



WARRIORS IN THE WORKFORCE

A RESOURCE FOR VETERANS AND TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS

Use this card to translate your on-the-job military experience into civilian skills.

Essential Nontechnical Skills Service Members Gain DURING ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCE

During your military career, you and other veterans and service members gained something many civilians lack—extensive experience with not only technical skills but also essential nontechnical skills that employers value and seek out, such as leadership, decisionmaking, persistence, and communication. But communicating these nontechnical skills to potential employers can be challenging because the terminology used in military and civilian workplaces can be so different. This guide identifies many essential nontechnical skills that enlisted members from the Army and Marine Corps combat arms occupations¹ attain from their on-the-job experience. Regardless of your military occupation, this knowledge will help you review job postings, enhance your résumé, and put your best foot forward in interviews.

The table below maps your on-the-job experience to 19 nontechnical skills that employers want and need. But it isn't enough to claim that you have these skills; you have to explain how you earned them. In this guide, you will find examples of how to convey your experience to employers, an overview of skills you may have gained while on the job, answers to commonly asked questions, and web addresses for in-depth materials. A comprehensive toolkit, available at www.rand.org/t/TL160z1-1, contains many other examples of how to talk about the skills you attained on the job.

CRITICALITY OF NONTECHNICAL SKILLS FOR SELECT MILITARY OCCUPATIONS

| | | ARMY EXPERIENCES | | | | | | MARINE CORPS EXPERIENCES | | | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|--------------|-----------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--|
| | | Mid-Level | | Mid- to Senior-Level | | Senior-Level | Mid-Level | | Mid- to Senior-Level | | Senior-Level | | |
| | | E-4 | | E-5 | | E-6 | E-4 | | E-5 | | E-6 | | |
| | | Infantry | Armor | Infantry | Armor | Infantry | Infantry | Artillery | Infantry | Artillery | Infantry | Artillery | |
| | | (n=107) | (n=20) | (n=41) | (n=35) | (n=23) | (n=43) | (n=46) | (n=49) | (n=26) | (n=22) | (n=18) | |
| Tier | Nontechnical Skill | COMPARABLE CIVILIAN EXPERIENCE LEVEL | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I | Decisionmaking/decisiveness | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| | Being dependable and reliable | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | |
| | Critical thinking | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ▲ | |
| | Leading, motivating, and inspiring others | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | |
| | Training others | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | |
| | Oral communication | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | ▲ | ■ | □ | |
| | Managing/supervising the work of others | ▲ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | ▲ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| | Situational awareness | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | □ | |
| II | Teamwork and team-building | ■ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | ■ | ■ | ▲ | □ | ▲ | ■ | |
| | Adaptability | □ | ■ | ■ | □ | □ | □ | ▲ | ■ | ▲ | ■ | ■ | |
| | Operating safely | □ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ▲ | ▲ | ■ | ▲ | □ | ▲ | ■ | |
| | Handling work stress | ■ | □ | ■ | □ | ▲ | □ | ■ | ▲ | □ | ▲ | ■ | |
| | Continuous learning | ■ | ■ | □ | ▲ | ▲ | □ | ■ | ▲ | □ | ▲ | □ | |
| | Conscientiousness and attention to detail | □ | □ | ▲ | ▲ | □ | □ | ▲ | □ | □ | ■ | □ | |
| III | Behaving ethically | ▲ | ▲ | □ | ▲ | □ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | |
| | Interpersonal skills | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | □ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | |
| | Persistence | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | |
| | Project planning | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | |
| | Written communication | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | |

¹ This resource was developed first for select combat arms occupations in the Army and Marine Corps. Similar resources could be produced in the future for other military occupations, including occupations in the Air Force and Navy.

