

# Hire a Vet!

## Toolkit for Employers Hiring Veterans

The U.S. military depends upon uniformed public affairs personnel to help protect and defend America. When these dedicated veterans return from service, many seek to transition to civilian careers in public relations.

If you are an employer hiring public relations talent, learn why hiring a veteran is not only the right thing to do, but can be good for your organization.

And if you do hire a veteran, know that PRSA offers the first 20 qualified veterans that apply a free one-year membership in PRSA (sponsored by Bell Helicopter) to facilitate networking and professional development — another reason why hiring a veteran is the right decision!

### Why Should You Hire a Veteran?

Many companies report that their veteran employees, because of their military work ethic and background in a goal-oriented culture, are not only excellent team members, but also tend to have a higher rate of retention. There are many reasons why companies seek out veterans — the most important being that they bring with them the skills to get the job done in a timely and efficient manner, skills that include leadership, management, teamwork, accountability and responsibility.

Reasons to Hire Veterans
Mission focus
Discipline
Commitment
Team leadership
Flexibility
Problem-solving skills
Organization
Planning Abilities
Priority-driven
Able to adjust communication skills
Results-oriented
Honesty
Integrity
Leadership
Conflict resolution
Multicultural skills
Writing

<b>Transferable Skills</b>
Leading multi-service communications teams.
Developing external/internal communications strategies and programs.
Managing marketing strategy.
Spokesperson at unit/regional levels.
Responding to international, national and local media queries.
Directing national and local outreach campaigns.
Providing interview techniques.
Developing strategy/plans for senior leader implementation.
Providing sound advice and counsel.
Writing implementation plans for field headquarters.
Orchestrating branding campaign/company vision.
Leading seminars.
Leading public relations focused trips.
Developing social media plans.
Initiating company blogs.
Producing e-newsletters.
Tracking results.
Translating technical information into easy-to-understand text.

**Which Veterans Have Skills Transferable to Public Relations, Public Affairs and Communications Functions?**

Military experience varies greatly from service member to service member. For those without a military background, it is helpful to become better educated regarding the types of jobs and levels of responsibilities a veteran or transitioning service member may have had while in the military:

- **Enlisted personnel** are the specialists of the military. They are trained to perform specific hands-on tasks in the military as needed for any mission. As enlisted personnel progress up the ranks (there are nine enlisted ranks), they assume more responsibility and provide direct supervision to their subordinates.
- **Non-commissioned officers (NCO)** are enlisted military members holding a position of some degree of authority, usually obtained by promotion for performance, knowledge and discipline. Additional testing and leadership schools are often required to achieve these ranks.
- **Warrant officers** are highly trained specialists and subject matter experts. They remain in their primary specialty to provide specialized knowledge, instruction and leadership to enlisted members and commissioned officers alike. With few exceptions, one must be an enlisted member with several years of experience, recommended by their commander, and pass a selection board to become a Warrant officer. The Air Force is the only service that does not have Warrant officers.
- **Commissioned officers** have the primary function of providing overall management, planning and leadership in their area of responsibility. Unlike enlisted members and Warrant officers,

commissioned officers are not as specialized (with certain exceptions such as pilots, doctors, nurses and lawyers). Commissioned officers must have a minimum of a four-year bachelor's degree.

**PRSA, in support of transitioning public affairs veterans (and sponsored by Bell Helicopter), has extended free membership (for the first 20 individuals applying) to those meeting the following criteria:**

1. Military public affairs personnel may apply for this program any time during the period 12 months prior to separation or retirement, and six months following separation or retirement.
2. All applicants must provide evidence of separation/retirement (DD-214) or intent to separate/retire (official separation/retirement request).
3. All members must separate/retire from the armed services under honorable conditions (includes medical discharge).
4. Candidates must meet the following professional and educational criteria:
  - Must have graduated from a basic journalism or broadcasting course, or the Public Affairs Officer Course, at the Defense Information School.
  - Must have served in a public affairs capacity for the previous 36 months.
  - Must currently hold an officer or enlisted public affairs classification (i.e., AFSC, MOS, Rating).

**Returning military veterans also may hold professional credentials such as the [APR](#) or [APR +M](#).**

**The Accredited in Public Relations (APR)** credential is valuable to those practitioners who earn it; to the agencies, clients and organizations they represent; and, perhaps most importantly, to the public relations profession itself. The Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation demonstrates that the holder of the credential has successfully demonstrated competency in the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required to practice public relations effectively in today's business arena.

On May 26, 2010, PRSA launched the **Accreditation in Public Relations + Military Communication (APR+M)**, an enhanced certification from the well-established APR. The mark will be awarded to candidates who master the Accredited In Public Relations (APR) KSAs plus joint public-affairs-relevant topics. APR+M signifies someone who meets all the qualifications of Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), PLUS a rigorous course of study surrounding military public affairs in joint operations.

### **Your Recruiting Strategy**

As when hiring for any position, your recruiting strategy should start with a position description, which should then serve as a basis for an online posting advertising the position. Consider using military terms in the posting, and leverage social media to publicize the posting. Finally, be sure to post your job on a highly-trafficked job bulletin board, such as [PRSA's Jobcenter](#), the number-one-ranked job board for public relations professionals. The PRSA Jobcenter also offers a "Veterans Upgrade" that specifically target veterans for open positions.

## Consider Using Military Language in Your Outreach and Job Descriptions

O\*NET OnLine offers a [Military to Civilian Crosswalk](#) that may help you improve your veterans outreach by targeting specific Military Occupational Classification codes that relate to civilian positions.

Simply enter the job title you are looking to fill (e.g., accountant, human resources, warehouse, etc.) into the military search section. Most civilian occupations will display a list of the occupational specialty codes used by the different branches of the military. You might consider including a list of these codes in your job announcement as a way to help veterans better understand the correlation between their military training and the civilian career you have available.

## Post Your Position on a Highly Trafficked Online Job Bulletin Board

Choose a highly trafficked job board for your posting such as PRSA's [PRSA Jobcenter](#), which offers not only worldwide exposure but an audience of more than 20,000 unique visitors a week. In addition, PRSA's Jobcenter offers a search mechanism where you can select job seekers specifically that have served their country. When you [log in](#) as an employer, you can view resumes of those that served time in the military. Just use the search mechanism and you're good to go. You can also search candidates by:

- Keywords
- State/province
- Country
- Last updated
- Career level
- Certifications
- Military experience

## Further Resources From [America's Heroes at Work](#)

Before you begin your search for a veteran, you may want to review the employer hiring toolkit at [America's Heroes at Work](#), which not only describes how rewarding it can be to hire a veteran, but provides lots of information about hiring and transitioning military personnel.

America's Heroes at Work can tell you more about:

- Tax incentives.
- The military culture.
- Resources to convert military into civilian qualifications.
- The different types of military service.
- What you can and should not ask during an interview.
- Creating a culturally sensitive new hire orientation plan.
- How much veterans appreciate a veteran-friendly workplace.