

Career Shift: Transitioning from Military to Civilian Employment

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Stiff competition, high level scrutiny and employer bias can be obstacles on any career path. For Minnesota's Veterans transitioning back to the civilian employment world, career planning must seem next to impossible. For example, if your most recent job title was Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator or simply 96U, do you put this on a resume? And will anyone's hapless HR assistant have a clue about what you can do? If you approach your job search the right way, you will be able to communicate effectively, translating what you know into skills organizations are looking for.

First, where's your VMET report? I was speaking with a group of Veterans last week and when I said this to them, they looked completely blank. Therein lies the problem, says Steve Reardon, who manages an occupational website for the Department of Defense. Many people receive the VMET just before leaving the service. They take one look at it and throw it away. But having it can be a huge help as you transition to civilian work. The Verification of Military Experience and Training document, DD Form 2586, lists your military job experience and training history, recommended college credit information, and civilian equivalent job titles. You can check the VMET website or ask your transition counselor for information about obtaining a new report.

Next, surf over to another website, <http://online.onetcenter.org/crosswalk/MOC>, and type in your military job title or description. The result is a list of comparable civilian positions, including competitive salary and specific requirements for success in each position. If you need to update your education, use up any military education benefits you have earned. This is your money, and any education you pick up will help you get ahead in your career.

Finally, cut and paste those job descriptions into a search engine like www.indeed.com and find out who is hiring for these positions in your area. Using your VMET in tandem with these other websites will ensure that you are looking for the right positions. You will be able to communicate with civilian hiring managers in a language they understand, and come across as someone who understands their needs, the perfect person to hire.

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