

Barclays: Realising the true potential of veterans

In the last ten years alone more than 200,000 veterans have left the armed forces bringing with them plenty of experience and an instinctive set of skills that can bring real value to the workplace. From leadership to strategic planning to problem solving, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) invests millions of pounds each year in developing the skills that not only allow military personnel to be the best in service, but can be applied to equal benefit in the working world.

However, research commissioned by Barclays among 2,000 employers shows that businesses are not valuing military experience as highly as they should do. As a result businesses are missing a major opportunity to hire this top group of talent and veterans are often ending up in employment that doesn't make best use of their skills.

The Veterans Employment Transition Support programme (VETS) was launched in November 2015 to share best practice to improve employment outcomes for veterans and employers alike. VETS provides transition support for all veterans whether they are leaving the military or left thirty years ago, offering veterans mentoring, CV and interview skills, training, work experience and job opportunities. For employers, advice is offered on how to recruit veterans and support is provided to help get the best from veterans in their workforce.

VETS seeks to work within the existing landscape of transition support activities, using insight and techniques from across the private and public sector to improve and join up these activities by working together. Organisations involved in VETS include: Barclays, Deloitte, ISS World, BAE Systems, Anchor Care Homes, Help for Heroes and Walking with the Wounded.

In July 2016, the coalition of partners, with support from the MOD and the Career Transition Partnership (CTP), launched a new website (www.veteranemployment.co.uk) to connect ex-forces personnel with the right employers and provide the tools to support them in finding a job that values their skills and experience.

The website, which is free for all veterans and service personnel to join, is a one-stop-shop for ex-forces personnel looking for employment, whether they want to find out about jobs on offer through partner organisations, or just be connected with a mentor for advice on entering the civilian job market. Visitors to the site can browse job opportunities, learn about upcoming networking events, and start being matched up with mentors and potential employers that will boost their skills and talent.

The site is also aimed at those interested in becoming mentors themselves, or companies who would like to join the VETS initiative and start gaining access to top talent from the military.

Stuart Tootal, head of the Barclays Armed Forces Armed Forces Transition, Employment & Resettlement (AFTER) Programme, one of the VETS partners: "Veterans have a wealth of experience and possess innate skill sets that make them a valuable asset in the civilian world, yet one of the main challenges can be working out how to translate these skills in a way that resonates with a civilian employer. We're really pleased with the progress we have been making with VETS so far, having now connected over 450 veterans with employers across the UK since the launch."

Andy Jones, Security Systems Operations Manager at ISS Facility Services, said: "I believed my skills from the military translated into civilian life but I was faced with many challenges. I found that some employers had an entirely biased view of what my skills meant and focused on their reservations that I would be 'too regimented' or even 'too inexperienced for some roles'. I was hit by a number of rejections which was not only demoralising, but I believe inexperience does not equate to ineptitude. I was even advised to remove my regiments name from my CV based on

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differences of opinion of what my regiment stood for. I am proud of my regiment and the blokes I served with.

“Luckily, I was then put in touch with my VETS mentor, who encouraged me to see that actually I had a number of transferable skills that were perfect for the civilian world and to think more broadly about my options. Through VETS I have landed not just a job but a new career path which makes the most of the broad range of skills I gained in the military.”

For more information contact VETSHUB@Barclays.com