



OKLAHOMA
CareerTech

CAREER FOCUS




**YOUR GUIDE TO
CAREER SUCCESS AFTER
MILITARY SERVICE**



CareerTech for
VETS



CS901525



CAREER FOCUS was developed for veterans who are leaving the military and transitioning to a civilian career.

This guide walks veterans through five steps in making this transition:

- **conducting a self-evaluation**
- **exploring career interests and options**
- **filling a skills gap**
- **finding and applying for a job**
- **managing the career transition**

The transition from a **military** to a **civilian** career is one of the most important tasks that you will complete. It is not an easy task, but it is made easier through **careful** planning and **determined** execution of the plan.

**YOUR JOB SEARCH
IS YOUR NEW
MISSION**



COPYRIGHT ©2025
Oklahoma Department
of Career and
Technology Education.
All rights reserved.

COORDINATOR
Craig Maile

EDITING
Counseling and Career
Development Team

LAYOUT AND DESIGN
Communications and
Marketing Department

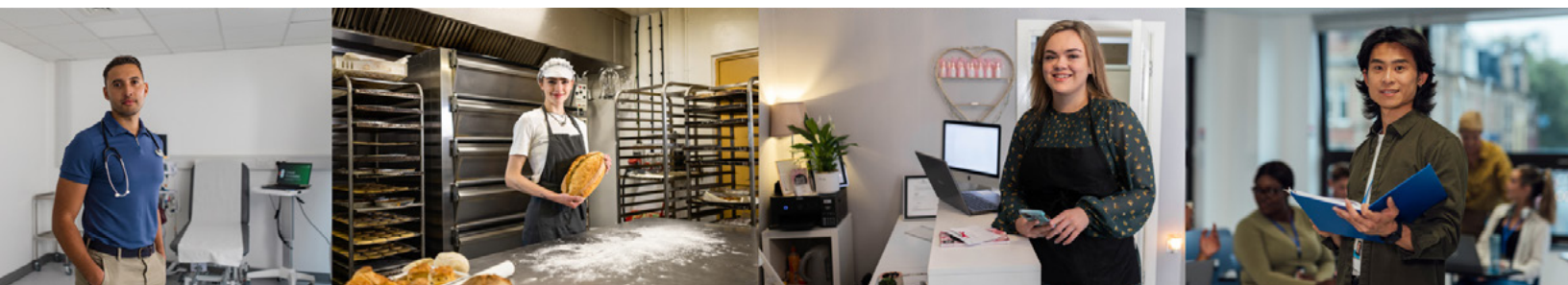
PHOTO CREDITS
Getty Images

Printed in the United
States of America by the
Oklahoma Department
of Career and
Technology Education,
Stillwater, OK
74074-4398

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Military career skills are civilian job-ready skills	<u>4</u>
Making your individual transition plan	<u>6</u>
Step 1: Conduct a self-evaluation	<u>7</u>
Step 2: Explore career interests and options	<u>8</u>
Career clusters and pathways	<u>9</u>
Tools for career planning and preparation	<u>14</u>
Step 3: Fill any skills gap	<u>15</u>
Prepping for a behavioral interview	<u>16</u>
Stop and drop the jargon	<u>17</u>
Inventory your personal job search assets	<u>18</u>
Step 4: Find and apply for a job	<u>19</u>
Strategies for networking	<u>21</u>
Skill builder: Build a personal network	<u>22</u>
Résumés that stand out for the right reasons	<u>23</u>
Strong verbs for résumés	<u>24</u>
Managing your digital dirt	<u>25</u>
Using job boards	<u>27</u>
Branding yourself online	<u>27</u>
Maximizing career fairs	<u>29</u>
Acing any interview: What you need to know	<u>31</u>
Step 5: Manage your career transition	<u>32</u>
Dealing with the stress of career transition	<u>33</u>
A blueprint for managing your emotions	<u>35</u>
Turning setbacks into steppingstones in the civilian workforce	<u>37</u>

Scan the QR code for a directory of resources »



» Military career skills are civilian job-ready skills

For many veterans, their military careers provided training and experience that allows for a solid foundation for a variety of civilian careers. Think about it: a single occupational specialty in the military may have given you skills relating to project planning and management, personnel management, administration, equipment maintenance, communication, data entry, and computer hardware and software applications. Today's job market demands a diverse set of skills and abilities — qualifications that many veterans possess due to their military service.

Veterans also bring other qualities that are highly prized by civilian employers, including a work ethic, teamwork and leadership abilities, planning and time management skills, confidence, and maturity. Here are some of the top abilities that employers value in new employees, and why:

Managing time and tasks. In the civilian workplace, just as in the military, the work of one person usually affects the work of others. Poor use of time or a lack of focus on priorities creates problems up and down the line. It is also a reality in both civilian and military jobs that multiple tasks must be underway at the same time. Your success at multitasking in your military career will be appreciated — and expected — in your civilian job.

Communicating effectively. In the civilian workplace,

communicating with co-workers and customers is essential for career success. Communication ensures that assignments are understood, the expected results are known, and team members recognize their responsibilities. This is also true in the military workplace. Professionalism in communications is also vital to career success in both the military and civilian workplaces. Customers and supervisors in the civilian workplace will reward your demonstration of professionalism through loyalty and promotion. Fortunately, your military career demanded professionalism every day.

Working as part of a team. Teams are a feature of many civilian workplaces today. Teams can be formal or informal, long-term or project-based. However, what made you successful as a team member in your

military career will work for you as a civilian: working toward common (team) goals, following accepted procedures and standards, and applying each individual's abilities in the most effective way.

Navigating among people and places.

Today's workplaces are full of places inhabited by all kinds of people. The boundaries that indicate these places at work are the lines on an organizational chart and the walls separating divisions, departments, and offices. People of all backgrounds and experience levels work in these different places. Civilian employers value job candidates who have demonstrated their ability to know where to go, how to get there, and how to effectively interact with the people they meet along the way. Sounds a lot like skills learned and applied in a military career, doesn't it?

