

TRANSITION TIPS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS & LEADERS

Steps for successful military transition & how leaders can support their troops

Successful reintegration is an individual responsibility that requires understanding, planning, and deliberate execution. These recommended steps will enable transitioning service members and their families to do just that and provide leaders with tools to best support their troops in the process.



5 Steps For Transitioning Service Members¹

- 1. Take responsibility for your own transition and make a plan.** While your veteran identity will remain a key aspect of your civilian experience, it should not define you. Think through what you want to be and do as a civilian, identify personal and professional goals, strengths and weaknesses, and develop a viable plan. Invest time in researching employment and education opportunities to make your plan a reality; a good resource is the Department of Labor American Job Center.²
- 2. Rehearse your interaction with the civilian sector.** Train for this life-changing event like you do for any military mission. Practice for interviews and prepare to confidently champion yourself. Counter to what you learned during your service, you must be your own advocate. Skills-translating software may help you explain what you have to offer to a potential employer.
- 3. Despite your natural reluctance, ask a civilian for help.** Ask a civilian to serve as your mentor who can help you navigate this new environment. Don't hesitate to ask them to help you with your resume.
- 4. Networking is important in the civilian sector; embrace it.** Employees with broad personal networks often have a higher potential for contribution given their access to different expertise. Social media, like Facebook or LinkedIn, can be helpful tools when prudently used. A thoughtful profile shows employers that you're someone they want on their team.
- 5. Don't expect to make as much or supervise as many without first proving yourself.** Recognize that you are starting over and you need to develop a reputation in the civilian world. Many successfully transitioned service members take an initial pay cut and supervise fewer people, but once established, progress at a much faster rate than non-veterans.

5 Steps For Leaders To Better Support Transitioning Troops³

- 1. Leaders of those transitioning should make their expectations clear and emphasize the importance of individual planning.** Developing an individual transition plan⁴ is a Department of Defense requirement, but it is also an excellent tool for leaders to help their troops develop a viable plan. Transition is also a commander's responsibility; you should give your troops time to plan and execute their transition plan while fostering an open dialogue on their progress through the process.
- 2. Leaders must certify transitioning service members as "career ready."** The new Transition Assistance Program requires commanders to certify that transitioning service members are "career ready." If service members are not ready, commanders must conduct a warm handover with an agency that will further help the individual meet the standards.
- 3. Leaders should consider allowing transitioning service members to attend civilian skill-training programs before transition.** Many civilian organizations offer job training programs, apprenticeships, and internships at or near military installations. Allowing transitioning service members to attend will enable them to transition into a new, sustainable career.
- 4. Leaders should recognize that a service member's reintegration into the civilian sector can influence the rest of that person's life.** Allowing service members sufficient time facilitates a successful transition into the civilian environment.
- 5. Leaders should reinforce our military's reputation as an organization that takes care of its own, encouraging the next generation to serve.** Investing in transitioning service members can potentially engender a sustained sense of loyalty, helping to preserve our all-volunteer force.

1. <http://taskandpurpose.com/chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-office-do-these-5-things-when-transitioning-to-civilian-life/>

2. <http://jobcenter.usa.gov/>

3. <http://taskandpurpose.com/chairman-of-the-joint-chiefs-office-5-ways-military-leaders-can-support-transitioning-service-members/>

4. https://www.dodtap.mil/rest/docs?filename=Individual_Transition_Plan.pdf

