
WORKPLACE MATTERS

10 reasons military veterans may be exceptional employees

With President Obama announcing a timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan, tens of thousands of American service men and women will be returning, many of whom will join earlier returnees in the search for work.

But veterans are returning home to a tough job market. In 2010, more than 1 million veterans were out of work, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. Hardest hit are those 18 to 24 years old: 22 percent of male veterans and 15 percent of female veterans of this age range are unemployed.

The Lane County Human Resources Association is encouraging employers to join what is being called the Employer Partnership, a veterans hiring initiative. The partnership provides employers with a database of veterans who are seeking jobs. And it offers veterans a chance to use their military training to find work with employers who value these skills.

Interested local employers can contact John Patterson, program support manager for the Military Personnel Services Corporation, Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces (866-265-0428 Ext. 2514 or at john.pattersonii@usar.army.mil). The website is www.EmployerPartnership.org.

John Sheppard of Sheppard Motors in Eugene said he knows that the skills learned in the military have value to employers.

"Right now, thousands of National Guard veterans are returning to Lane County," he said. "Many will be looking for jobs and have the discipline, leadership and dedication to make great employees. They use the skills I learned in the military. Those skills have served me well and helped me to succeed. I urge you to hire a vet."

David Stone of Commercial Dehydrator Systems in Eugene said that military service can tip the balance for an employer faced with competing job candidates.

"Hiring is a hard thing. A bad decision can cost your organization dearly," Stone said. "So how do you choose? ... A prospective employee with a military background brings a list of hard-to-get attributes."

Veterans Today, an online military and foreign affairs journal, offered the top 10 reasons to hire a veteran:

1. Accelerated learning curve:

Veterans have the proven ability to learn. In addition, they can enter your work force with identifiable and transferable skills that were proven in real world situations.

2. Leadership: Veterans have the confidence to lead. They are trained to lead by example.

3. Teamwork: Veterans understand how genuine teamwork grows out of a responsibility to the organization and one's colleagues.

4. Diversity and inclusion: Veterans have learned to work side-by-side with individuals regardless of race, gender, geographic origin, ethnic background, religion, economic status, or mental and physical capabilities.

5. Performance under pressure: Veterans are skilled at working under pressure and meeting timelines.

6. Respect for procedures: Veterans know how policies and procedures enable an organization to function effectively.

7. Technology and globalization: Veterans can bring the global outlook and technological savvy that enterprises of any size need to succeed.

8. Integrity: Veterans know what it means to work hard and be dependable. They take pride in doing their best.

9. Health and safety standards: Veterans represent a drug-free work force and are aware of health and safety protocols both for themselves and the welfare of others.

10. Triumph over adversity: Veterans have proven their mettle in mission critical situations demanding endurance, stamina and flexibility.

For free assistance in hiring veterans — including placing a job order or finding out what tax credits might be available — contact Rob Bassett at Veterans Affairs at WorkSource Lane, 2510 Oakmont Way, Eugene; 541-686-7684; or Robert.j.bassett@state.or.us.

If you have questions about training your work force, contact Eileen Marcroft-George at Lane Workforce Partnership: 541-682-3800.



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