Building professional skills. Most job openings in today's civilian workplace attract many candidates who satisfy the basic requirements of the job. What civilian employers value more highly are those candidates who have gone beyond the basics to learn and develop new skills and who have applied those skills



Civilian employers prize job candidates who have demonstrated their ability to know where to go, how to get there, and how to effectively interact with the people they meet along the way.

in their careers. As a veteran, you likely demonstrated your interest in professional development in many ways, such as by completing advanced or specialized training, seeking college credit for military experience, obtaining a security clearance, taking licensing and certification courses,

pursuing leadership training, and using career interest assessments.

Getting the job done in a diverse workplace. The civilian workplace is becoming more diverse in terms of ethnicities, generations, and lifestyles. This change mirrors the changes in the population of the United States as a whole. Diversity is important to employers. In a global economy, it's important to take advantage of the different skills and viewpoints that a diverse workforce offers. Work teams that represent diverse abilities and experiences can respond with more flexibility to a range of situations and challenges. Customers are diverse, so a diverse group of employees can also help the employer relate to those customers successfully. The military is already a diverse workplace, so your success there should be an asset in an increasingly diverse civilian job market.

**CAREER FOCUS
ACTIVITY »**

The military has an array of transition assistance programs and resources. **Military OneSource** is the gateway to programs and services that support the everyday needs of service members and immediate family members. These programs and services include separation from the military and transitioning to civilian life. Visit Military OneSource and its separation resources at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/transition-retirement/separation/>.

» Making your individual transitional plan

Completing the mission of your transition to civilian life requires planning and preparation. Planning will improve the odds of your success. A basic transition plan involves the following five steps:

- Conduct a self-evaluation.
- Explore career interests and options.
- Fill any skills gap.
- Find and apply for a job.
- Manage your career transition.

STEP 1 Conduct a self-evaluation

This step involves taking a complete — and honest — look at your skills, training, experiences, abilities and talents. After completing this step, you will be able to summarize your skills, abilities, interests and talents for later use in a résumé, cover letter, job application, and interview preparation.

Questions to answer

- What skills can you document?
- What training have you completed?
- What interests do you have?



Actions to take

- Get a copy of your DD Form 2586, “Verification of Military Experience and Training” (VMET).
- Get an official transcript of education and training credits you received. (Each service branch has its own system.)
- Save your VMET and your transcript as resources to use when writing a résumé and preparing for an interview.

- Summarize in a list your demonstrated skills and abilities, as well as any personal interests or talents.

Translating military careers to civilian careers

While serving in the military, you had chosen a career path or occupational specialty. Many jobs in civilian life align pretty closely with military training and experience, such as these jobs:

- Auditor
- Case worker
- Civil engineer
- Entrepreneur
- Food service manager
- Heavy equipment operator
- Information technology/telecommunications
- Management
- Mechanic
- Medical specialist
- Nuclear engineer

It can be more difficult to translate some military occupations and training to their civilian counterparts. When looking for resources or communicating with potential employers, a successful strategy is to identify the major duties, tasks, and responsibilities of your military career — rather than refer only to the military job title. Civilian employers will be more familiar with the words you use to describe your responsibilities; they will probably not be familiar with many military job titles.

Identify your top skills and interests as they relate to the workforce by taking this free career assessment: <https://agilities.org/tools-resources/agile-work-profiler/>.

OKCareerGuide is an easy resource available for all Oklahomans to explore and guide their future. You can take assessments, identify occupations, establish education plans, and connect to employers. Get started today by creating a free account at okcareerguide.org.

**CAREER FOCUS
ACTIVITY**

STEP 2

Explore career interests and options

This step involves identifying possible career areas that interest you, as well as jobs that relate to those career areas. After completing this step, you will be able to narrow your focus to jobs in specific career fields of interest.

Questions to answer

- What career areas relate to your skills, abilities, education and training?
- Within each career area of interest, what are possible jobs of interest?
- Do those jobs of interest match your demonstrated skills, abilities, and experiences?
- Do any relocation requirements exist? How could those requirements affect your job search?

Actions to take

- Identify possible career areas that interest you.
- Gather information about each career area: employment trends/outlook, job duties, working conditions, education and training requirements, salary range, and other information important to you.
- Choose a career area for greater focus in your job search.
- Within each career area, identify jobs of interest that also match your demonstrated skills, abilities, and experiences.
- Research jobs of interest using tools for career planning and preparation.



» Career clusters and pathways

Career clusters are broad career fields in the civilian workplace. Each cluster represents related occupations organized into career pathways. Career information is often organized according to these career clusters and pathways. You can use them in two major ways:

- If you're thinking about an occupation, you can find career information for that occupation under the appropriate cluster and pathway titles.
- If you're interested in a civilian career field, but aren't yet sure about a specific occupation, pick

the cluster title to identify possible occupations. This will help you to narrow your focus.

Find the top career clusters that might interest you according to your personal qualities and interest/skill areas.

CAREER CLUSTER

Advanced Manufacturing

Personal qualities

- Practical
- Observant
- Physically active
- Step-by-step thinker
- Coordinated

Interest/skill areas

- Math
- Geometry
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Trade and industry
- Technology engineering
- Language arts



CAREER CLUSTER

Agriculture

Personal qualities

- Practical
- Observant
- Physically active
- Step-by-step thinker
- Coordinated

Interest/skill areas

- Agricultural education
- Math
- Geometry
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Language arts



It's more than farming. Science and technology are fascinating areas that continue to grow through research efforts. New methods and products are continually being developed to make our lives easier and safer.

Many of the jobs involved in science and technology are part of agriculture. What exactly is agriculture? It is the production of plants and animals, and related supplies, services, mechanics, products,

processing and marketing. Because agriculture continues to expand, the term **agriscience** is often used to describe the application of agricultural principles and new technologies.

There are more than **47 million** jobs in agriculture and related fields in the U.S. today. Direct farm employment is a small part of the total. Agriculture in the 21st century is based in science and often calls upon the latest technologies.



