



## LEADING PRACTICE



**SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY**

**INSTITUTE *for* VETERANS  
and MILITARY FAMILIES**

JPMorgan Chase & Co., Founding Partner

### **Assimilation, Retention and Advancement - Proven Practices and “How-Tos”**

#### Company Culture and Policy

- Firms pursuing veteran-focused employment programs should establish an executive-level champion who, along with a veterans’ initiative advisory board, can plan a consistent and cohesive strategy for communicating veterans’ issues to the firm.
- As a veteran-friendly employer, create awareness of employment opportunities targeted to military members, prior to separation, to encourage job applications from candidates with a good potential employment fit. This may be done by contacting your local VA to find out how information on hiring opportunities could be added to veterans transition assistance programs operated from designated military separation centers.
- When the veteran is hired, make sure they understand how the company works, its policies, and its procedures. Give them a thorough orientation designed to help them fit in easily and quickly, and to immediately contribute to the company.



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- Pay attention to employees' personal needs and offer more flexibility where possible.
- Consider offering telecommuting, compressed schedules or onsite or back-up daycare when needed.
- Symbols, artifacts, and ceremonies 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.
- Offer benefits coordination to ensure transparent coordination between military, veteran, and civilian programs, particularly health and mental health care.

### Staff Training

- Provide training to experienced hiring managers on the particular workplace transition issues facing veterans. Hiring managers should use these insights when they interview and assess candidates to ensure they have the right skills, and that they fit well with the company culture, managers and co-workers.
- Develop training programs for hiring managers and also for staff on myths and facts about mental illnesses, understanding workplace implications of PTSD and TBI, disability etiquette in the workplace and accommodating veterans with disabilities. You may not need to develop these training programs by yourself, since they may already be available from community partners like your local Mental Health Association,



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Independent Living Center, VA, and Department of Labor One-Stop Career Centers, among others.

- Veteran employees often benefit from training that helps them transition from a military to a civilian workplace. Training and discussions about how work expectations differ in the military from what they encounter in the private sector could be developed by experienced veteran employees who have been successful in making the transition.
- Leveraging current veteran employees in aiding new (and transitioning) hires helps to create a veteran-supporting company culture. Employers can begin the process by inviting veteran employees to a lunch session and ask how they would go about developing an in-house veterans' transition program and a mentoring capacity.

### Workplace Assistance

- By increasing veteran employee engagement with non-veteran employees, the firm will help veterans form organizational attachments positioned to engender loyalty.
- Consider forming resource groups, affinity groups, mentoring and sponsorship, peer supports, and other focused activities which provide opportunities for veterans to learn from their peers about the company and what it takes to keep and advance in their job.
- If veterans are encountering difficulties adapting to the workplace, enlist a mentor as a workplace "buddy" to help them identify what appears to be getting in the way of keeping and thriving at their job.
- Use workplace flexibility to give military family members more options for getting their work done in the face of increased caregiving demands, support for injured veterans, managing multiple benefits systems, and the emotional and physical stress of meeting these demands. Sometimes jobs



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can be restructured to allow employees to work remotely so even in face of caregiver demands, essential job tasks can still be accomplished.

### Address Assimilation and Retention by Supporting Veterans' Families

- Compensation is important, but in many cases veterans are also focused on benefits related to their family and their well-being, given disability issues and family concerns. Highlight such benefits at the time of hire, and continue throughout their tenure.
- Consider offering part-time work, flexible schedules, and telework to help military families care for their family members while remaining employed.
- Military family resource groups can also be used to help military families pool resources and experiences to support one another, both at work and at home. Employers might attach these groups to their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and/or collaborate locally with other veteran-friendly employers to create cross-employer veteran family support groups.
- When possible, offer job transfer opportunities to active-duty service members and their family members so their employment can continue even in the face of deployment or relocation. This will help build employee loyalty and retention.



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