



LEADING PRACTICE



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Leading Practices Brief #2: Training and Professional Development

GE developed the Junior Officer Leadership Program (JOLP) - a two-year rotational experience - through which Junior Military Officers (JMOs), hired by GE are exposed to Leading Practices: Training and Professional Development in the firm's different lines of business and receive both on-the-job and formal classroom training. Each business within GE has a JOLP champion, a high-ranking person whose job description includes leading the JOLP within their respective business. Typical training curricula include: Finance for Non-Financial Managers, Six Sigma Quality, Business Dynamics, Advanced Managers Course, Power Systems Product Knowledge Course, and Interview Training. Walking participants through the three-month rotations in different job fields allows GE to identify the strengths and interests of the junior officers, so that they may work and grow within that particular field once they graduate from the JOLP.

The Challenge:

Although most veterans have acquired significant skills and knowledge in the military, these are not always easily translatable to the civilian workplace. Successful training and professional development includes helping veterans use their military skills, knowledge and experience but also acquire new skills that will help them succeed

in civilian employment. Training and professional development is central to



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creating careers for veterans; that is, firms that have found success in the pursuit of veteran-focused employment initiatives cite the need to focus beyond hiring the veteran to also provide the training and resources necessary to empower the veteran in finding success in the civilian workplace.

Rotational Experience and Professional Development: Most training programs are “linear” in nature; that is, they provide the training needed to perform a specific job or tasks. Some companies are taking a different approach by exposing veterans to a variety of training opportunities across the company that cultivate knowledge, skills and abilities central to succeeding in the business culture. This may be easier to accomplish in medium to large firms that may have more diversity in their lines of business. Nonetheless, rotational assignments provide valuable contacts and experience that accelerate the development of technical, business, and professional skills. For example, GE has made a significant effort to create a supportive work environment for veterans through the creation of the GE Veterans Network. The network provides an internal platform for veteran employees to interact with fellow veterans across different GE businesses, provides referrals and mentorship, opens the door to different career paths within the firm, and is positioned to support career development training and assistance.

Collaborative and Proactive Workforce Development: Viewing training in a collaborative way, both within the company and with partners can leverage training and career programs across industries and to gain the capacity to serve different veteran stakeholders across different geographic locations. For example, Prudential partnered with a local community college and Workforce Opportunity Services (WOS), a not-for-profit organization, to replicate an Information Technology (IT) training program for veterans that were originally developed for disadvantaged youth. This VETalent program provides formal



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education combined with on-the-job training to prepare veterans to succeed in IT-focused careers. Prudential provides a scholarship to the veteran, which covers the cost of formal training (provided by a university partner). Prudential also provides each participating veteran a stipend of \$500 per week, allowing them to fully focus on the program without the burden of additional employment. This helps the veteran achieve certification, obtain experience, and open the door to the opportunity for fulltime employment.

Internship and Mentoring: Training and experience programs targeted to veterans and run, or supported by, business and industry provide opportunities to veterans to gain entry

BAE Systems (BAE) developed a veteran mentorship program that pairs veterans within the company to help them grow internally and to identify career growth resources, provide guidance, and to

The work-study portion of VETalent spans nine months and provides onsite work experiences for veterans, as a tool to socialize them in a civilian work environment. The program was originally managed by the IT department that initially drove innovation; but today it is managed by Prudential's veteran initiative team that reports to the company's chairman. VETalent is now expanding to other Fortune 500 companies to collaborate and open

into the civilian workforce, and to engage with potential future employers. Creating internships may enable companies to enhance the training and preparation of these veterans, who will be positioned as qualified applicants once they complete the internship/apprenticeship experience. For example, Ernst & Young suggests the creation of half-day internship fairs at schools for veterans only. The schools can leverage existing job fairs, when companies are on campus and can provide

specific time slots for veterans to attend. Companies can inquire with universities

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on how to adjust their career sites and allow students to self-identify as veterans, as well as how to add a veteran-preferred option on their internship and job postings. AT&T utilizes these job shadowing opportunities in order to test different career tracks within AT&T. They have been utilizing meet-and-greet events on university campuses and military bases.

Sodexo leverages its Sodexo University to offer veterans the training they need to succeed and grow through tuition reimbursement, self-study training modules, instructor-led classes and online learning opportunities. The program leverages online tools that assist the veterans with career development, keep track of their performance goals, and make use of thousands of resources within the company that allow them to shape their own future and grow with the company. Tools such as real-life work scenarios and online simulations link the veterans immediately to other resources within Sodexo, and the training opens opportunities for internal mentoring and growth development.



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