Civilian employers are interested in a wide range of nontechnical skills

The nontechnical skills and their definitions are listed below, in addition to related terms that you can use in your cover letter, résumé, and when speaking to potential employers about your skills and experiences.

| | | SKILL | DEFINITION AND RELATED TERMS |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| META-CATEGORY | Cognitive | Decisionmaking/decisiveness | Chooses the best solution or option in a timely and decisive manner , even in ambiguous situations and without assistance when appropriate. <i>(related terms: assertive, authoritative, resolving)</i> |
| | | Critical thinking | Actively and skillfully conceptualizes, applies, analyzes, synthesizes, and evaluates information to formulate options and to reach a conclusion. Demonstrates mental agility and the ability to reason, anticipate obstacles, identify problems, locate, gather, and organize relevant information, generate alternatives, evaluate and analyze information, and apply what is learned. <i>(related terms: analytic thinking, reasoning, argumentation, interpretation, problem solving)</i> |
| | Directing people and projects | Leading, motivating, and inspiring others to accomplish organizational goals | Influences and inspires others by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the organization's tasks and goals and improve the organization's capabilities; adapts leadership styles to a variety of situations; offers career development opportunities to subordinates; mentors others' skills, abilities, attitudes, future intentions, and career issues; recognizes achievements; sets an example for others; encourages other's self-assessment and enhancement of skills in an activity; and promotes training, learning, and preparing for the future. Generates enthusiasm for task objectives and team accomplishment through standard and creative influence techniques. Recognizes contributions and achievements of all types, among people in high- and low-visibility activities alike. Rewards employees for high performance. Sets an example for others by acting in ways that are consistent with organizational goals and objectives. <i>(related terms: motivating, inspiring, mentoring, encouraging, developing)</i> |
| | | Managing/supervising the work of others | Organizes, coordinates, and leads subordinates in work efforts to effectively and efficiently accomplish organizational goals and objectives. Involves staffing, delegating roles and responsibilities, clarifying objectives, and monitoring, assessing, adjusting, and rewarding the actions of subordinates. Requires knowledge and experience applying performance management concepts, principles, and practices. <i>(related terms: administering, overseeing, organizing people)</i> |
| | | Project planning | Identifies resources, plans, organizes, schedules, and coordinates tasks and activities so that work is completed effectively and efficiently. Prioritizes various competing tasks and performs them quickly and efficiently according to their urgency. Finds new ways of organizing work areas or planning to accomplish work more efficiently. <i>(related terms: project management, strategic planning, organization, coordination, planning, scheduling)</i> |
| | Professional development | Continuous learning | Takes the necessary actions to develop and maintain knowledge, skills, and expertise; demonstrates an interest in learning; anticipates work changes; identifies career interests; applies a range of learning techniques; integrates newly learned knowledge and skills with existing knowledge and skills; and is aware of own cognitive processes. <i>(related terms: adaptive learning, willingness to learn, active learning, metacognition)</i> |
| | | Training others | Plans, organizes, and conducts activities that increase the capability of individuals or organizations to perform specified tasks or skills. Has knowledge and experience applying employee development concepts, principles, and practices related to planning, evaluating, and administering training and education initiatives. <i>(related terms: teaching, developing skills)</i> |
| | Interpersonal | Teamwork and team-building | Establishes productive relationships with other team members to perform team tasks and works to improve team performance; acknowledges team membership and role; and identifies with the team and its goals. Team-building activities include improving the ability of a team to work together to accomplish a task or activity; resolving conflicts within a team; developing collaboration to promote learning and expand team perspectives; discouraging unproductive behavior among team members; and encouraging and building mutual trust, respect, and cooperation. <i>(related terms: team player, followership, cooperation, collaboration)</i> |
