

Hiring Military Veterans is Good Business

Unemployment rates high for these individuals

BY BILL WHITMORE

If your company's diversity recruiting strategy fails to include military veterans, you are missing out on working with some of our country's most outstanding men and women. Organizations that fail to recognize the extraordinary leadership qualities veterans bring to the workplace pass up the opportunity to work with results-oriented employees who have a strong sense of accountability and responsibility. It is time for our country's corporate leaders to awaken to the reality that combat leadership and military discipline translate into dynamic employees who can enhance an organization's productivity.

While the national unemployment rate hovers around 9.7 percent for civilians, the unemployment rate for young male veterans, including those returning from Afghanistan and Iraq, is more than double the national average at 21.6 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Isn't it time to shine the employment spotlight on the brave men and women who serve our country?

What essential set of life skills do military veterans bring to corporate America that makes them an indispensable pairing? The military trains our men and women to lead by example, as well as understand the nuances of delegation and motivation. As General Douglas McArthur once said: "A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others." Military veterans understand the value of teamwork, which they



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can apply in our country's offices and board rooms. Veterans understand their role within an organizational framework and serve as exemplary role models to subordinates while demonstrating accountability and leadership to supervisors.

Veterans generally enter the work force with identifiable skills that can be transferred to the business world, and are often skilled in technical trends pertinent to business and industry. And what they don't know, they are eager to learn – making them receptive and ready hires in work environments valuing ongoing learning and training. Veterans represent diversity and collaborative teamwork in action having served with people from diverse economic, ethnic and geographic background – as well as

race, religion and gender. Even under dire stress, veterans complete tasks and assignments in a timely manner as they have labored under restrictive schedules and resources on the battlefields and military installations they've served.

Employers can find qualified veterans from a variety of sources including the Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, Military.com, HireVeterans.com and the Wounded Warriors Project. Employers can become true partners with selected veterans' organizations and work with them proactively to ensure they are maximizing their ability to recruit from this extremely qualified talent pool.

Lest we forget, the men and women who have chosen to serve our country are patriots who have made enormous sacrifices to ensure our safety and freedom. By employing military veterans, we are saying, "thank you for your service" and for protecting us from terrorism and other threats. □

About the Author

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