CAREER CLUSTER

Arts, Entertainment and Design

Personal qualities

- Creative and imaginative
- Communicates well
- Curious about technology
- Relates well to feelings and thoughts of others
- Determined

Interest/skill areas

- Art/Graphic design
- Music
- Speech and drama
- Literature
- Journalism
- Audiovisual technologies



CAREER CLUSTER Construction

Personal qualities

- Curious
- Follows directions
- Detail-oriented
- Can imagine possibilities
- Patient and persistent

Interest/skill areas

- Math
- Drafting
- Physical sciences
- Construction trades
- Electrical trades
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning
- Technology engineering



CAREER CLUSTER Education

Personal qualities

- Friendly and helpful
- Decision maker
- Innovative
- Questioning/inquisitive
- Good listener

Interest/skill areas

- Language arts
- Social sciences
- Math
- Science
- Psychology

CAREER CLUSTER Digital Technology

Personal qualities

- Logical/analytical thinker
- Sees details in the big picture
- Persistent
- Good concentration skills
- Precise and accurate

Interest/skill areas

- Math
- Science
- Computer technology/ applications
- Technology engineering
- Communications
- Graphic design



Who are IT workers? No single definition exists. However, people in IT careers usually have a computer-related focus. IT careers can be found in almost all parts of the country and in all types of organizations, from retail businesses to manufacturing plants.

CAREER CLUSTER Energy and Natural Resources

Personal qualities

- Professionalism/Integrity
- Interpersonal skills
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Curiosity
- Enthusiasm and positivity
- Ethics and responsibility
- Desire to learn/Upskill
- Reliability
- Self-directed

Interest/skill areas

- Safety awareness
- Tool and technology use
- Critical thinking/Problem solving
- Decision-making
- Team orientation
- Communication skills: listening, speaking, writing
- Planning and organizing
- Working with data
- Customer service and quality



CAREER CLUSTER Financial Services

Personal qualities

- Trustworthy
- Orderly and logical
- Self-confident
- Methodical or efficient

Interest/skill areas

- Accounting
- Math
- Economics
- Banking/Financial services
- Business law

CAREER CLUSTER Healthcare and Human Services



Personal qualities

- Compassionate and caring
- Follows directions
- Conscientious and careful
- Patient
- Good listener
- Communicates well
- Uses logic and intuition
- Non-judgmental

Interest/skill areas

- Health careers education
- Biological sciences
- Chemistry
- Math
- Language arts
- Psychology/Sociology
- Family and consumer sciences education
- Finance
- Foreign language

Look for “hidden healthcare careers.” Of the many possible careers in health sciences, you might be familiar with only a few of them, such as doctor, nurse and physical therapist. Other careers are not well known and require little or no contact

with patients. For example, investigate careers such as biostatistician, cytotechnologists, surgical technologists, pharmacy technician and medical transcriptionist. Health educators promote wellness and healthy lifestyles.

CAREER CLUSTER Hospitality Events and Tourism

Personal qualities

- Tactful
- Self-motivated
- Works well with others
- Outgoing
- Easygoing/slow to anger

Interest/skill areas

- Language arts/Speech
- Foreign language
- Social sciences
- Marketing
- Food services





CAREER CLUSTER
Management and Entrepreneurship

- | | |
|---|---|
| Personal qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized • Practical and logical • Patient • Tactful • Responsible | Interest/skill areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and information technology/computer applications • Accounting • Math • English • Economics |
|---|---|



CAREER CLUSTER
Marketing and Sales

- | | |
|---|---|
| Personal qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiastic • Competitive • Creative • Self-motivated • Persuasive | Interest/skill areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language arts • Math • Business education/Marketing • Economics • Computer applications |
|---|---|



CAREER CLUSTER
Public Service and Safety

- | | |
|--|--|
| Personal qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates well • Competitive • Service-oriented • Organized • Problem solver • Adventurous • Dependable • Community-minded • Decisive • Optimistic | Interest/skill areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Language arts • History • Math • Foreign language • Psychology/Sociology • Law enforcement • First aid/First responder |
|--|--|



CAREER CLUSTER
Supply Chain and Transportation

- | | |
|---|--|
| Personal qualities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic • Mechanically-inclined • Coordinated • Observant • Planner | Interest/skill areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math • Trade and industry • Physical sciences • Economics • Foreign language |
|---|--|

» Tools for career planning and preparation

Recruiter. A person who evaluates potential employees and makes recommendations to the employer.

Podcast. A digital file, audio or video, available on the Internet that can be played or downloaded to a personal computer or a mobile device, such as a smartphone.

Blog. A website that enables a user to create and update an online journal and allows readers to add comments.

A number of tools can assist you in choosing a career and finding a job:

- **Salary calculators.** These tools provide information on salaries within specific geographic locations and for specific career types. They are useful when moving from one location to another where the cost of living may be drastically different.
- **Career tests.** These tools can help you determine which career is a best fit for your skills and interests.
- **Skills training.** Technology centers, colleges and universities, and community or technical colleges can help you obtain or improve specific job-required skills. Many of them also offer courses online.
- **Advice and resources.** These tools provide information on current employment trends; sample résumés, cover letters, and common interview questions; and even advice on negotiating salary and benefits.
- **Podcasts.** Podcasts provide an opportunity for recruiters to give résumé and job seeking tips. They also enable employers to advertise positions and provide information about their organizations.
- **Blogs.** You can create your own job-search blog, read company blogs, and join career-related blogs.

CAREER FOCUS
ACTIVITY »

To see some possible careers like your military job, you can visit **My Next Move for Veterans**, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, found at <https://www.mynextmove.org/vets>.

STEP 3 >>> Fill any skills gap

This step involves determining whether you are qualified for possible jobs of interest, and filling in any potential gaps in your qualifications. Filling in a recognized gap in skills or experience will make you a stronger candidate for a job. After completing this step, you will be more fully qualified for your top civilian jobs of interest.

Questions to ask

- Are you fully qualified for the civilian jobs you want?
- If you are not fully qualified, are you willing to fill the gap?
- Do opportunities and resources exist for you to fill the gap?

Actions to take

- Compare your list of jobs of interest (from Step 2) to your list of skills, abilities and experiences (from Step 1).



- Identify any gaps between the qualifications for your top jobs of interest to the qualifications that you currently have.
- Make a plan to fill any gap through more education and training, certifications, temporary or part-time jobs,

volunteer work, or internships. List the resources available, such as local training programs or online credentials testing, as well as your personal resources available (time, money, internet access, etc.).

- Carry out your plan.

TIP



In some parts of the country, employers receive many more job applications and résumés from veterans than in other parts of the country. As a result, the competition for job opportunities may be tougher in those areas. Also, if you're looking for a civilian job that is similar to your military specialty, some parts of the country may offer more opportunities than others.

