

How military leavers can benefit the private industry



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Each year British businesses clamour after the best and brightest coming out of business schools. However, these same businesses often overlook a body of potential employees not only with good or better training, but also with the experience to go with it. Given that military personnel provide a valuable and often taken for granted service to our country, often putting their own lives in danger to defend others, it seems more should be done to assist them in the transition back into civilian life. Such personnel also offer a viable resource for British business, leaving the military with some of the arguably best training in the world and often significantly more experience in a wide variety of areas than others their age who did not undertake military service.

This research aims to examine the benefits of military leavers', particularly officers', experience and training to private industry. It is hoped findings from this study will aid both military leavers and industry in the UK in connecting, so as to encourage productive employment relationships between the two. Possible outcomes of this research may include some type of publication of findings, or recommendations for military leavers and employers, which would assist employers in taking advantage of this valuable resource and military leavers in finding suitable civilian employment.

Specifically, this research undertakes four objectives:

- To examine the success of military officers in private industry, and how their military training contributed to their success.

- To identify what specific skills are readily transferable to private industry, and how these can best be articulated to those in hiring positions.
- To increase awareness amongst those in hiring positions of the often overlooked talent pool of military leavers available to their industry sectors.
- To consider what private industry must do, if anything, to ensure smooth transition for leavers moving into civilian positions.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

This project will include a review of literature relevant to the four objectives above. This will include reports and research in former military officers and how they have achieved successful employment in private industry. For example, Shuit (2003) describes the training, people skills, and self-discipline former junior officers bring to the corporate sector. Many others offer similar information (Abrashoff 2002; Anon 2004; Bowers 1996; Joinson 1997; Zicarelli 2000). Specific reports of success across a number of military leavers, rather than concentration on a few case-study type accounts, will be emphasised.

Also considered will be the specific skills acquired by military officers that are readily transferable into the civilian workplace. As it is necessary to limit skills to a workable group for research purposes, basic management skills will be emphasised. All officers can be assumed to have received both training and experience in these skills, often much in excess of their civilian counterparts. For example, Questionline reports “ service leavers have spent

more time being trained than ninety-nine per cent of civilians... They will be valued, if the employer is able to understand what they are" (Anon 2002). They also argue that British military training is among the best in the world, and has "considerable civilian value when stripped of its purely military elements and translated into the right language" (Anon 2002). Bowers (1996) similarly contends "business-management experts say the military builds skills that can be as valuable in the office as in a war zone" (1). Identifying skills common between the military and private industry will assist both military leavers and HR managers in identifying transferable skills (Anon 2004; Joinson 1997; Zicarelli 2000).

Examination of literature will document reasons private employers may overlook leaving military personnel as potential hires. This is undertaken to make recommendations on ways the placement of former military officers in private industry may be improved. For example, Zicarelli (2005) notes that HR positions are increasingly held by people without military experience or reference. As such, understanding and appreciate of military attributes can no longer be assumed. Additionally, many military leavers had to persevere in searching for civilian positions, often learning through turn-downs how to finally present their experience in a way understandable to the typical civilian HR manager (Shuit 2003; Investor's Business Daily 2004).

Methods employers or organisations have found successful in aiding military officers in transitioning into civilian employment will be analysed, with the purpose of developing broad recommendations for use in the private sector.

These will include tactics employed by individual HR managers and

company-wide programmes. For example, American companies such as <https://assignbuster.com/how-military-leavers-can-benefit-the-private-industry/>

Home Depot, Coors and General Motors have programmes specifically designed to recruit military leavers (ICFAI (2004; Zicarelli 2005). British employers with similar programmes, if any, will also be reviewed. It is anticipated that data in this section will included both information for the individual HR manager and concerning developing company-wide initiatives.

Finally, the literature considered in this review will concentrate on those leaving the British military who seek and / or obtain employment in the UK. Supporting literature from countries with similar militaries and economies, such as Australia, Canada, and the United States will be additionally considered from a supportive standpoint.

METHODOLOGY

Data will be collected from two groups of people: former military officers who have successfully transitioned into civilian employment, and HR personnel in charge of hiring. Open-ended questions designed from issues arising through the review of relevant literature will be used. It is anticipated these open-ended questions will solicit a variety of responses, but will also allow documentation of actual perceptions and observations from interviewees, rather than reduce their experiences to a defined group of possible responses. It is anticipated that questions will be framed within the four stated objectives, however, this framework may be adapted if significant findings from the literature review warrant such change.

