

Transitioning From the Military and Your New Career



Tailoring Your Experience
Into Public Relations and
Communications

PRSA
Public
Relations
Society of
America

Your Career Battle Plan

You served your country and you're ready to transition into civilian life. PRSA is here to help. The first step is finding the right job that emphasizes your skills as a leader, motivator and team player. This document provides the following career content to place you on that path. Topics being covered are:

- Networking
- Personal branding
- Newsletters to grow your expertise
- Cover letters
- Resumes



- Job interview
- Overall tips
- LinkedIn
- Additional resources
- Final remarks

Military Accomplishments Fitting Into Civilian Jobs

- Your military experience has made you an expert communicator. Your troops have depended on you; you have dispatched orders, handled crises and saved countless lives.
- But how do you translate these skills to get hired?
- There's a lot of hope, and PRSA is there to help. The former military on the next pages have generously provided their transition success stories.



Military Success Stories — Where Are They Now?



Johnny Rea
24 Years Air Force Service
Retired 2007

Current Position:
Vice President, Strategic
Marketing and
Communications
Centura Health



Joseph V. Trahan, III, Ph.D.,
APR, Fellow PRSA
Retired Lieutenant Colonel
(United States Army Reserve)

Current Position:
President and CEO
Trahan & Associates
Media Relations, Crisis and Risk
Communications Expert Trainer



Cathy Segal, APR
27 Years Air Force Chief Master Sergeant
Retired 2008

Current Position:
Strategic Communications
Consultant
Booz Allen Hamilton Inc



Military Success Stories — Where Are They Now? (Cont'd)



Dennis Spring
Vietnam War Vet
Drafted 1967

Current Position:
President
Spring Associates, Inc.
Executive Recruiting Firm



Chuck Merlo
United States Air Force
1994

Current Position:
Owner
C.G. Merlo Consulting



Jeffrey Bishop
United States Air Force
1995

Current Position:
Marketing and Communication
Director
Department of Veterans Affairs



Military Success Stories — Where Are They Now? (Cont'd)



Fred Wellman
22 Years United States Army Retired
2009

Current Position:
Chief Executive Officer and Founder
ScoutComms, Inc.



Melissa Boatwright, APR
Air Force 1997-2007
Public Affairs Officer, Air Force
Reserve 2007-Present

Current Position:
Senior Communications Specialist
Thomson Reuters



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PRSA Jobcenter Career Resources

- PRSA Jobcenter has a plethora of career resources including
 - Job hunting advice
 - Resume and Coverletter help
 - Networking guides – Join PRSA and connect with your chapter and section
 - Interview advice
 - Mentoring
 - Salary Information
 - General career guidance from your peers

PRSA Jobcenter Job Search Help

- Search jobs by location and keywords on <https://jobs.prsa.org>
- Follow @prsajobcenter on twitter to see real time job opportunities
- Create a job alert
- Sign up for the PRSA Jobseeker Career E-newsletter

Networking Guidelines



- Attend PRSA Chapter events.
- Get involved with your PRSA Professional Interest Section.
- Get active in meet ups. For local venues, try searching www.meetup.com.
- Survey your network.
- Build your network on LinkedIn, Facebook or Google+. Invite them to your network.
- Get out there and Network! Be yourself and be confident.

G i v e T o G e t

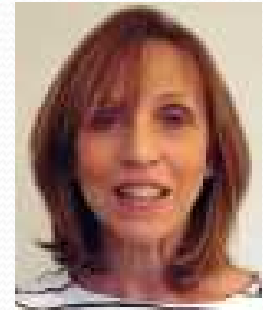
Social Media Following Etiquette



- Build a relationship.
- Give to get (reciprocity).
- Find mutual personal interests.
- Give restaurant tips.
- Write a blog.
- Be honest and authentic.
- Measure your *Klout* influence.

