

LP Examples Culture.docx

Leading Practice Examples: Culture

Having a 'veteran friendly' culture is a critical success factor for organizations implementing veteran recruitment and retention initiative. The following are leading practice recommendations and highlights:

Company Infrastructure

- Class leading examples of leadership-driven initiatives include JPMC's decision to situate the firm's veteran initiatives under the direct purview of the firm's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). JPMC integrates all the firm's veterans' initiatives (products, employment, philanthropy, training and education, etc.) under a single organizational unit, and by doing so can promote the firm's vision through a single, unified channel. Because this unified team is fully focused on veterans' issues impacting the firm, a deep understanding of the ties and integration between JPMC's varying initiatives impacting veterans is cultivated. This can be leveraged to educate others throughout the firm as to the opportunity available to business and industry related to veterans as customers, clients, suppliers, employees, and investors, with each reinforcing the other.
- Firms such as Walmart, Prudential, Ernst & Young, and Humana Healthcare have assumed an executive-level champion for veteran-related issues. The key finding in this area is that executive-level engagement is most likely to foster a veteran-engaged culture within the organization.
- Firms pursuing veteran-focused employment programs should establish an executive-level champion for such initiatives.
- Firms pursuing veteran-focused employment programs should consider establishing a firm-wide advisory board on veterans' initiatives, chaired by the executive-level champion.
- The executive-level champion should plan a consistent, cohesive communication strategy focused on veterans' issues over a significant period of time. The communications should start from the executive-level champion, and be consistently reinforced through many different channels and media, and targeted to specific stakeholders to advance business goals. Veteran-focused messages and talking points should be passed down so that mid-level managers are not creating their own messaging, but emphasizing and reinforcing the same innovation messages as the executive-level champion.
- The executive-level champion should develop goals and measurements related to the firm's veteran initiatives, which are tightly aligned to the strategic goals of the firm. Doing so will begin to institutionalize a focus on veterans' employment and career development across the firm.
- According to GE, in order to be successful, the company needs a "veteran-loving culture," and the veteran initiative needs to come from their leadership. For example, during Veterans Day, GE invites Vietnam veterans to a social event with their top management. Furthermore, the company places service flags and an appreciation letter on each veteran's desk, which reinforces positive recognition of veterans in the workplace and motivates other veterans to self-identify. This small act identified that the non-veterans were appreciative of the company for doing it, and they became more supportive of veterans.

- JPMC leadership describes how identifying and committing human capital resources at different levels throughout the HR infrastructure, focused on supporting the firm's veteran employment goals and objectives, has been central to the initiatives success.
- There are companies, which have created positions specific to new veteran employee assistance. For example, Lockheed Martin has created its Military Relations Manager position. ¹ Four regional Military Relations Managers at the company have the sole responsibility to help those transitioning from the military to Lockheed Martin.

Importance of Metrics for Tracking Performance

- Companies like GE, TriWest, AT&T, and Merck have implemented ways to voluntarily track and incentivize veterans to self-identify by leveraging existing programs and initiatives such as employee surveys, veterans' affinity groups, and more. It's widely accepted that employee resource and affinity groups can be leveraged for both self-identification and engagement, and that such groups positively impact companies, reinforcing the benefits of tracking and using the data for positive purposes. Finally, lack of identification may also result in missed opportunities for the firms to effectively train, retain, and empower veterans, which increases a firm's overall productivity and growth. Examples of self-identification incentives that GE has developed within their tracking program include:
 - Social events & cocktail hours specific to veterans to recognize and honor their service. During these events, computers are available so that veterans can physically update the employee database and self-identify.
 - GE Appliances has developed a challenge coin and makes the announcement to the top management level that a veteran is getting a coin, which is given by the CEO as means of recognizing and honoring veterans companywide. This incentivizes other veterans to self-identify.
 - GE sends a message to identified veterans and asks them if they know any other veterans who have not self-identified and to help with that effort.
 - The veterans' affinity networking group attracts veterans who usually do not come to veteran-specific events. The network provides many resources and initiatives such as professional development. The affinity network group has been the most effective initiative at GE (which is typical of affinity groups in a diversity context).
 - GE has created a veteran wall to honor veterans within the company.
- A company that has mandated tracking is AT&T, whose new policy mandates that after being given a job offer, candidates must be asked if they are currently, or have ever been, in military service.
- This specification is important, as some veterans do not identify themselves as veterans. Asking new employees about military service captures the relevant data better than asking about veteran status. Merck used existing employee surveys to measure corporate culture related to people with disabilities which are also relevant to wounded warriors. Another method, shared by Walmart, is using data from military leaves of absence to identify and track military employees.
- Tracking the degree of success that has been achieved as a consequence of the initiative, particularly as it relates to post-employment outcomes, represents an ongoing area of focus for JPMC. While it is relatively

straightforward to track the number of new hires, the firm recognizes a need to better understand what data needs to be captured during the recruitment process, and how that data relates to post-employment performance.

JPMC captures data in order to measure the process effectiveness as well as the relevance of skills and talents that veterans possess compared to the career opportunities within the firm.

Activities Supporting Veteran Engagement and Assimilation

- By increasing veteran employee engagement with non-veteran employees, the firm will help veterans form organizational attachments, positioned to engender loyalty.
- Symbols, artifacts, and ceremony are the means through which the military engenders organizational commitment. As such, awards, recognition, and praise might just be the single most cost-effective way to maintain a committed veteran workforce.
- Provide a vision for the future, and help the veteran understand where they fit within the firm. Communicate that you are willing to invest time and money in order for them to achieve mutual goals.
- GE stresses assessment and evaluation of Veteran initiatives throughout program implementation is critical. Metrics should be created so that evaluation of results provides insight into the veteran's strengths, talents, and skills, making linkages between those skills/strengths and prospective work roles evident.

Citations:

1 Lockheed Martin. (2012). Transitioning Military: Meet Our Military Relations Manager. Retrieved from <http://www.lockheedmartinjobs.com/meet-our-military.asp>.