The planned sample size is ten interviews for each group. While this is statistically too small a sample to make relevant statistical conclusions, the purpose of this research is to articulate transferable skills and raise <https://assignbuster.com/how-military-leavers-can-benefit-the-private-industry/>

awareness to the benefits in hiring military leavers, neither of which require the statistical justification of a large sample size. This is additionally a large enough group of interviews to allow broad generalisations about issues outlined in the project objectives to be examined without the possible skewing of one person's atypical experience that might occur with a sample of only two or three interviews. In addition, ten is a workable number of interviews for the researcher to conduct within the project time guidelines.

Companies in a variety of civilian pursuits will be examined, with additionally at least two small, two medium, and two large organisations present in the sample of HR managers. A list of companies currently hiring for management positions will be gathered from Internet and newspaper advertisements. These companies will then be drawn at random to establish an order for contact, with each contacted by letter and follow-up phone calls. Interviews of approximately one hour will be requested, with an overview of the questions to be asked provided with the letter. Contact of companies will continue until ten interviews are secured.

Former military officers will be identified through two means. First, the researcher will seek recommendations from those in private industry as to successful former military officers. If ten persons willing to participate in interviews are not acquired through this method, HR managers interviewed as part of the first group of this research will be asked to provide names in their companies or others of potential interviewees. Both groups of interviewees will be promised and supplied with a copy of the final research project.

Data will be analysed to develop a skills set that is clearly identified as relevant, the benefits and drawbacks of hiring military leavers, and ways to increase companies' awareness of potential post-military hires. This will be done first by thorough examination of the transcripts of each interview, followed by statistical gathering of the number of times and importance each item considered was provided by the interviewees.

Similarities present in items identified in the interviews will be described and supported with relevant quotes from interview transcripts. A summary of the most relevant answers to each question will be included in an appendix to the report.

Obviously, it is not possible to consider all types of military leavers with their myriad of training and experience, or all the needs of private industry that such personnel could fulfil. Therefore, this study will concentrate on the basic management skills typically acquired by all military personnel achieving a rank of at least junior officer. It will examine how this basic management acumen translates into successful civilian employment. Also, since a large number of military personnel go into the defense industry and it already typically recruits military leavers, only companies and positions outside the defense sector will be considered.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

It is anticipated the most significant resources this project will require are time and people. Twenty interviews of approximately one hour each will be conducted, not to mention the time required to arrange such interviews and analyse results. Getting busy workers to provide an hour of their day for an <https://assignbuster.com/how-military-leavers-can-benefit-the-private-industry/>

interview that do not immediately benefit them may not be so easy. It is important to line up persons to interview that can make contributions to the areas considered in the research.

The project requires little capital outlay beyond letters, copying of the final report and postage. A small tape-recorder may be used to better document interviews, in which case this would be an additional expense. In addition, it may be necessary to interview some people over their lunch times, in which case politeness would require the researcher to foot the dining bill.

PROJECT PLAN

The literature review will be completed within thirty days of the project approval, and interview questions developed. These questions will then be submitted to the supervisor for feedback and recommendations. Towards the end of this period, a list of companies and individuals that may be potential interviewees will be developed. Interviews should be arranged within two weeks, and completed within the next two to three weeks. After that, data will be analysed and a project report draft written, which will be forwarded to the project supervisor for comments. Finally, the final report will be generated.

Tentative Project Plan:

Week 1 - Begin literature review research.

Week 2 - Continue literature review research.

Week 3 - Continue literature review research.

Week 4 - Write literature review, create interview questions.

Week 5 - Begin compiling interview list, interview questions to supervisor.

Week 6 - Finish compiling interview list, write and send out letters.

Week 7 - Follow-up letters with phone calls, arrange interviews.

Week 8 - Continue arranging interviews, begin conducting interviews.

Week 9 - Continue conducting interviews.

Week 10 - Finish conducting interviews.

Week 11 - Analyse data, begin writing project report.

Week 12 - Finish draft of project report, draft to supervisor.

Week 13 - Make changes to draft as recommended by supervisor.

Week 14 - Make changes / rewrite draft.

This project plan will both ensure the project is completed in a timely manner and is flexible enough to allow for contingencies.

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