Being willing to relocate can expand your job opportunities — and give you an advantage over the competition. You may want to choose the type of job you want

first, and then prepare to go where those jobs are.

If you decide to relocate, you should consider:

- The job potential of the community
- The affordability of the community
- The suitability of the community for a short-term or long-term stay (depending on your personal goals)
- The environment around the community — rural or urban, small town or large, near recreational facilities, etc.

» Prepping for a behavioral interview

Some employers use the interview to identify real-life examples of your on-the-job performance, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and leadership abilities. You need to be prepared for behavior-based interview questions. These kinds of questions require more than a one-sentence answer — they require you to answer the question using one or more specific examples from your experience.

Some examples of behavior-based interview questions appear below:

- Can you describe a time when a team on which you were involved was failing, and the steps you took to remedy the situation?
- Can you tell us about a time when you had to persuade others to make a decision or choice?
- When did you accomplish something that required your participation to make the achievement possible?
- Can you explain a difficult situation involving a co-worker, and how you responded to it successfully?
- Can you describe a time when you had to overcome a significant barrier to achieve a goal, and what you did to overcome the barrier?
- Have you had to reconcile different viewpoints on a project or process in order to accomplish a task or goal? Please describe the situation, your actions, and the results.
- Tell us about a time when you had to respond to critical feedback from a supervisor or customer.
- Can you explain a situation in which you had to respond to an upset customer?
- Can you give us an example of how you were a key to solving a problem or resolving an issue?
- Can you describe how you prioritized the work on a project to achieve a successful outcome?
- How have you gone about making what you knew would be an unpopular decision?
- What is an example of a bad decision you've made? Why was it bad, and what would you do differently?
- Tell us about a situation when the time or other resources available to you changed, but you still had to meet the original deadline.

TIP



Many employers ask you to respond to behavioral interview questions by giving answers that describe a STAR:

ST = Situation/Task

A = Action(s) you took

R = Results of your actions

You might find it helpful to keep a list on a note card of situations or tasks that you could use in response to multiple interview questions. That way, you won't struggle to think of something relevant to a specific interview question.

CAREER FOCUS ACTIVITY

You can use a **skills translator** to compare your military experiences to their civilian counterparts. One example is the **Skills Translator** at www.Military.com. Click on the **Veteran Jobs** tab and select the **Skills Translator** tab from the lower menu bar.

Stop and drop the jargon

Don't let military jargon put obstacles in the way of your successful career transition. You must take your military job description, skills and accomplishments and translate them.

Translate them into another language? Sort of. You need to translate them into skills that meet the needs of civilian employers.

Employers and recruiters see hundreds and thousands of résumés. They don't understand military terminology and have no time to learn it. If your résumé doesn't quickly answer their questions about your qualifications, it will end up in the wastebasket.

Where should you start? Start by translating your military job title. Then, convert your job duties, skills and accomplishments. Use key words and strong verbs that relate to the employer's needs.

For example, the employer won't know the meaning of your rank, but all employers will know the value of a job applicant who has supervised seven people. If you're not sure how to begin, start by describing what you did to accomplish a task, then go back and shorten your description until you have a statement.

Basically, you should write, then edit, then edit again. Keep sifting through your words until only the shortest, most direct, most meaningful statement remains.

Clear?





» Inventory your personal job search assets

You have assets that will help in your career transition that are unique to you. By taking an inventory of your assets, you can make career decisions that make use of these assets. Here are some personal assets and their value to your career transition:

Your dreams. Dreams and daydreams say a lot about what's important to you. They also provide hints about what interests and motivates you. Thinking about your dreams can help you to get serious about pursuing a future that you've always wanted.

Your values and beliefs. Your personal values and beliefs act as guideposts in your work and personal lives. Knowing what these are, and why they are important to you, can help you to choose a career that places value on the same things.

Your (positive) personal characteristics. These are the words you would use to describe yourself to another person. What kind of a person do you believe yourself to be? How do you think other people would describe you? Knowing these personal characteristics can better prepare you to respond to related questions during an interview.

Your interests. Interests are things you enjoy doing, things that you make time to do. For example, they may be hobbies that you pursue after work or on weekends. Or, you may get real satisfaction out of helping other people or volunteering. You may discover a new career that involves doing the things that you previously did "just for fun."

What you know. This refers to your personal knowledge base. It includes things that you've learned through education and training, as well as through experience.

What you know may be of interest to a potential employer.

Who you know. This is your personal network of relatives, friends, co-workers, acquaintances, professional contacts, neighbors, team or club members, and other people. Your personal network is very valuable in helping you to locate job opportunities — as well as supporting you during your career transition.

Transferable skills. These are skills that you possess and that you can take anywhere with you — you can transfer them to another career. Transferable skills include communication skills, leadership skills, math skills, critical thinking skills, organizational skills, time management skills, and many others. Transferable skills are valued by many employers in all career areas.

Materials and equipment. These assets include things that you own, that could be helpful in a new career. Some of these assets are owned by many people, while others belong to fewer people. They include vehicles (to get to work or to perform work), cell or smartphone, computer and software, work-related tools or equipment, work-related clothes, portfolio (of your work, such as photographs or other samples), money, and other examples.

Make a list of your assets for each of the categories above. Use your list as you make decisions about career and job opportunities.

STEP 4 Find and apply for a job

This step involves finding a current job opportunity in the civilian workplace and applying for the job. After completing this step, you will have applied for one or more jobs.

Questions to ask

- Do you have any *digital dirt* to manage?
- Have you identified members of your personal network?
- Have you updated your résumé?
- Have you created an e-résumé?



Actions to take

- Set up accounts on social media sites, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, if you haven't already.
- Brand yourself online using social media and professional networking sites.
- Build your personal network.
- Update your résumé and create an e-résumé.

- Identify potential job opportunities.
- Apply for jobs of interest.

Finding job opportunities

Most jobs are filled through referrals from other people. As a result, your primary job search tool should be your personal network of friends, co-workers, acquaintances,

and family members. In addition, consider these resources:

- Career networking websites
- Social networking websites (LinkedIn, Facebook)
- Career fairs
- Employment agencies
- Newspaper classified ads
- Internships, volunteer work, community service work



Using social media in your job search

Social media helps you in your job search in multiple ways. Creating and maintaining a social media presence helps you to market yourself, develop a personal and professional network, become known within groups, and locate resources in your fields of interest. Most importantly, social media makes you more visible to the people who are looking for someone with your skills, qualifications, and interests. Visibility is critical. More

and more organizations are being proactive about using social media to find new employees.

