

# JOBS

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

### Industries hiring ex-military

Five popular jobs that give the men and women who've served our country an opportunity to make a difference and move up: information technology specialist, police officer, math or science teacher, civilian public service and entrepreneur. – *Caroline Levchuck, Monster.com*

# From the military to corporate world

### Tips for transitioning from a military career

By **Melissa Erickson**  
More Content Now

**M**oving from one job to another is never easy, but veterans and active duty military personnel transitioning to a civilian career are often at a competitive disadvantage.

While each service member exits with a certain rank and awards and decorations, the honors they've worked so hard for don't easily translate into the private sector, said retired U.S. Army Lt. Col. John W. Phillips.

"Be proud of what you have done for your country and leave it at that," he said.

Phillips spent more than 20 years in the military and, after retiring in 1999, transitioned directly to a position with Coca-Cola Co. A mid-level finance executive and founder and chairman of Coca-Cola's annual Veterans Day program, Phillips hopes to help other veterans with their own transition with his new book, "Boots to Loafers: Finding Your New True North."

The transi-

tion to a civilian career should start before even leaving the military, Phillips said.

"Get organized. Get together the efficiency reports and other paperwork to show what you accomplished to prepare for job interviews," he said.

Before interviewing, prepare your responses using the STAR technique to stand out, said Phillips, referring to the interview technique that structures responses to include situation, task, action and result.

Be ready when an interviewer poses a question such as, "Tell me about a time you solved a problem on a tight schedule. Compose an answer that includes the situation, which sets a context; the task that was required of you; the action you took; and the result of how the situation played out."

One of the harshest surprises when entering the corporate world after being in the military is the extreme change in culture, said Lida Citroën, author of "Your Next Mission: A



**Air traffic controllers monitor the status of aircraft in the Carrier Air Traffic Control Center aboard the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise (CVN 65) in August 2010.** U.S. NAVY PHOTO/MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS JEFFRY A. WILLADSEN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

personal branding guide for the military-to-civilian transition." Citroën volunteers her time and resources to help returning military veterans and is active with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and the Wall Street Warfighters Foundation.

Entering a civilian workplace can be a shock to the system for veterans. "They are sometimes naïve about the corporate nuances and cultural differences that influence hiring decisions," Citroën said. With uniforms and rankings, military culture is clearly defined, with exact rules of

conduct and a common bond in beliefs, traditions and values. In a civilian company the lines of communication are much more ambiguous, especially when the boss may come to work in jeans and flip flops. Roles and status are more flexible. Veterans who served in combat positions may not have worked with women recently, which poses certain gender issues, Citroën said.

Veterans have to learn to lighten up and follow the cues of those around them, said Phillips. While getting the job done and not worrying about hurt feelings works in the military, it can be a huge disadvantage in the corporate world.

"The rules of the game are different," said Citroën, and nowhere is that more obvious than on social media — especially for veterans coming off long stints of military service. Veterans have

**"Veterans have soft skills that civilians don't know about or understand. They're extremely trainable and resilient. They have leadership qualities, decision-making skills. They succeed under pressure."**

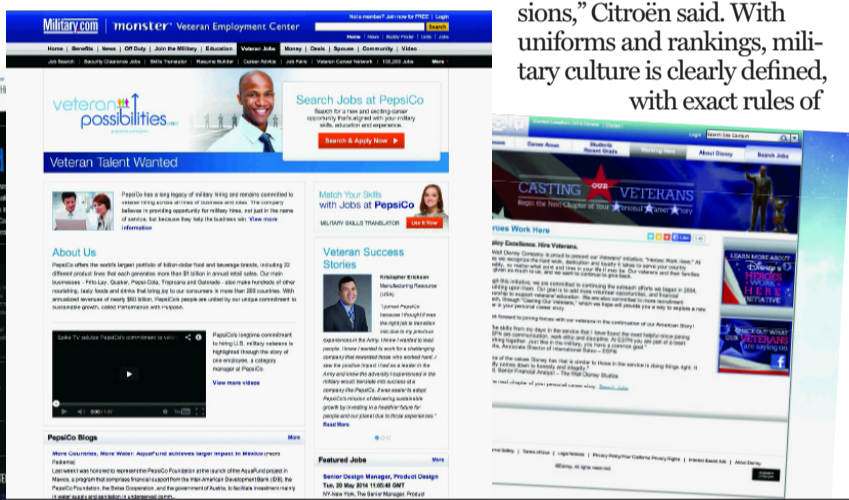
U.S. Army Lt. Col. John W. Phillips

to relearn tech skills to communicate wisely and effectively on email and social media as it relates to employment. "LinkedIn is a great resource for veterans re-entering the job market," Citroën added.

Veterans also have to overcome the stereotype that all they know how to do is carry a gun, Phillips said.

"Veterans have soft skills that civilians don't know about or understand," he said. "They're extremely trainable and resilient. They have leadership qualities, decision-making skills. They succeed under pressure. If they served in Iraq or Afghanistan, they had to navigate foreign cultures, which is great for companies that are global. They have a high level of security clearance (a benefit for companies who might otherwise have to pay for background checks). You're getting an employee who raised their hand and doesn't shy away from hard work," Citroën said.

**TIPS: Do a Web search of top companies that hire veterans, such as financial services company USAA, BAE Systems, Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Disney. Use veteran-friendly sites, such as HireHeroesUSA.com, to accelerate your job search.**



HALF PAGE AD