Information courtesy Mark Schaefer

LinkedIn



Sandy Charet

- Profile is the most important element.
- Use the “specialties” section to place keywords.
- Must have a picture.
- Say what you do (e.g., multi-cultural program).
- Keep profile relevant and up-to-date.
- Click on PDF and make sure resume and profile match.
- Complete your entire profile.
- You can join up to 50 different specialty groups.

Information courtesy Sandy Charet – Charet Associates.

Online Branding Guidelines

- Can you be found online easily? If you were to Google yourself, where would you place and can you be found?
- Build, enhance and/or check your profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc.
- Start building an online portfolio of your work.
- Establish a blog or other social media platform to provide thought leadership about your field.

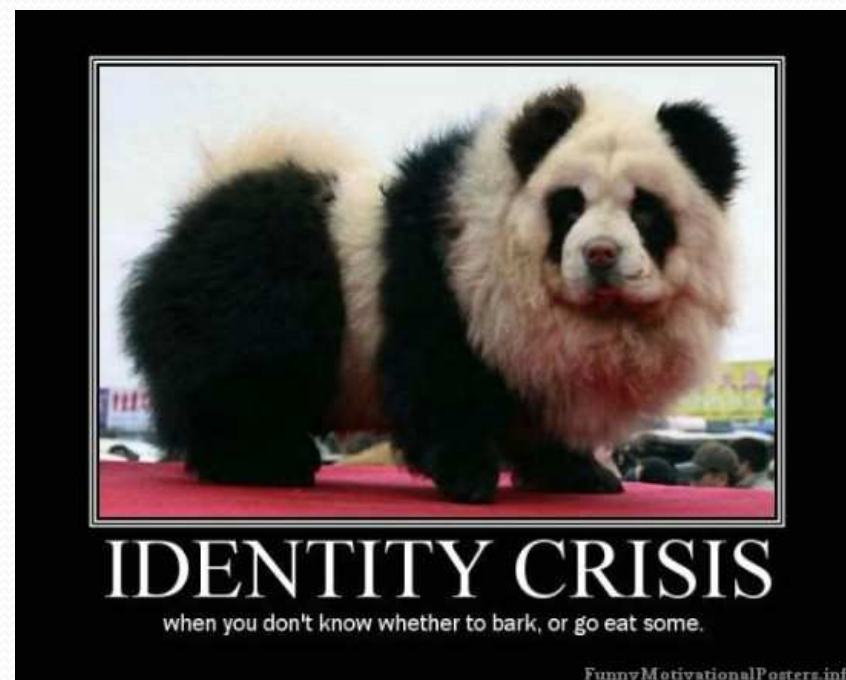
Do this wisely. Everything you post online — pics, comments is now public domain.

Information courtesy PRSA Mentors and College of Fellows.

Your Brand Identity

1. Establish an online identity.

- Own your domain name.
- Differentiate yourself.
- Develop consistent LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Google profiles..
- Work with brandyourself.com via Google.



2. Personalize URLs.

Strengthens your search engine optimization (SEO) related to your brand.

Check through <http://namechk.com/> if name is still available.

Information courtesy Dr. Dawn Edmiston.

Your Brand Identity (Cont'd)



3. Develop content.

- Use Google Alerts to receive daily updates on selected topics.
- Share content through a personal blog site such as WordPress.

4. Promote brand name.

5. Promote content.

6. Actively network via associations and LinkedIn.

7. Engage your audience.

- Review and respond to postings in a timely manner.
- Post questions to the group.

Information courtesy Dr. Dawn Edmiston.

Branding Yourself (Cont'd)

8. Monitor your brand.
 - Establish a Google Alert for your brand.
 - Use tracking sites like *Social Mention*.

9. Measure your online *Klout*.
 - Based on actions such as retweets, @messages, follows, comments and likes.

10. Manage your brand presence.



Information courtesy Dr. Dawn Edmiston.

