

LIFE AFTER THE MILITARY

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER TRANSITION

Are you thinking about the transition to a civilian career after your military service? If so, you may find many options available to you, which leaves you with a lot to consider. That may feel overwhelming, but it can also be exciting as you make important decisions about your future. Read on to discover essential information that can help you get a head start on your civilian career goals.



Colorado Technical University®

ARE YOU IN?



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MAKING A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

While there may be some uncertainty when you separate from the military and enter the civilian workforce, there is a lot you can do before that happens. You may have already gone through the Transition Assistance Program, which means some of this information will be familiar to you, but these tips, along with information about Colorado Technical University, can help you make a smoother transition.

- ▶ **Get started early.** Begin to think about your civilian career one to two years before your expected separation date. You'll need that time to assess your skills and interests, so you can research and align yourself with a civilian career that will be a good fit. You may want to further your education after you separate from the military. Talk with an ESO on your base to get more information.
- ▶ **Do your research.** Your research involves more than gathering information about potential civilian career paths. It also involves tapping into what personally resonates with your passion and interests. Think about the elements of your military experience that sparked an internal fire, and then consider how that might be translated to a civilian career. Rather than focus on job titles, focus on the skills you want to use and the careers that will let that happen. If you are considering going back to school, look for universities that offer transfer credit for past military service or training, military benefits, scholarships or grants, and research the school's reputation in the military community.
- ▶ **Assess your skill gaps.** If you've given yourself enough lead-time, you'll have a better idea of the civilian career path you want to take, which gives you time to fill any skill gaps that may come up. When possible, seek additional military training and experience that might help you with your civilian job search. This may involve doing more than the expected, but that extra effort can pay off when it's time to launch your civilian career.
- ▶ **Dust off your resume.** Depending on your circumstances, you may never have created a resume. Whether you have a resume or not, it's important to know that your military experience may not easily translate into a civilian career. For this reason, consider creating a functional resume that focuses on specific skills that will be of interest to a civilian employer, rather than a chronological resume that lists military job titles a civilian employer will not recognize or understand. Many universities have career services departments that can help you create a resume. If you decide to go back to school, take advantage of this perk and consult a specialist for help building your resume.

- ▶ **Build your professional network.** Chances are you have many more military contacts in your network than civilian ones. If that's the case and you have an eye on a civilian career, then you should actively build a more diverse network while you're still in the military. Creating a professional profile online using a site like LinkedIn is a good place to start. Continuing to build your network will better prepare you for a career as a civilian. For more information and advice on building a powerful professional network, download the **Modern Networking: How to Build Professional Connections That Matter** eBook.

REEL IN CIVILIAN EMPLOYERS WITH YOUR MILITARY EXPERIENCE

One of the challenges of switching from a military to a civilian career is finding a way to relate your military experience to the civilian workplace. Military occupational specialties are very different compared to what you'll find in corporate occupations, which means you may need to think differently about your skills and experience. For example, you may be accustomed to a military lingo that involves jargon, acronyms and terms a civilian employer would not understand. Of course, the same is true in civilian workplaces, so you may need to learn new ways of communicating.

Did You Know?

CTU has over 200 education partners, many of which have strong commitments to hire those with military backgrounds.

If you're not sure how your military experience might translate into a civilian career, consider conducting informational interviews. While you can gather a great deal of information about a career by researching online or reading brochures and books, you'll gain far greater insight by communicating first-hand with someone with direct experience in the occupation you seek. Always treat informational interviews as you would a job interview. You may not be actively in the running for a position, but you are making a professional impression, so you want to be sure it's a good one.

Through your interviews, you'll likely discover a number of marketable skills and characteristics that make you an ideal candidate for a civilian career. According to CTU Military Career Coach, Dale Prickett, there are a number of attributes that civilian employers tend to look for in employees, including:

- ▶ **Work Ethic.** Many military service members and veterans apply the structure and commitment from their training to the workplace.
- ▶ **Leadership.** “Nearly all veterans have served in a leadership role in some capacity during their time in the military,” Prickett explains, “so whether they are leading from the front or motivating others to achieve collaborative goals, veterans usually perform exceedingly well in a supervisory or managerial capacity.”
- ▶ **Timeliness.** Arriving on time is a key component of the military lifestyle, so being a veteran usually gives civilian employers confidence in your ability to be reliable.
- ▶ **Teamwork.** The nature of military service often means goals are achieved through the collaboration of people. There are no lone rangers. This makes veterans excellent team players who demonstrate a sense of loyalty that civilian employers appreciate.
- ▶ **Technological Skills.** Veterans tend to have a broad range of technical skills, or the ability to quickly pick up new technology. In the fast-paced civilian workplace, this kind of adaptability and innovation goes a long way.

WILL YOU NEED A DEGREE?

Military servicemen and women have varying employment interests that cover a broad spectrum of career fields. Prickett observes that veterans he’s coached regularly accept positions in a variety of fields, including IT, Logistics Management, Healthcare, Security, Operations Management and Law Enforcement, but the possibilities can be endless.

According to a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report¹, individuals with a Bachelor’s degree earned an average of \$23,764 more per year than their counterparts who held just a high school diploma in 2013. Those with a Bachelor’s degree also had an unemployment rate 3.5% less than those with merely a high school degree in 2013.

If a college degree is in your future, the Post-9/11 GI Bill is a benefit that may help cover your education expenses. It is worth considering using your military education benefits to earn a college degree since that may impact your career as a civilian.

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE AT CTU

Since 1965, CTU has been dedicated to serving the military community. Its first campus opened in Colorado Springs to meet the needs of students from five nearby military bases. Today, the university has expanded, offering degree programs

at a second campus in Denver, and also online through its virtual campus. Of course, you can choose to study on campus, online or both. That’s part of what makes CTU unique—you can fit your education around your life, and for the 34 percent of CTU’s student population who are military members and veterans, that means having the flexibility to choose when, where and how to earn their degree.

If a college degree is part of your future goals, contact us to learn more about our degree programs—including Associate, Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral degrees—in Business and Management, Criminal Justice, Engineering and Computer Science, Health Care, Information Systems and Technology, and Security Studies.

GET STARTED: CONNECT WITH US

Once enrolled, you will be assigned a Career Coach who can offer additional support as you make the transition to a civilian career. [Learn more](#) about Career Services.

If you have questions along the way, we’re here to help. Call or visit us online to learn more.

Call: 866.396.1726

Visit: coloradotech.edu/military

¹Salary statistics are based on national historical averages. Conditions in your area and at time of graduation may be different.

http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm

Financial aid is available for those who qualify. CTU cannot guarantee employment or salary. Find employment rates, financial obligations, and other disclosures at www.coloradotech.edu/disclosures. Not all programs available to residents of all states.

4435 North Chestnut Street, Colorado Springs, CO 80907. 852-1234567 0873937 03/15