



CASE STUDY

Leading Practices Model: Google for Veterans and Families

Started as a grassroots effort, today Google maintains a 500-member employee resource group, the Google Veterans Network (VetNet), that includes veterans, spouses, and other employees that share an interest in supporting veterans broadly, and also Google's veteran employees. The Google for Veterans and Families program,¹ designed by the Google Creative Lab in partnership with VetNet, is a powerful example of a firm leveraging its existing competencies and core resources to positively impact veterans, their families, and others positioned to support the veterans community.

Approach and Innovation: Leveraging Existing Competencies In-Kind

Through the Google for Veterans and Families program, the firm provides tools and resources, positioned to support the community of veterans and military families. Importantly, these tools and resources are ones that Google is uniquely positioned to deliver, given their world-class technology resources and expertise.

For example, Google provides a variety of relevant video-based resources that appear on the company's YouTube channel. A series, Veterans' Voices, for example, depicts veterans sharing their personal experiences in and about the military. The videos are organized by thematic questions, such as: Why did you choose to serve?; What was your biggest challenge?; What do you want civilians to know?; How was your transition out of the military?; and, many more. These may be useful tools to share with hiring managers, line supervisors, and others who need or want to understand veteran issues.

The channel also contains video tributes, which offer opportunities for community members to share their thanks with those who are serving and those who have served. This is done geographically, and veterans can see people in their own communities offering their thanks. In addition to the videos, valuable information may be found within the section on transition tips, which provide tutorials and tips on how to manage finances, find a civilian job, pursue further education, continue service, and communicate military experience.



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The Google for Veterans and Families website also provides tools for military members and families, to assist with the reintegration into civilian life. Again, most of these Google tools had already been developed by the firm, and are now being leveraged and customized for veterans and their families. Some of the tools that are included in the website are Google Docs, allowing veterans and military members to keep their records in safe place; a Resume Builder which allows them to build a professional resume; Google Voice, allowing them to be reachable by prospective employers as well as to stay in touch with family, friends, colleagues and others; and a demo of the soon-to-be-launched Tour Builder, powered by Google Earth, which allows veterans to record service experiences and map the places visited throughout their military careers.

Google also built the Veterans Job Bank, in partnership with the VA, a customized job search engine in the National Resource Directory, which is powered by Google Custom Search technology and crawls the web to identify veteran-preferred job openings.

Challenges to Implementation and Scalability

The Google Veterans Network has led an ongoing education effort about the value of military service for the employee base. These socialization efforts have helped inform and shape aspects of Google's strategy across departments, including marketing, human resources, and policy. One noteworthy component of this educational campaign includes a speaker series, highlighting the contributions of veterans both within Google, and also in society, more broadly. This and other, related efforts helped Google employees broadly 'see the possibilities, related to how the firm's existing resources, networks, and tools can be leveraged to support the veterans' community.

Recommendations

- Firms should look for opportunities to leverage their core competencies, in the context of where/how these strengths can be most effective and applied to impact the employment situation of veterans.



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- Effective philanthropy is often represented by a synergy between financial and non-financial (in-kind) giving.
- Leverage multiple communication channels, including collaborations with VSOs and other organizations serving veterans, to create awareness of non-financial (in-kind) giving.
- Engage internal affinity groups for veterans in dialogue for creative ideas on how to leverage your company's services externally.

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¹ Google. (2012). *Google for Veterans and Families*. Retrieved from

<http://www.googleforveterans.com/>.



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