| | | Interpersonal skills | Recognizes and accurately interprets the verbal and nonverbal behavior of others; works well with others; shows sincere interest in and sensitivity to others and their concerns, needs, and feelings; shows insight into the actions and motives of others and recognizes when relationships with others are strained; and maintains open lines of communication with others. <i>(related terms: demonstrating concern for others, demonstrating insight into behavior, intercultural skills)</i> |
| | | Oral communication | Persuasively presents thoughts and ideas; receives, attends to, interprets, understands, and responds to verbal messages and other cues; expresses information orally to individuals or groups, taking into account the audience and the nature of the information; practices meaningful two-way communication; picks out important information in oral messages; understands and is able to process complex oral instructions; and appreciates feelings and concerns of oral messages. <i>(related terms: speaking, public speaking, persuasive speaking, debating, active listening, two-way communication)</i> |
| | | Written communication | Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, messages, and other written information in a logical, organized, and coherent manner; creates documents, such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts; presents well-developed ideas, with supporting information and examples. Uses standard grammar and sentence structure, correct spelling, and appropriate tone and word choice. <i>(related terms: writing)</i> |
| | Intrapersonal | Being dependable and reliable | Diligently follows through on commitments and consistently meets deadlines; behaves consistently and predictably; is reliable, responsible, and dependable in fulfilling obligations. <i>(related terms: getting the activity done)</i> |
| | | Conscientiousness and attention to detail | Diligently checks work to ensure that all essential details have been considered; performs assigned tasks and responsibilities diligently even when not under direct supervision; displays self-discipline and self-control; follows oral and written directions; complies with organizational rules, policies, and procedures. <i>(related terms: conscientiousness, respect for procedures, discipline, autonomy, productivity)</i> |
| | | Situational awareness | Perceives, analyzes, and comprehends critical elements of information in one's environment. This also includes continually seeking new information to update and refine one's understanding. More simply, know what is going on and how it relates to the goals of the individual, team, and/or organization. <i>(related terms: alertness, responsiveness, attentiveness, situational understanding)</i> |
| Adaptability | | Responds quickly and effectively to uncertain and unpredictable work situations. Open to change, rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles. Thrives in the "gray" area and requires minimal structure. Quickly learns new work tasks, technologies, and procedures. <i>(related terms: active learning, changing to fit the situation, able to adapt, situational flexibility)</i> | |
| Handling work stress | | Functions effectively under pressure; remains composed under pressure and high-stress situations; does not overreact; manages frustration and other stresses well; acts as a calming and settling influence on others. Exhibits a hardness of spirit despite physical and mental hardships; possesses moral and physical courage. <i>(related terms: productive stress management, resilience, effectiveness under pressure, triumph over adversity, coping)</i> | |
| Persistence | | Works hard to achieve a goal or accomplish an assigned task. Won't quit, does not tend to procrastinate, and completes tasks once begun. Sees work through to completion. Even in the face of failure, keeps trying. Tends to believe that success is always attainable with hard work and persistence. Works hard even when the reward is small, unlikely to be obtained, or will only be realized far into the future. <i>(related terms: perseverance, grit, work ethic)</i> | |
| Behaving ethically | | Behaves in an honest, fair, and ethical manner and encourages others to do so as well. Always does the right thing even when no one is watching. This includes (but is not limited to) performing work-related duties according to laws, regulations, and policies, but also understanding that behaving ethically goes well beyond what the law requires. Takes responsibility and maintains accountability for own actions, decisions, and roles in missions. <i>(related terms: integrity)</i> | |
| Operating safely | Identifies and carefully weighs safety risks in making decisions and adheres to safety rules and regulations. Fosters a safety culture, wears safety gear, and encourages others to follow safety rules and speak openly of their safety concerns. Has knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools used for risk assessment and mitigation, including assessment of failures and their consequences. <i>(related terms: safety and risk management)</i> | | |

