

VETERAN HIRING PROGRAMS

How to Create a Veteran and Military Spouse Hiring Strategy

Sep 20, 2023 · Cat DiStasio



Recruiting and hiring veterans and military spouses is often overlooked in proactive talent acquisition strategies. But paying more attention to this valuable talent pool could help organizations address skill shortages and make progress toward DEIB goals. In this article, we'll cover important advice on how to build a military connected community and veteran hiring program.

We recently hosted a webinar devoted to hiring military-connected talent featuring a panel of experts, Sean Trecha, director of talent acquisition at [KPMG](#), a professional services firm and one of the Big 4 accounting and consulting firms; Matthew de Passo, recruitment marketing manager at [Amtrak](#); and Brooke Prouty, senior director of digital products and innovation at [Hiring Our Heroes](#), an initiative of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, focused on veteran and military spouse employment topics.

Here are some of the key takeaways from that discussion.

What is a Veteran & Military Spouse Hiring Strategy?

Simply put, this is a recruiting and hiring strategy that targets veterans, military spouses, and transitioning military members, a talent pool often described as "military-connected" talent.

Prioritizing the military-connected talent pool offers organizations a variety of benefits. Hiring veterans and military spouses can help you attract qualified, diverse, and experienced talent that can add incredible value, perspective, and range to your team. Plus

It may also help address talent shortages, as there is a large pool of untapped talent especially among the military spouse community. Creating a veteran hiring strategy is also a way to support those who perform military service and help them reintegrate with civilian life after service, as well as to support the active military family by providing a much-needed income stream through military spouse employment, which most rely on.

The basic steps for creating a new military-connected hiring strategy are:

1. **Start with military-connected folks you already employ.**

If you have a veteran-focused ERG, this can be a great resource. Talk with these employees about their perspectives on how working at your organization has been, what their candidate experience was like, and ask for input on reaching other candidates like them.

"One of those big and really important steps is going to be lining up the values that particular group has versus your company," said de Passo. "So if being service oriented is really important, that'll be a good thing to focus on."

2. **Understand what roles fit vets and military spouses by focusing on skills and experience, not job titles.**

"Approximately two-thirds of our roles require an accounting degree and a CPA designation, and in reality there are very few people coming out of the military who have a CPA designation, but there are plenty that come out with operations supply chain logistics experience that otherwise qualifies them for the role," said Trecha.

3. **Outline a program that supports more than hiring, including onboarding, professional development, and continued employee engagement.**

"These candidates are hopefully going to contribute to your organization long term," said Prouty. "It's great to approach this holistically—not just how you're going to find, recruit and onboard them—but asking 'How are we going to maximize their potential within the organization?'"

How to Attract Military-Connected Talent

Telling authentic stories about organizational culture is a key strategy for attracting and engaging with military-connected candidates. Through your recruiting events and recruitment marketing content, show veterans and



military spouses why your organization is a great fit.

Hosting virtual events that feature vet-related ERGs or video testimonials from military-connected employees is an effective way to build trust and demonstrate your organization's commitment to being a great place for military-connected people to work.

Offering **remote work arrangements** is an especially attractive quality for military spouses, who might otherwise be forced to change jobs with every new location assignment. Remote work offers the possibility of long-term employment and career advancement for candidates who may not know where they'll be living a year from now.

Strategies for Engaging with Military Spouses

For military families, having dual income is crucial. HOH's [Military Spouses in the Workplace](#) study revealed that **77% of military spouses reported that having two incomes was "vitally important" to their family.**

Despite this, military spouses are more likely to be unemployed than their civilian counterparts. Today's national unemployment rate is 3.8% overall and 3.5% for women, while the **military spouse unemployment rate is around 21%.** Fortunately, employers can help close this gap.

Several effective strategies that help organizations engage with military spouses are:

- Highlighting ERGs in your recruiting events and content
- Communicating authentically about the organizational culture and employee experience
- Demonstrating your organization's commitment to DEIB

Leveraging Technology for Meaningful Connection

When evaluating technology solutions to reach military-connected candidates, there are several key factors to consider.

- **Ability to host targeted events.** While military-connected candidates may attend general recruiting events, they may be more likely to participate in an event that specifically focuses on their situation. Hosting hiring events specifically for transitioning vets or active military spouses shows them, without a doubt, that you want to engage with them.
- **Ability to host virtual recruiting events and remote interviews.** Military-connected candidates could be in your local zip code or halfway around the globe. Creating a location-agnostic hiring process is key so it's crucial to build a tech stack that allows you to conduct your recruiting process without geographic constraints.
- **Partner with specialized vendors who are already connected to the military community.** Find a tool that is flexible and can equip you to host many types of hiring events for different use cases - if you can use a single vendor for networking events and hiring events, that's a win for candidates and creates a consistent experience for them.

Business Benefits of Hiring Military-Connected Candidates

Veterans and military spouses are an often overlooked yet incredibly valuable talent pool. Military-connected candidates can offer unique skill sets and perspectives that enhance any organization's ability to innovate and grow. This community also includes a high proportion of underrepresented groups, giving organizations the opportunity to tangibly support diversity and contribute to DEIB goals. There are countless reasons to create a specific hiring strategy for military-connected candidates and perhaps one that matters more than the rest: it's the right thing to do.

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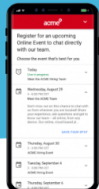
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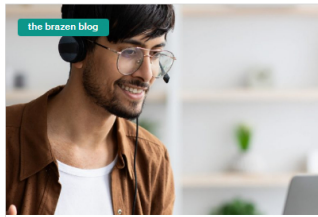
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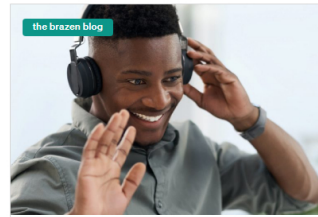


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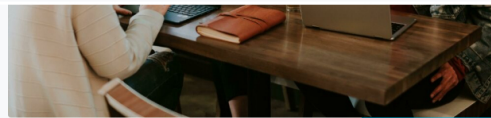
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