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### Value of a Vet Challenge: Skills Transferability, Supply, and Demand

Another challenge commonly cited by employers relates to the transferability of military-trained skills and abilities to the civilian sector; that is, many hiring managers and HR professionals report a perception that skills and experiences gained through military service do not always correlate to the work-role responsibilities typical of many civilian sector jobs.

An important insight related to the perception among some hiring managers that military-trained skills and abilities don't easily translate to the civilian sector, is that this perception appears to be sometimes reinforced as a consequence of employers relying exclusively on one of the many Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) translator tools currently available. As a result, in some instances these tools have the unintended effect of closing the door to employment opportunities for some veterans who, as a consequence of a varied military career combined with other educational experiences, are in fact viable candidates for a given civilian employment opportunity.

Based on in-depth interviews of the employers contributing insights to this publication, and analysis of in-demand civilian occupations provided by these same employers, it appears that the misperceptions related to skills transferability are largely a function of a lack of understanding among civilian employers as to the roles and responsibilities associated with many military occupations.

As a means to better educate civilian employers seeking to relate military occupations to civilian employment opportunities, PayScale created a list of occupations for which veterans are ideally suited, based on the transferability of military skills and training, as well as a function of those occupational roles identified as "high demand" in the civilian sector. Similarly, Monster.com evaluated broad occupational skills for supply, demand, and additional training and education requirement characteristics, finding:

In addition to the careers and skilled trades listed by Monster.com, PayScale found that veterans more frequently hold the following skills than non-veterans: "Cisco Networking, Computer Security, Contractor Management, Electronic Troubleshooting, Leadership, Microsoft SQL Server, Program Management, Security Policies and Procedures, and Security Risk Management." Veterans also often hold security clearances, which are currently active or quickly able to be investigated and reactivated, a critical advantage for



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many firms engaged with government or with contractual requirements for cleared workers.

Importantly, it's also critical to note that the notion of skills transferability applies equally to technical skills/abilities conferred as a consequence of military service, and also those less tangible skills and abilities characteristic of veterans that are valued in the workplace, but that are not necessarily work role specific.

For example, research conducted by Monster.com suggests that "soft-skills" characteristic of veterans such as the ability to concentrate for long periods, creativity, attention to detail and accuracy, a calm demeanor, the ability to communicate, self-discipline, confidence, and the ability to follow detailed instructions were all reported by employers already hiring veterans as skills that are both transferable and highly valued. However, both the transferability and value of these skills appears to be less salient to those firms with limited experience hiring veterans.

In sum, based on the accumulated research conducted for this publication, a key finding of this report is that there is little basis to suggest that:

- 1) The population of veterans is unskilled or that the occupational skills characteristic of veterans are not readily transferable to a civilian work setting.
- 2) The skills conferred as a consequence of military service are not relevant and valued in the civilian workplace.

In fact, those firms with meaningful and longer-term experience hiring veterans all report that opportunities to leverage veterans as a highly skilled and trained talent pool is a primary motivation for ongoing investments supporting veteran-focused employment initiatives. Instead, it appears that the core impediment to employment related to the issue of skills transferability is largely based on:

- A lack of understanding among civilian employers as to how and what skills conferred to the prospective employee as a consequence of military service will transfer to a civilian work role.
- A lack of understanding among many veterans as to how to best communicate the relevance of their skills and experiences to civilian employers.



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