Cover Letters

— Introduction

- Showcase key qualifications and what sets you apart from other candidates.
- No more than two paragraphs.
- Inspiring and brief.
- What follows are some cover letter don'ts and guidelines.

Cover Letter Guidelines

- Grab their attention. Do not repeat resume. Study job spec and company. What can you add that no one else can?
- Put just enough in the cover letter to entice, but not too much.
- Google the cover letter that went viral.



Resumes — Introduction

- Six seconds to attract a recruiter's attention.
- Keep it organized
- No Typos (Have someone review it)
 - Upload your resume to PRSA Jobcenter and opt-in for a free resume review
- Start with a background summary
- Use language in the job description
- Express your accomplishments, achievements and service



Resume Background Summary

- Suggestions from recruitment experts:

- George Jamison Spencer Stuart

Emphasize strong hands-on skills, strategic thinking and leadership ability.



- Dennis Spring of Spring Associates

Include most prominent public relations skills, niche specialty/categories, industry specialization.



No overly-personal attributes:



Five Resume Don'ts

~~1. My Resume.Com~~

2. Name in header only.



~~3. Fancy Fonts.~~

~~4. Flowery, vague language.~~



~~5. Resume holes.~~



Information courtesy Sandy Charet – Charet Associates.

Five Resume Do's

- Keep it short.
- Use technology: Mashable and Google
- Use the keywords from the job description in your resume and cover letter.
- Get inspired.
- Look at your resume as if you were the person doing the hiring.



Information courtesy Sandy Charet – Charet Associates.

Three Types of Resumes

- **Type 1:** Duties and responsibilities. This will typically include the following sections:
 - Background summary
 - Education
 - Professional experience
 - Title, time period
 - Name of company
 - Reporting
 - Duties
 - Accomplishments
 - Skills (e.g. computer)
 - Awards, memberships, volunteer work



Information courtesy Brazen Careerist.

¶
SKILLS¶

¶
Computers and Technology.¶

- MICROSOFT OFFICE SUITE. Advanced proficiency in MS Word, Excel, Access, Outlook, PowerPoint, FrontPage¶
- ADOBE CREATIVE SUITE. Expert-level skills in Adobe Acrobat, PageMaker, InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, ImageReady. Certified expert training with InDesign for long documents; Advanced training sessions on Photoshop techniques and graphic design (incl. levels, curves and vanishing point), training on visual representation of data with renowned artist Ed Tufte¶
- MORE SKILLS. Skill description¶
- MORE SKILLS. Skill description¶
- MORE SKILLS. Skill description¶
- MORE SKILLS. Skill description¶
- MORE SKILLS. Skill description¶

¶
AWARDS, MEMBERSHIPS, VOLUNTEER WORK¶

- Volunteer position, organization, date.¶
- Volunteer position, organization, date.¶
- Volunteer position, organization, date.¶
- Award, award-giving institution, date¶
- Award, award-giving institution, date¶
- Award, award-giving institution, date¶

¶
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL OR INTERESTS¶

You can list your international travel (if that's applicable to your job) or other interests you have here.¶

¶
¶

¶
→ [Courtesy of the Brazen Careerist.¶

Three Types of Resumes (Cont'd)

The two remaining types are:

- **Type 2: Functional**

- This is a great format for people who've had substantial experience at one company/organization and who wear multiple hats. It typically includes:
 - A two-three sentence overview of your role here and any high-level, over-arching achievements.
 - A listing of about five different key functions. Within that, about five bulleted descriptions of your role in this context and any high-level achievements.

- **Type 3: Keyword**

- Include an expertise heading with your skill/network/keyword.

Information courtesy Brazen Careerist.

Resume Guidelines

- Focus on what you have accomplished for your employers.
- Tightly target to your audience. Use relevant words.
- Use action words that paint a picture of who you are and your value to the company.
- Do not make the resume a boring recitation of the tasks that comprise the jobs you have held. Show how you fit the bill and suit the organization's culture.

Information courtesy PRSA Mentors and College of Fellows.