How to communicate your essential nontechnical skills to potential employers

Below are some examples of how you might convey what you learned from your on-the-job military experiences. For each nontechnical skill that we highlight, we first provide an overview describing how that skill can translate from a military to a civilian setting. Then we provide an example, which consists of three components: title, summary, and full story. The title is both the name of the skill and a brief statement of the main points. The summary is precisely structured to first outline the background information (situation), then the specific actions taken (behavior), and finally the outcome of those actions (result). Framing a story in this way (situation, behavior, and result) will allow you to quickly and effectively share the most important and relevant information. To show how you can elaborate on these summaries, we also provide the full story in detail. Together, these examples are meant to add clarity when talking about the nontechnical skills that you earned and, more importantly, show how you earned them. We list several stories as examples, but you should substitute your own words and experiences when talking to employers.

These are only a few of the many illustrative examples available in the comprehensive toolkit, available at www.rand.org/t/TL160z1-1.

DECISIONMAKING/DECISIVENESS AND CRITICAL THINKING

Because decisionmaking/decisiveness and critical thinking are conceptually similar, we discuss them here together. Although those in most civilian occupations do not face the same life-and-death situations encountered in the military, ambiguous situations do regularly arise, and they can have important consequences for an organization's bottom line. Military service members may often find themselves in uncertain circumstances, faced with difficult challenges that demand thoughtful consideration and effective responses. Although the circumstances will certainly differ between a military and civilian context, common themes include the importance of seeking out relevant information, synthesizing multiple inputs, generating possible courses of action, and selecting and implementing the best course of action. Sometimes, the situations may allow only for a brief pause to analyze relevant factors before requiring immediate action. These instances highlight the importance of arriving at swift and firm conclusions when time is of the essence. Other situations may allow for extensive research and deep analysis, which illustrates the problem solving process known as risk management that is widely used across the military services to help organizations and individuals balance risk and other costs with mission benefits.

“I had to constantly take in new information and make quick decisions about where to position the teams and how to best use our assets.”

Orient, Observe, Decide, Act

SITUATION My team was conducting a squad-supported training exercise with real ammunition, which meant that we had many different types of teams working with us.

BEHAVIOR To overcome various obstacles, I analyzed each situation, selected the best course of action, and appropriately positioned my Marines.

RESULT We successfully completed the exercise by clearing the enemy and setting up a defensive position.

FULL STORY My team was conducting a live-fire maneuver with multiple weapon systems and support teams. Our mission was to take down an enemy defensive position. I was to receive an order, prepare my squad accordingly, and coordinate with machine gun and mortar teams. But I was also receiving updates from evaluators aimed at making the situation more difficult, so I had to constantly take in new information and make quick decisions about where to position the teams and how to best use our assets. For instance, to demolish a wire obstacle between us and the enemy, I had my squad provide cover for the engineers so they could reach the obstacle and blow it up. For every decision, I followed the same steps: orient, observe, decide, and act. Using these strategies to actively problem solve, we were able to clear the enemy and quickly set up a defensive position.

Innovative Techniques for Avoiding Roadside Explosives: Baby Powder and Glow Sticks

SITUATION My battalion was deployed in a high-risk area with many roadside improvised explosive devices (IEDs) (i.e., a bomb constructed and deployed in unconventional ways).

BEHAVIOR My platoon leader and I conducted a risk assessment and then developed novel techniques of avoiding IEDs: having Soldiers walk in a single-file line (instead of in a “V” formation) and mark safe pathways (using baby powder during the day and glow sticks inside water bottles during the night).

RESULT My platoon did not sustain a single IED casualty over the course of the nine-month deployment, so our methods were successful. For comparison, our battalion had upward of 30 amputees.

FULL STORY My team conducted most of our missions on foot in an area flush with IEDs. My platoon leader and I formed several strategies to keep our Soldiers safe. First, we located a mine sweeper to detect metal underground. Then we trained our Soldiers to walk single-file instead of in the usual “V” formation to lessen the chances a Soldier would trip an IED. During the day, we used baby powder to mark safe pathways, because the enemy wouldn't know what it was for and it blows away after a day or so. At night, we used glow sticks inside water bottles to mark safe pathways. Our methods were ultimately effective. My platoon was the only one with zero amputees, while my battalion had upward of 30.



BEING DEPENDABLE AND RELIABLE

Dependability and reliability are qualities that every employer desires in an employee, from the most senior to the most junior levels. In the military, being dependable and reliable is instilled as part of the culture and many military service members consider it an implicit task—so important that it simply need not be stated. There are a variety of examples of military personnel demonstrating these qualities in ways that civilian employers desire. For example, the story to the right shows the most basic of job expectations being continually met; although seemingly unremarkable, the duration of such stability is extraordinary. Another example in the comprehensive toolkit shows how service members go above and beyond to make sure their work is of high quality. This ingrained expectation affords civilian employers confidence that veterans are likely to complete responsibilities without micromanagement.

MANAGING/SUPERVISING THE WORK OF OTHERS

Managing and supervising the work of others is critical in every civilian organization, but not all jobs afford someone an opportunity to manage or supervise others. As a result, only a subset of the civilian workforce has such experience. In contrast, in the military, nearly all service members are regularly expected to oversee the work of others. At early stages in their military careers, individuals are placed in positions of responsibility to manage the completion of routine and nonroutine tasks. The scope and complexity of this oversight grows with rank. Accomplishing tasks often requires deliberate planning and problem solving, within-team coordination, and workload balance, as well as monitoring and modifying actions and strategies. The story to the right illustrates these behaviors in an environment that is fast-paced and full of competing demands. Other example stories in the comprehensive toolkit emphasize the importance of providing clear instructions, assigning roles and responsibilities, and monitoring who is doing what and when. Successfully managing people and tasks ensures that the larger goals of the organization can be accomplished.