Successful job seekers often find that the contacts they made through social media were the most important resource they used in their job search. Employers also use social networking sites to research job candidates.

CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE »



Using social media in your job search << CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Using social media for networking can help you find *unofficial* job postings or find out about future job openings. Social media is how professionals meet hundreds of people without traveling. Networking through social media:

- shows employers that you know how to use the internet;
- connects you to employment opportunities that are not advertised;
- expands your network of professional contacts;
- makes it easier to research industries, organizations, and positions of interest; and
- makes you visible to hiring managers and other decision makers.

The key to using social media in your job search is to shift your focus from looking at positions to looking for people. You can begin by creating and updating profiles on one or more social media sites.

Different social media platforms have different uses in career development. You can use multiple platforms, but you should start out with LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the professional networking site that employers and human resource professionals use most when searching for candidates. The free basic version is all you need. Here are some guidelines to help you get started using LinkedIn:

- Create your account (if you do not already have one) and your professional profile.
- Summarize your work experience using keywords

that relate to your field. (To identify keywords, read some related job descriptions and look at other professionals' profiles for ideas.)

- Connect to everyone you know to grow your network, including friends, family, and previous co-workers. (Note: Both quantity and quality are important. A larger number of contacts increases your visibility to employers. People with whom you have strong interpersonal connections may be more likely to endorse you when a job opportunity arises.)
- Post about your job search and your career goals.
- Post at least once a week to keep your network updated on your job search.
- Create posts that spark conversation and keep people interested.
- Search for organizations and groups that interest you. Groups can include industry groups, associations, alumni groups, and groups related to your skills and interests.
- Look for indirect connections you have to people in organizations and groups.
- After making a connection at a meeting or conference, find the person on LinkedIn and send a request to connect.
- Share and comment on posts to boost your presence.
- Ask questions or become an authority at answering others' questions.
- Stay professional and positive online. Avoid criticizing or venting about issues or organizations.
- Stay alert for job listings within groups.



» Strategies for networking

Networking is the job of creating links from people you already know to people they know, for a specific purpose — such as finding a job. It also involves making yourself known by meeting with people formally or informally in groups or one-on-one. Networking rarely produces immediate results. It may take many conversations with many people before you find yourself in an interview. It is important to remain positive when talking to potential contacts.

- Join and participate in professional organizations. Almost every career field has related professional organizations. Find organizations that relate to your career interests.
- Practice your social skills. It will give you more confidence in your ability to meet new people and communicate with them.
- Develop your personal self-introduction. Think of a way to introduce yourself to create interest. Practice your introduction until it feels natural and includes the words you want.
- Look for opportunities to network. Are there professional organizations you could join? Is there volunteer work you could do in your community? Think of ways to make yourself more visible to other people.
- Reintroduce yourself to people; don't wait for them to remember you. Remind the person where and when you met before.
- Focus on people when you meet them. Practice your ability to listen for and remember names. Being remembered makes people feel good. It also helps you to widen your network.
- Be courteous with everyone you meet. Anyone you meet could become important in your working life. Being respectful also encourages other people to include you in their networks.
- Keep addresses and titles up to date.
- Keep your network active by staying in touch with people. Use cards, notes, text messages, telephone calls, personal visits, email and other opportunities.
- Follow up promptly on any job referrals that people give you. People like to know that their advice was helpful. Following up with people will encourage them to share more leads with you.

» Skill builder: Build a personal network

Making introductions and participating in conversations are important skills in the civilian workplace. How you make and acknowledge introductions can influence the impression you make on other people. Being able to start a conversation — and keep one going — will also help you in social and workplace settings.

A personal network is a voluntary, informal communication community. It includes people who share information, abilities, services, support, or other resources with each other. The people in a network make connections with other people. These connections allow members to ask for help or resources — and respond to similar requests from other members.

Networking is the process of creating and maintaining a personal network. Networking allows you to use your communication skills to improve your ability to get something done — such as finding a job or a new job. The success of your personal networks

depends on your ability to make connections with other people.

Meet three new people. You can meet them where you go to school, where you work, from a club or community group, from church, or other opportunities that make sense for you.

Introduce yourself to each person and carry on a short conversation. After each conversation, record basic information about each contact:

- The person's name
- Where the person works
- The person's title (if any)
- When and where you met
- Things you talked about
- Needs, requests, and interests of the person
- Other people or organizations discussed

Make a goal for yourself to add a certain number of contacts to your network each month. Check your progress, using a calendar to remind yourself.

TIP



Here are some basic guidelines for starting conversations. You can search online for conversation starters to find examples of questions to ask.

- » **Be genuine and enthusiastic:** Your energy will be contagious.
- » **Ask open-ended questions:** Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple **yes** or **no**.
- » **Be curious and show interest:** People love talking about themselves and their passions.
- » **Listen actively:** Pay attention to what the other person says and follow up with relevant questions.
- » **Don't be afraid to share a bit about yourself:** This can help build rapport and create a connection.

TIP



Résumés that stand out for the right reasons

You can find lots of helpful resources about résumé styles and designs, and what to include in a résumé. These hints will help to make your résumé a successful *commercial* that advertises you.

- Know your goal and design your résumé to reflect that goal.
- Know your personal selling points and prioritize them.
- Focus on your successes and accomplishments.
- Identify key words and make them stand out. For example, what words does the job description include? What words stand out in the scholarship application?
- Keep your résumé brief (1-2 pages). Put a list of references on a separate sheet and keep the list up to date.
- Do not include a photograph.
- Review and revise your résumé before you send it. Fix any spelling or formatting errors.

The typical forms of résumés and the tools to create them

Two common types of résumés are the **chronological résumé** and the **functional résumé**. The functional, or targeted, résumé highlights major accomplishments, skills, and strengths. It organizes skills into clusters that support your work objectives. Previous job titles and dates in your work history are either downplayed or left off altogether. This format can make specific required skills easy for the employer to find.