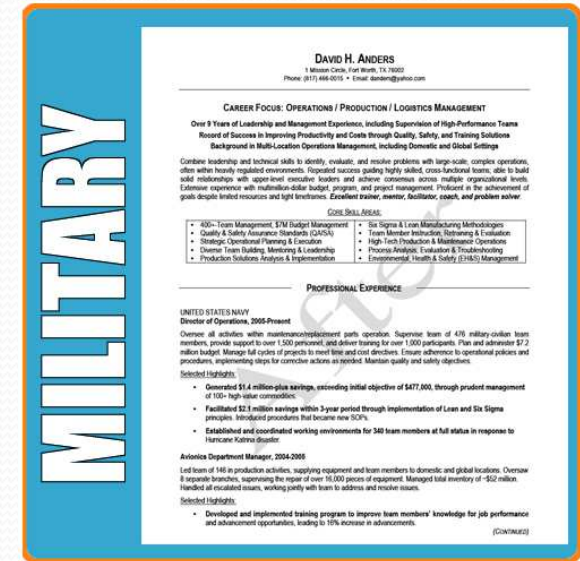
Resume Guidelines (Cont'd)

- Use storytelling techniques.
- Make the resume fit each opportunity. Tailor the resume to each job description.
- Match keywords to the job description.
- Create one very long “master” resume and pull what you need for each application based on job description.
- Attend on-base resume writing courses when available.
- No two resumes should look exactly the same

Information courtesy PRSA Mentors and College of Fellows.

Resume Guidelines (Cont'd)

- Limit your resume to recent 10 years.
- Google “resume that went viral.”
- Log on to PRSA Jobcenter as employer and go into “view resumes.”
- Do not have a wordy resume (one page if beginning).



Resume Guidelines (Cont'd)

- Do not have a vague background summary.
- Do not “spray and pray” applying to any job.
- Do not use overly elaborate graphics.
- Do not have faulty references.
- Do not have any gaps.





Potential Phrases to Incorporate in Your Resume

The military has prepared you for a leadership role in public affairs, strategic public relations, communications, social media or media relations.

The following phrases have been aggregated from public relations and communications professionals that have successfully transitioned from the military.

Phrases to Consider (Communications)

- Led multi-service communications team.
- Developed external/internal communications program.
- Employed communication strategies/programs.
- Identified communication gaps and initiated updates.
- Managed marketing and communications strategy.
- Managed marketing and communications execution.
- Spokesperson at unit/regional levels.

Phrases to Consider (Media Relations)

- Responded to international, national and local media.
- Directed outreach campaign.
- Targeted themes.
- Coordinated integrated public outreach programs.
- Responded to media queries.
- Created talking points.
- Spearheaded service line marketing/development campaigns.
- Targeted national outreach.
- Provided interview techniques.

Phrases to Consider (Strategic)

- Results-oriented communicator.
- Developed outreach strategies.
- Developed strategy/executed plans for senior leader implementation.
- Defined and executive integrated marketing strategies.
- Developed marketing and business strategies.

Phrases to Consider (Leadership)

- Provided sound advice and counsel.
- Wrote implementation plan for field headquarters.
- Orchestrated branding campaign.
- Prepared health care and Air Force senior leaders to succeed in media engagements.
- Led seminars.
- Led public-relations-focused trips.
- Guided the Air Force through career field mergers following workforce cuts.

Phrases to Consider (Social Media)

- Directed Facebook page.
- Developed social media plan.
- Initiated company blog.
- Created Pinterest page for company.
- Created and maintained Twitter page.
- Led content curation for blogs and tweets.

Phrases to Consider (Tactical)

- Produced e-newsletter.
- Tracked results.
- Possess strong organization skills.
- Able to translate technical information into easy-to-understand text.

Phrases to Consider (Reputation Management)

- Promoted company's vision.
- Orchestrated branding campaign.
- Provided message development.