ORAL COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Because *oral communication* and *interpersonal skills* are conceptually similar, we discuss them here together. In civilian jobs, oral communication and interpersonal skills are critical for leading others, interacting with customers and vendors, and coordinating with coworkers. This is also the case in military jobs—in fact, oral communication is the primary type of communication for the majority of military occupations. Thus, military service members have likely gained a significant amount of practice speaking in a clear, concise, and convincing manner for the intended audience and situation and ensuring that their message is understood by engaging in follow-up conversations and reading nonverbal behavior.

Every Day I Do What I Am Supposed to Do: It's Pretty Simple

SITUATION I have daily responsibilities.

BEHAVIOR I use my time wisely and plan ahead so that my fellow Soldiers can depend on me. Before meetings, I arrive ten minutes early in the proper uniform with a pen and paper in hand and ready to work.

RESULT I consistently fulfill my duties to the best of my abilities.

FULL STORY In my nine and a half years in the Army, I never called in sick or missed a day of work. I am committed to my responsibilities and fulfilling the needs of leadership and the Army. I use my time wisely and plan ahead so that my fellow Soldiers can depend on me. I arrive ten minutes early to meetings in the proper uniform with a pen and paper in hand and ready to work. I do this every day—not just when it's convenient or easy. I wouldn't and shouldn't have a job if I couldn't do what I am supposed to do. It's really pretty simple.

Juggling Multiple Priorities: Constant Communication and Task Delegation

SITUATION My team was tasked with building a new combat outpost while still engaging in combat operations.

BEHAVIOR I maintained constant communication and I delegated tasks to my squad leaders and the local Afghan Army.

RESULT The combat outpost was built to standard in a timely and efficient manner.

FULL STORY My team was tasked with establishing a new combat outpost in Afghanistan. There were no structures at all, so I led a team of about 50 people in the construction of a perimeter, security posts, and storage for food and water. Meanwhile, I was also managing combat operations and trying to develop relationships with local leaders. Making sure everything got done required constant communication and delegation. I assigned duties to my squad leaders and the Afghan soldiers supporting us, and I communicated via radio and on-site visits to clarify instructions, provide feedback, and track our progress. The organizational skills that I learned during my military career helped to ensure the new outpost was completed in a timely manner.

Timing of Advice: The Recipient Has to Be Ready to Listen

SITUATION I worked as an instructor team leader at the Mountain Warfare Training Center, which involved mentoring company commanders. I had a company commander who was overconfident in his abilities and unwilling to listen.

BEHAVIOR After allowing him to make a mistake with low consequences, I talked to him in a tactful and professional way to guide him toward better communication strategies; e.g., by advising him to consult his staff noncommissioned officers.

RESULT He became ready to listen and more receptive to the input of his staff, which improved the performance of the company overall.

FULL STORY My job as an instructor team leader involved evaluating, guiding, and mentoring company commanders while they execute operations. We were in the Sierra Nevada, which has a lot of steep terrain and natural hazards, and I was in charge of one commander who was overzealous and overconfident, and wouldn't take advice. When the consequences of an error were low, I let him make mistakes. This made him more willing to listen, and by talking to him in a tactful and professional way, I could show him a better approach. For instance, I advised him to take advantage of his staff noncommissioned officers because they can help you a lot. He eventually became more of a team player, which ultimately improved the performance of the company as a whole.

