

12 Conditions for Successful Post-Military Service Transition

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Condition 1: Increased accountability, ownership, agency and responsibility of veterans for their transition

- Veterans must employ their personal agency to embrace the challenges, tasks and decisions necessary to reintegrate into civil society and to find and adjust to civil work
- Transitioning veterans must understand that the presence of a “sea of support programs” does not replace individual responsibility for successful transition
- Veterans must draw upon their personal resilience to muster and sustain hope, optimism, self-belief and perseverance to navigate the uncharted pathway to their civilian life futures

Condition 2: Veterans possess accurate information regarding the true costs and challenges of reentry to civil life and work

- Transitioning veterans must be aware of and prepared to meet the personal, financial, family and social costs and challenges of the re-socialization, re-integration and occupational transition process
- Transitioning veterans must select credible sources of information and insight to make better informed transition decisions

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Condition 3: *More refined tools and instruments exist to accurately assess the value of a veteran's human capital*

- Transitioning veterans must have access to better assessment and descriptive tools to accurately evaluate their skills, knowledge, abilities and other attributes (KSAOA) relative to employers' actual current needs
- Transitioning veterans must explore a broader field of future employment opportunities (type, location, entry positions) to align themselves where job opportunities currently exist

Condition 4: *The military institution's transition pathway for veterans is aligned with workforce talent acquisition hiring needs, strategies, and methods*

- The institutional transition assistance programs must position veterans to interface with the talent acquisition processes used by civilian employers
- Institutional transition assistance programs must provide veterans with the diverse skills needed to interface effectively amidst the unique hiring practices of a range of prospective employers (small business, government, corporate, non-profit, etc.)

Condition 5: *Employers must view departing veterans as a qualitative source of human talent and sound employment candidates*

- Veterans must possess similar levels of employer-required skills and competencies to effectively compete with non-veterans for positions

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Condition 6: *Transitioning veterans understand the conditions and implications of the economic realities of concluding their military service*

- Veterans must strategically position themselves to account for their absence from the civil workforce on account of professional military service by accepting less than desired positions and compensation as a cost of entry
- Transitioning veterans must realize that most employers avoid hiring new employees from the pool of those accepting unemployment benefits
- Transitioning veterans must be prepared financially to accept civilian pay and benefits that are determined by market conditions (and generally below those of active duty)

Condition 7: *Veterans are willing to expand their career interests beyond fields related to their service to where current private sector opportunities exist*

- Veterans must consider positions in workforce sectors with more vacancies (available from Bureau of Labor Statistics, North American Industry Classification System, etc.)

Condition 8: *The military services and Dept. of Veterans Affairs develop and execute their transition programs based on relevant adult life transition theory and human science to most effectively address the full spectrum of major changes involved in reintegration*

- Relevant models of adult development and transition exist that can be followed to better sequence the transition processes involved in post-military reintegration (Handy, Schlossberg, Jolly, etc.)

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Condition 9: The military services expand their promotion of higher education opportunities beyond recruiting and retention purposes to encourage veterans to obtain transferable human capital afforded by quality college degrees

- The military must no longer manage “individual voluntary education” opportunities, programs and institutions as a commodity of the lowest, acceptable rigor and value for its service members
- Intellectual competency building must replace “credentialing” as the primary purpose of members enrolling in higher education programs during and after military service

Condition 10: The military services modify their professional cultures to equally respect retention with separation—so that “leavers” enjoy a positive emotional state needed to face difficult transition and reintegration

- Perceived and actual negativity, sanctions and withholding of resources to departing service members (compared to those re-enlisting or extending) greatly inhibit effective transition, long-term reintegration and value one places upon their military service

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Condition 11: *The appropriate role of non-profit veteran service organizations (VSO) or non-professionally credentialed independent consultants in the transition process have been defined and are regulated to insure efficacy and professional service*

- The complexity and critical importance of effective transition demand that this human phenomenon be assisted, mediated and supported by professional – not amateur – organizations/practitioners

Condition 12: *The American military-civilian gap will continue to expand, making transition and reintegration increasingly more difficult and requiring new strategies to better equip veterans to deal with both career transition and re-integration simultaneously*

- Veterans will need to adapt from the military service culture to the professional culture of their new/prospective industry/employer
- Veterans need to adapt from the type of employment within a uniformed governmental institution to that of a small-business, non-profit organization, civic agency or corporate organization
- Veterans need to re-socialize from the professional military socio-cultural world of military living to adapt to independent life in civil society