Converting Military to Civilian Terms: Example



Military platoon leader, leading petty officer, section leader = front line supervisor in the business world.

- Supervised and evaluated up to 75 employees.
- Conducted high-quality training for groups up to twenty-five employees.
- Improved staff productivity and efficiency by 30 percent.
- Enforced 100 percent of company policies and procedures.
- Submitted comprehensive and timely reports to supervisor.

Source: TAPS Guide

Converting Military to Civilian Terms: Creating Accomplishment Statements

Think of this as a story with a title. Identify the scenario. Some topics (titles) may include:

- A task you performed alone.
- A project you worked on as a team member/team leader.
- A challenge you overcame in the job setting.
- A problem you solved.
- A goal you set.

Source: TAPS Guide



Converting Military to Civilian Terms: Measurable Results (Examples)

- ... which reduced accidents from 30 percent to fewer than 2 percent in two weeks.
- ... which enabled constant communication in four different states.
- ... which increased the training rate of employees by 45 percent.
- ... that provided search and recovery support for disaster victims.

Source: TAPS Guide



The Job Interview — Guidelines



- RESEARCH! (Look at website, media articles, analyst reports, social media channels, press releases, personal friend, etc.).
- Keep calm during the unexpected questions.
- Practice your one-on-one.
- Work on your public speaking skills.
- Ask questions to show significant interest
- Be authentic...Be You!

Interview Mistakes Taking You Out of the Running

- Any negativity about a previous job experience.
- Showing up late.
- Not dressing for success.
- Being unprepared in researching the company.
- Not following up with a thank-you email.
- Having a vague understanding of the job description.
- Not following instructions on the application.



Your Military Experience and the Job Interview — Introduction



How did your military career prepare you for this job?

Remember, your military experience has made you an expert at leading, inspiring and following instructions — attributes applicable to any position. The next few pages cover some qualities to emphasize in the interview.

Your Military Experience and the Job Interview — Qualities to Emphasize

- Mission-focused
- Discipline
- Commitment
- Team leader
- Flexibility
- Writing skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Organized
- Good planner
- Priority-driven
- Honesty
- Integrity

Facing Recruiter Feedback With Grace

- Be Kind: Reinforce you are willing to take any classes or tutorials to get hired.
- Be Brief: Do not tell them you are surprised you didn't get the position. Limit questions to one or two quick ones.
- Be Prepared: Don't be defensive when taking criticism.
- Be a Good Listener: Listen to what is said and how it is said.

Overall Tips

- Look for companies that advertise their support of vets — aerospace and defense companies, Coca-Cola, etc.
- Be prepared to take a brief step back in your career to get your foot in the door.
- Look for associations that have employer toolkits to hire military.
- Consider going for your Accreditation in Public Relations + Military Communications (APR+M). Consult PRSA.
- Think like a public relations or communications professional.
- Explain your value in civilian terms.

Fields to Consider

- Advocacy
- Corporate/employee communications
- Community relations
- Educational institutions
- Media liaison/media relations
- Media training
- Nonprofit/associations
- Organizational management
- Public affairs/government
- Public relations
- Journalism
- Investor relations
- Technology
- Health
- Travel/tourism

Resources for Information:

- Public Relations Society of America (PRSA): www.prsa.org
- Transition Assistance Program (TAP)
- LinkedIn Group — America's Heroes at Work
- Converting military to civilian terms:
<http://www.careerinfonet.org/moc/Default.aspx>
- Military Officer's Association of America (MOAA):
www.moaa.org/

Final Remarks



- Check PRSA Jobcenter: <https://jobs.prsa.org>.
- Consult PRSA membership for special rates.
- Tap into PRSA's complimentary member webinars.
- Consider signing up with a PRSA Mentor.
- Consult award-winning Silver Anvil campaigns.
- PRSA — here to help in times of trouble and joy.
- Contact john.Kesaris@prsa.org for career information.