TEAMWORK AND TEAM-BUILDING

Although teamwork is something that many organizations value, not all civilians are well practiced at working in a team. In contrast, in the military, teamwork is practiced daily. Military service members in the combat arms are expected to operate in teams from the very start of their military careers. During basic training, the Army introduces “battle buddies,” which are two individuals assigned to accompany and assist one another. And the team size only increases with experience and rank. There are fire teams (3–4 individuals), squads (8–16 individuals), platoons (16–44 individuals), and so forth. Inherent in this organizational structure is learning to work effectively with all personality types, skill sets, etc., to deliver results. As individuals gain seniority, the focus may shift from working within a team to building a team. As the story presented here shows, service members learn to identify individual strengths and weaknesses in order to place people in roles and situations that will elicit the very best from a person. Other stories located in the comprehensive toolkit illustrate a recurring theme of generating collective confidence and unity through activities such as holding competitions and working to develop team member expertise. As a result of the military’s strong emphasis on teamwork, many veterans are well positioned to work collaboratively with a variety of individuals to achieve an organization’s larger goals.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Civilian workplaces are constantly changing to keep pace with new technologies or other advancements in the marketplace. Because of the ever-evolving landscape, someone who is continuously striving to learn and update their technical and nontechnical skills is a desirable employee. The military expects that continuous learning will occur as part of service members’ typical on-the-job activities. Constant change is a defining feature of life in the military. Service members regularly transfer to different units (approximately every three years), requiring perpetual on-the-job learning of responsibilities, people, and cultures. On top of that, you are expected to know your job as well as the responsibilities of others in case you have to perform them. In addition, as developments in technology result in new equipment and as the strategy and tactics of our military and our enemies evolve, service members have to strive continually to learn and improve. To the right is an example of how service members are constantly encouraged to evaluate their past performance for future gain. This is widely-known as the “after action review”: a structured discussion involving relevant stakeholders to analyze what happened, why it happened, and how it can be done better in the future.

“By critically evaluating our practices, we were able to develop a better way to work that has saved a considerable amount of time.”

The Great Race: Building a Platoon

SITUATION While stationed in Germany, my platoon leader and I had nine months to get a new 40-person organization ready for deployment.

BEHAVIOR To help identify skill sets, we developed team-building training activities, such as daily physical training and a 26-mile march and run through Germany. My platoon leader and I were able to see our individual team members’ unique personalities and skill sets through the exercises and design our teams appropriately.

RESULT Our team worked together well during the deployment, and we had some of the highest re-enlistment rates within the battalion.

FULL STORY My platoon leader and I were charged with creating an entire platoon from scratch that would deploy to Iraq in nine months. Command gave us 40 Soldiers, and we had to form the teams. We developed team-building activities—one of which was a 26-mile march and run through Germany that we called the “Great Race”—designed to test each Soldier physically and mentally and reveal their unique personalities and skill sets. Using our experience from previous deployments, we identified the best fit for each position and for each team overall, and thought through what type of leader each group needed. Does this group need a stern, strong leader or a persuasive leader with the gift of gab? By matching up the right people, we fostered cohesive teams that performed well once we got to Iraq. By the end of the deployment, we had some of the highest re-enlistment rates in the battalion.

After Action Review: Bringing Everyone Together and Evaluating the Process

SITUATION Artillery involves an intricate process of passing information from a group of Marines working as observers to the Marines on the ground (those operating weapon systems).

BEHAVIOR To improve our efficiency, we met after every mission to identify problems and analyze solutions.

RESULT We developed a new strategy that saved us a considerable amount of time.

FULL STORY In the Artillery, Marines on the ground receive missions from observers who detect potential targets and enemy activity. My team processed the information, computed the technical data, and sent it to the rocket launcher crews. We held daily meetings after field operations, training, and live-fire missions to identify problems, analyze the issues, and improve efficiency. One improvement we made as a result of these meetings was to pass on the initial information we receive to give the launchers a jumpstart, and then send them the processed data when we’ve completed our analysis. In the past, we would finish our analysis and send the information all at once. By critically evaluating our practices, we were able to develop a better way to work that has saved a considerable amount of time.