The chronological résumé lists your work history in order. You list your most recent work experience first and work backwards in time. It can do a good job of showing how you

Create a Resume

Resume Name:

New Resume

Preview

Download

Print

Copy

Delete

Resume Preferences

Resume Format:

Chronological

Functional

Resume Style:

Basic

Contemporary

Elegant

Professional

Your Information

Your Full Name:

Your Email Address:

youremail@provider.com

Your Phone Number:

XXX-XXX-XXXX

☒ Display my address on my resume

Your Street Address:

Your Full Mailing Address, including City, State and ZIP code

have progressed or grown in experience or responsibility.

OKCareerGuide includes a tool for creating

both types of résumé. OKCareerGuide is an easy online resource available for all Oklahomans to explore and guide their future. You can take

assessments, identify occupations, establish education plans, and connect to employers.

okcareerguide.org



Strong verbs for résumés

Strong verbs are action verbs. They get to the point quickly and describe your skills, abilities, and accomplishments accurately. You should use strong verbs in your résumé, but also any time you need to list your qualifications. Some useful strong verbs appear below.

Achieved	Acquired	Acted	Adapted	Administered
Advised	Allocated	Analyzed	Answered	Applied
Approved	Arranged	Assembled	Assessed	Assisted
Audited	Authorized	Balanced	Briefed	Budgeted
Built	Calculated	Checked	Coached	Collected
Communicated	Compared	Compiled	Completed	Complied
Computed	Conducted	Constructed	Consulted	Contracted
Controlled	Converted	Coordinated	Created	Decided
Defined	Delegated	Delivered	Demonstrated	Designed
Determined	Developed	Devised	Diagnosed	Directed
Displayed	Distributed	Documented	Drafted	Drove
Eliminated	Enforced	Ensured	Established	Estimated
Evaluated	Examined	Exceeded	Expanded	Explained
Extracted	Facilitated	Filed	Fixed	Focused
Followed	Formed	Gathered	Generated	Guided
Handled	Headed	Helped	Identified	Implemented
Improved	Increased	Influenced	Initiated	Inspected
Instituted	Instructed	Integrated	Interpreted	Interviewed
Introduced	Inventoried	Investigated	Involved	Judged
Kept	Launched	Learned	Led	Lifted
Located	Logged	Machined	Made	Maintained
Managed	Manufactured	Mapped	Marketed	Mastered
Maximized	Mediated	Met	Minimized	Modified
Monitored	Motivated	Navigated	Negotiated	Observed
Obtained	Operated	Ordered	Organized	Oversaw
Packaged	Participated	Performed	Persuaded	Piloted
Planned	Predicted	Prepared	Presented	Prioritized
Processed	Produced	Programmed	Projected	Promoted
Proposed	Protected	Provided	Published	Purchased
Questioned	Raised	Received	Recommended	Reconciled
Recorded	Recruited	Reduced	Referred	Reorganized
Repaired	Replaced	Reported	Requisitioned	Researched
Responded	Reviewed	Revised	Scanned	Scheduled
Screened	Selected	Served	Shaped	Shared
Simplified	Solicited	Solved	Streamlined	Strengthened
Summarized	Supervised	Supported	Surveyed	Taught
Tested	Tracked	Trained	Transferred	Translated
Upgraded	Used	Validated	Verified	Wrote

More KEY words

Besides strong verbs, you should use other **key words** in your job search. Key words are descriptive words and phrases that relate to specific career fields or jobs. Using key words in résumés, cover letters, applications, emails, and online postings tells potential employers that:

- » you know the career field or subject area
- » you are familiar with the workplace
- » you are up-to-date on industry-required training
- » you know how to describe your skills and abilities

In addition to the reasons listed above, using key words is important for other reasons. Using key words that are used throughout a career field helps employers to decide if you have the needed skills and experience. Key words also help to keep your résumé from being set aside or discarded. Many employers use people or software to screen résumés for key words.

Where can you find the right key words for the job you want? Here are a few suggestions:

- » Write down key words and phrases that appear in the job advertisement or posting.
- » Look at multiple, similar job postings or advertisements; note the key words and phrases that are repeated.
- » Visit the employer's website; note how similar jobs are described.
- » Visit websites of organizations within the same career field or industry. Write down any key words you find. Examples include competitors' websites, industry association websites, and industry publication websites.
- » Remember how other people describe the job when you communicate with them, such as in person or via social networking sites or email.
- » Make a file of job postings and advertisements that interest you. Pay attention to the words used to describe the job requirements and qualifications.



» Managing your digital dirt

Be careful about the information you provide or post online. This is especially important with social media sites. Employers may check a job applicant's online information as a routine part of the hiring process. In other words, you need to manage your *digital dirt*. Do this by:

- Being selective about what you post about yourself
- Searching for your own name to discover what others might be sharing about you:
 - » Use multiple search engines, such as Bing, Yahoo, Google, etc.
 - » Use quotes around your name.
 - » Search for different spelling variations of your name — even possible misspellings.
- Using available privacy controls.
- Knowing the people with whom you share personal information.
- Removing information that might harm your chances of getting a job:
 - » Inappropriate photos
 - » References to drinking, drug use, etc.
 - » Derogatory references to anyone, including co-workers
 - » Rants about every topic
 - » Spelling and grammar mistakes
- Keeping personal information private



E-résumé tips

Your electronic résumé is a more basic version of your print résumé. Its purpose is to be easily posted to online job boards or emailed to potential employers. Here are some tips for an effective e-résumé:

- Use a common font, such as Helvetica, Arial or Calibri.
- Include the appropriate key words. Leave out military terms, acronyms, and abbreviations that civilian employers will not recognize. (Translate those terms into civilian language, if needed.)
- Focus on your major responsibilities with quantifiable accomplishments.
- Include only your primary phone number and email address.
- Check your résumé for spelling errors and missing punctuation. Check it yourself and ask someone else to check it.
- Save your résumé as a plain text file. This is a file type with the ".txt" extension. It is a common requirement of many job boards.
- Include a cover letter. Never send a résumé without a cover letter. For an electronic résumé, your cover letter can be the email message to the employer contact. A cover letter should be no longer than three to four paragraphs, each with three to four short sentences:
 - » First (1 paragraph), identify the job and how you found out about it. Mention your attendance at a career fair, if appropriate, and any contact with an employer's representative.
 - » Second (1-2 paragraphs), summarize your experience and qualifications for the job. Briefly state how your skills and training match the requirements for the job. Refer to your résumé, but do not repeat the résumé in the cover letter.
 - » Third (1 paragraph), request an interview at the employer's convenience. Give information about how and when you can be reached.

