industry, the role, and the point in their career at which that veteran finds themselves. "It's not one answer," Bencivengo says. "It's multifaceted, just as it is with any of our associates."

Three building blocks for a veteran-hiring strategy

1 Think local

Work with regional and local chapters of Veteran Service Organizations (VSO), connect with military bases in your area, and sponsor local volunteer and veteran events.

2 Be vocal

You must verbalize your commitment and stick with it. And that has to come from the top down. You're connecting with a community that knows how to give its all, so you must meet them with the same effort.

3 Small is big

What may seem to be a simple gesture (pins identifying veteran employees, participating in the 22 Pushup Challenge) can often speak louder than the grandest efforts. Use your social media to be part of the conversation and demonstrate your commitment.

Do you need help with veteran talent acquisition?
[Visit Monster's military veteran recruiting solutions](#)

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