



Resume Writing for Veterans

Career Development Center

Marketing your military experience to a civilian employer is not always easy. Anyone who has served knows the military has a language of its own, thus it is important to translate this language in order to effectively communicate your skill set. Adding to this difficulty, many employers and veterans don't know how military experience applies to a civilian position. This handout will help you translate your military experience to the civilian world and effectively communicate your skills to any employer

Type of Resume

The most common type of resume is chronological, listing and describing experience from the most to least recent. This type of resume, however, is not always the most effective for veterans, especially if you are entering a new career field. When beginning a new career, a functional resume might better demonstrate your skills to an employer. Rather than emphasizing previous job positions, a function resume focuses on skills (e.g. Leadership, Communication, Management, etc.) This allows you to market entire groups of skills, regardless of where you developed them. For further instructions on how to create a functional resume, see our Career Guide or Functional Resume Handout.

Modifying Military Jargon

In the military it is difficult to say one sentence without using an acronym, technical term, or jargon. After being in the military for a long time, you often do not realize you are even using language civilians do not understand. Unfortunately, when it shows up on your resume or comes up in interviews it only confuses employers. Here are some ways around military-speak with words you might need in your resume:

- Acronyms: Spell them out and consider simplifying them
 - o Use the word "Base" rather than "FOB" or "AFB"
 - o Use "Non-Commissioned Officer" or "Supervisor"
- Occupational Designator: State your job title rather than the MOS/MOC designator
 - o Use "Infantry Squad Leader" rather than "11B"
 - o Use "Aircraft Loadmaster" or "Cargo Manager" rather than "1A2X1"
- Technical Terms: Put them into the simplest terms

- o Use "Military Helicopter: rather than "AH-64"
- o Use "Operations Department" rather than "S3"

Tips for Success: Ask someone without military experience to check your resume for confusing terms.

Military Education

Service members regularly attend military schools but often fell military education does not belong on a resume. It does! Create a section called "Additional Education and Training" and list the schools you attended, where they were, and the length of the course. If the name of the school is not self explanatory, describe the program. Also, state why that experience was valuable and any accomplishments you achieved.

Example:

Warrior Leadership Course Fort Bliss, Texas February 2012

- Two week course that utilized experiential learning to teach valuable skills in leadership, teamwork and critical thinking
- Recognized as "Soldier Leader of the Class" for outstanding physical and academic performance

Marketing Your Skills

Serving in the military gives you many great experiences and skills. But which ones are useful to employers? Here are some skills common to veterans that would be valuable in any job position:

Leading, Communicating, Training, Facilitating, Planning, Improvising, Motivating, Adapting, Organizing, Inspecting, Supervising, Evaluating, Critical Thinking, Working Under Pressure, Teamwork, Decision Making, Multitasking, Managing, Problem Solving, Reasoning

Provide specific statements of how you used these skills, why you used them, and for whom. For example:

- Trained over 20 soldiers in first aid techniques, which facilitated deployment readiness for the unit
- Used critical thinking skills on a daily basis to ensure communications equipment functioned properly
- Worked on a diverse team of five people for three years, succeeding through stressful work conditions





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Skill ideas for your resume could come from sources such as award citations, NCOER's, and counseling statements. For example, statements on your NCOER could be changed into resume statements:

- NCOER: Responsible for over \$50,000 worth of equipment
- Resume: Managed over \$50,000 worth of equipment during a 12 month deployment with no loss of inventory
- NCOER: Manages, tracks, and oversees all administrative actions for 130 soldiers
- Resume: Tracked, managed and oversaw all administrative actions for 130 personnel, which ensured efficient operations

Online Military Skill Translator

O*Net Online: www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC will translate your skills. All you have to do is select your branch of services and occupations, and a list of skills, and position related information will be provided.