AUDREY CRENSHAW
P.O. Box 12345
Stanford, CA 94309
650.497.1234
student@stanford.edu

OBJECTIVE

Summer intern position focusing on software development

EDUCATION

Stanford University, Stanford, CA
Bachelor of Science, Computer Science, expected June
Coursework: Java, C, LISP, programming paradigms and algorithms, databases, and artificial intelligence

COMPUTER SKILLS

C, Java, LISP, Perl, VisualBASIC, Oracle, PL/SQL, ODBC, XML, SQL/CLI, PSM, UNIX, Linux, HTML Web page design, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, Flash, Photoshop, GoLive, Illustrator, Acrobat, FileMakerPro, Lotus Notes Databases

EXPERIENCE

Career Development Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA
Computer Technician and Programmer, 10/20XX-present
* Set up and maintain JSP server for connectivity to database
* Help design and maintain center website

Adobe Systems, Adobe Solutions Network, San Jose, CA
Database Intern, 6/20XX-9/20XX
* Set up and maintained JSP web pages for connectivity to database
* Redesigned and maintained related FileMakerPro databases and engineers

Source: Stanford Career Education

TIP



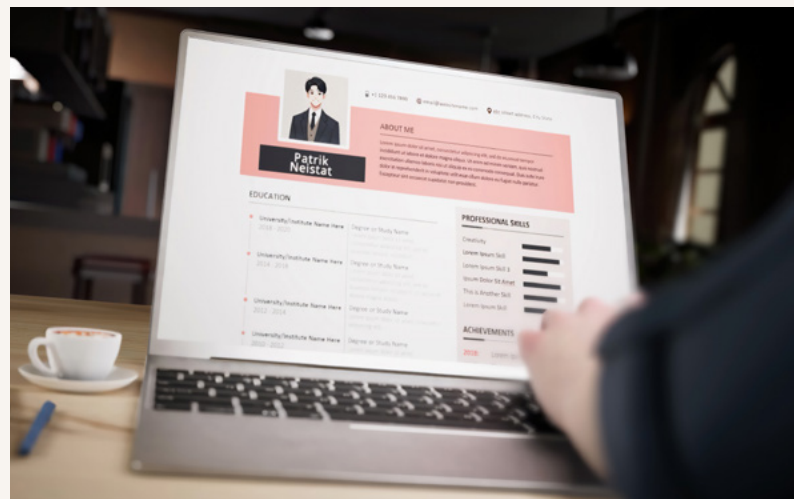
Using job boards

- » **Try out a job board before relying on it.** Do some test searches and check the results. Do you get the kinds of jobs you want?
- » **Go from broad to narrow.** First, let the job board's search engine provide you with the broadest range of job openings. Then, add key words to narrow the search and focus the results. This way, you avoid starting out too narrowly focused, which could cause you to miss some opportunities.
- » **Complete the profile for each job board.** By skipping the profile, you communicate to potential employers that you are not serious about your job search.
- » **Edit your résumé to better match up with different jobs.** Using the same résumé for every job opportunity will reveal gaps in qualifications that employers will recognize.
- » **Post, update and repost your résumé.** Avoid keeping the same résumé online for month after month. If you don't get results, then update and repost your résumé. Many employers will not take a look at résumés that were posted months ago.
- » **Use a job board not only to find job opportunities, but to identify employers for further research.** This is a more active approach than posting and waiting. You might spot a job opportunity that appeals to you. If so, you could visit that employer's social media sites and look for contact information.

Branding yourself online

Social media and professional networking sites — such as Facebook, LinkedIn and others — are becoming fundamental job search tools. They allow job seekers to create and build a professional network online, as well as find out about job opportunities early. Social media sites allow employers to find job candidates, but also to evaluate those candidates by looking at their profiles, blog posts, and Google search results.

More and more employers are using social media in their hiring processes. They use social media both to promote job openings and to check the profiles of job applicants. It is common today for employers to fill job openings using social media. It is also common for employers to eliminate applicants from the pool



of candidates based on information found online. Employers are even using social media to seek recommendations through their networks to fill jobs that have not been posted yet.

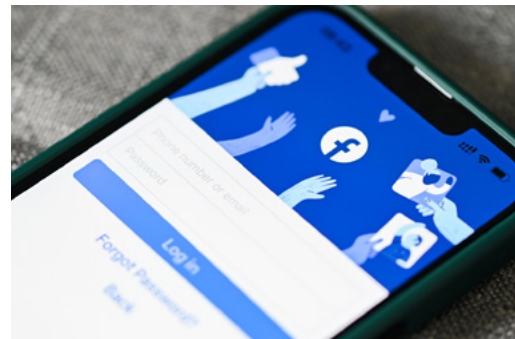
How can you brand yourself online to facilitate your job search?

Here are some strategies:

- » Create an online presence if you haven't already done so.
- » Develop your online brand and update it regularly:
 - same photo on all sites
 - consistent use of your name
 - consistent description of your skills, training, and experiences
 - use of your name in your LinkedIn identity, etc.
- » Include a photo that is appropriate for the civilian workplace.
- » Manage your digital dirt early — not after you've posted résumés and emailed cover letters.
- » Use key words matching to your skills, training and experience, and that relate to the jobs you want.
- » Update your profiles regularly. Weed out contacts that do not add value to your job search.
- » Evaluate the profiles of people you link to — could those profiles reflect poorly on you with a potential employer?
- » Link to your profiles in other places, such as in your email signature line.
- » Network online with other people — make more people aware of your job search.
- » Join groups.
- » Communicate with people regularly and thank them often.
- » Ask people you're connected with online to introduce you to people they know.
- » Give, give and give again to others if you want to receive from others:
 - Respond to questions or comments from other people.
 - Be willing to provide recommendations for other people.
 - Stay involved in discussions online.
 - Respond to friend requests.
- » Use a detailed subject line when sending email. This can make your message — and your brand — more memorable to the recipient.
- » Follow employers that interest you. Visit their social media sites.

Facebook as a job search tool

Facebook is a social network of users who create personal profiles. It allows users to maintain contact with their friends and their acquaintances. Facebook allows you to create and maintain a personal network. You can send messages to people in your network, asking for job leads and referrals. You can also post a status update to note that you are currently searching for a new job or career transition.