ADAPTABILITY AND HANDLING WORK STRESS

Adaptability and *handling work stress* are conceptually similar skills and we therefore discuss them together. Adjusting to change and working under stress are qualities that many jobs in the civilian marketplace demand. Similarly, expecting the unexpected is a hallmark of military life. From Day 1 of basic training, military service members experience unpredictable and chaotic situations. They must be able to handle high workloads and difficult situations effectively, even in the most unforeseen and demanding situations. Many stories in the comprehensive toolkit show how emotional responses such as anger, resentfulness, or frustration are simply unnecessary distractions and only detract from accomplishing the task. Other stories found in the comprehensive toolkit show how service members can maintain control of situations because they have had challenging experiences confronting difficult scenarios; and how they have learned to rely on a variety of strategies such as clarifying necessary steps, leaning on humor, relying on creativity or acknowledging adversity. This story presented here shows resourcefulness in overcoming obstacles to complete the mission. The intense and uncertain experience of life in the military leaves veterans well equipped to deal with the typical stressors and changing conditions associated with civilian work, such as tight deadlines, demanding clients, and fluctuating requirements.

Find a Way to Get the Job Done

SITUATION My team was asked to conduct track maintenance for a company of tanks, but the tools for the job were either broken or missing.

BEHAVIOR We fixed the broken tools and coordinated with other units to borrow tools that we were missing to get the job done.

RESULT We completed the task.

FULL STORY In the Army, we are often asked to complete missions and tasks without sufficient resources, so we have to get creative. For example, my team was asked to conduct track maintenance for a whole company of tanks, but the tools that we typically use for this task were either broken or missing. We had to be resourceful, so we worked efficiently as a team to fix the broken tools, borrow tools from other units, etc., to get the job done. By adapting to a situation that wasn't otherwise straightforward, we were able to complete the task.

“We had to be resourceful, so we worked efficiently as a team to fix the broken tools, borrow tools from other units, etc., to get the job done.”



Frequently asked questions

Q. Are the nontechnical skills shown on this card a comprehensive list of the skills combat arms veterans possess?

A. No, veterans are likely to have developed nontechnical skills through military training, education, and on-the-job experiences beyond those listed in the tables.

Q. Can the information in this toolkit be generalized to non-combat arms personnel?

A. Yes, in many cases. For more information, view the full report at www.rand.org/t/TL160z1-1 and turn to page 9.

Q. Where can veterans go to ask questions about the job search process or to explore more resources?

A. Nearly 2,500 American Job Centers (AJCs) nationwide serve over 1 million veterans every year. AJC staff will provide valuable employment, training, and education information specific to the local community. Find your local AJC at www.servicelocator.org. Many more resources are also available at www.mynextmove.org/vets.

Q. Where can veterans learn more about their technical skills, as opposed to nontechnical skills?

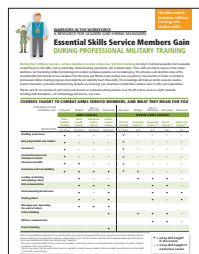
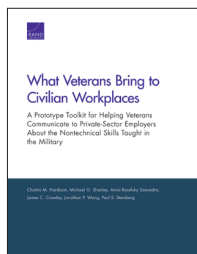
A. There are many resources designed to help veterans find civilian jobs that require technical skills similar to those obtained in certain military occupations. For example, see the technical skill translator resource that Military.com created in partnership with Monster.com at www.military.com/veteran-jobs/skills-translator/ or one from the Department of Labor at www.onetonline.org/crosswalk/MOC/Information.

Q. Where can veterans learn how to describe the credentials or licenses they earned in the military so that civilian employers understand them?

A. Go to your service's Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) website.

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|------------------|--|
| Army | www.cool.army.mil |
| Marines | www.cool.navy.mil/usmc |
| Navy | www.cool.navy.mil/usn |
| Air Force | afvec.langlely.af.mil/afvec/Public/COOL |

RAND RESOURCES ON VETERAN EMPLOYMENT



This guide and many other resources for employers and veterans are available free for download at www.rand.org/employing-veterans

This reference card is based on research found in *What Veterans Bring to Civilian Workplaces: A Prototype Toolkit for Helping Veterans Communicate to Private-Sector Employers About Nontechnical Skills Developed in the Military* by Tracy C. McCausland, Michael G. Shanley, Chaitra M. Hardison, Anna R. Saavedra, Angela Clague, James C. Crowley, Jaclyn Martin, Jonathan Wong, and Paul Steinberg, RAND Corporation, 2017 (TL-160/1-1-OSD). For more information on this publication, visit www.rand.org/t/TL160z1-1.

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TL-160/4-OSD



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