Employers also use Facebook. They use it to promote awareness of their products and services, as well as to communicate employment opportunities. Facebook users can **like** the employer's pages and, as a result, can receive updates from the employer.

LinkedIn as a job search tool

LinkedIn is a social network of users who create personal profiles, but has an employment focus. It allows users to maintain a professional network, rather than the broader personal network on Facebook. LinkedIn lets you see your professional network at a glance so that you can make connections with more people.

For example, on LinkedIn, you can see to whom you're connected and how. You can also see where your connections have worked. As a result, you can better target your networking activities.



As with Facebook, employers can also create a profile using LinkedIn. You can receive updates from these employers as their LinkedIn profiles are updated.

» Maximizing career fairs

Career fairs put a variety of employers and job seekers in the same place at the same time. This can be a great way to gather information about employers, meet recruiters and other employer representatives, and get answers to basic questions in a more relaxed setting.

At a career fair, employers usually occupy individual tables or booth spaces in a large conference room or ballroom. The organizer of the career fair may provide a *floor plan* showing the location of the participating employers. You can take certain steps to maximize your attendance at a career fair:

Before the fair

- Research the listed employers to narrow your focus and determine your plan of attack:
 - » Identify your top three to five employers from an attendees list, if provided in advance.
 - » Visit the employer's website for product and service descriptions, as well as recent press releases and other news.
 - » Network in advance with anyone you know who is familiar with the employer (such as current and recent employees).
- Make a set of notes for each employer you wish to visit. Include key points you want to discuss, as well as specific questions you have.
- Locate the employers you wish to visit using a map of the career fair participants, if provided.

- Prioritize your list of employers in the order that you want to visit them.
- Prepare a brief introduction that focuses on your background, your interest in the employer, and your related experiences.
- Make copies of your résumé. Have more than enough copies for the number of employers you plan to visit. Note that some employers will not accept printed résumés and will ask you to apply online instead.
- Set aside the time to attend the fair. This means scheduling the career fair as your top priority while you will be attending it.

At the fair

- Dress professionally — treat the career fair as an interview.
- Be conservative with your use of cologne, perfume and makeup; consider not using any cologne or perfume.

CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE »

Maximizing career fairs

« CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

- Carry a portfolio with a notepad, pen, and copies of your résumé. (If carrying a purse, keep it small.) Do not carry a backpack.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Be patient — do not interrupt if the employer's representative is already in a conversation with another job seeker. (You might hear something of interest to you too.)
- Use your research in your discussion with the employers' representatives. Make sure the representative knows of your interest and your enthusiasm.
- Avoid collecting literature and giveaway items from every participating employer. You risk having too much to carry and looking awkward instead of organized.
- Ask for the representative's business card and thank the representative for his/her time.

- Ask the representative about the best method of follow-up. If you are referred to another contact person for follow-up, write down that information. (Ask if you may mention the representative's name when following-up with the contact person.)

After the fair

- Thank each employer's representative you visited within 24 to 48 hours after the career fair. Send an email or written thank-you note.
- Follow up with any other employer's contact to whom you were referred. When you do so, mention your attendance at the career fair.
- Take other steps suggested by the employer's representative, such as completing an online application and uploading your résumé.

TIP



Dressing for a skilled trades interview

Most industries have a uniform. In the skilled trades, it's likely to be a pair of jeans or khaki pants, a work shirt, boots, and possibly a hard hat. In general, you should dress one level better than you would if you were already working for the company.

Business casual clothing is appropriate, such as khakis and a button-down shirt that is clean and not wrinkled. Pants and skirts should be in neutral colors like black, brown, navy or grey. (Jeans might be appropriate for the job, but not for the interview.) Skirts should fall around the knee line. Tops should be light blue or white and buttoned appropriately. Avoid busy or flashy patterns.

Wearing a polo shirt in hot weather is appropriate. No clothing should have rips, holes, stains, slogans, or distracting designs. Wearing a suit for a skilled trades interview is usually unnecessary and can even make you look like you don't understand the work.

You might be invited into the workplace, so wear shoes that are appropriate for a shop floor or a tour. (If you need to walk a distance to get to the interview, wear tennis shoes to get there and change into nicer shoes after you arrive.) Dress shoes or nice casual shoes are appropriate; tennis shoes or sandals are not. If the weather is poor that day, make sure your outer jacket is clean.

» Acing any interview: What you need to know

An interview is an important event for almost every person. Interviews take place when you apply for a job, but they may also be required when you apply for admission to a school or training program, or even when you apply for a scholarship.

For any opportunity that might attract multiple candidates, interviews usually help to narrow the pool. This means that any interview is also your chance to stand out from everyone else in a positive way.

Your behavior before, during and after the interview will strongly influence the impression you make. Here are ways to make a good impression with any interview:

- Dress conservatively.
- Choose clothing that looks good on you and that is not too casual for the occasion.
- Wear minimal jewelry and makeup. Avoid perfume and cologne.
- Do not wear sunglasses.
- Take the necessary documents. For example, bring any required application forms, permissions, recommendations, transcripts, permits, and other information.
- Arrive early. Leave early enough to find the interview location with about 15 minutes to spare.
- Turn off your phone and put it away.
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist or secretary, to the interviewer, and to any other people who will be participating in the interview.

- Shake hands if the opportunity is made to you.
- Let the interviewer begin the interview.
- Keep good posture.
- Maintain eye contact and listen carefully throughout the interview. This shows your sincere interest in the purpose of the interview.
- Be brief, positive and honest when answering questions. Take notes to help you answer questions, if needed.

Avoid

- Chewing gum, eating candy, and smoking.
- Using slang or offensive language.
- Nervous habits, such as playing with your clothes, jangling your keys and wiggling your foot.
- Talking in a negative way about other people, jobs, or experiences.

At the end of the interview, thank the interviewer and anyone else who participated.

Within a day or two after the interview, send a thank-you card or email to thank the interviewer for interviewing you.

STEP 5

Manage your career transition

This step involves paying attention to how your career transition affects your work and personal life. This step is never really completed.

Questions to ask

- Do you have a plan for addressing your personal needs during career transition?
- Do you have a plan for addressing your family's needs during career transition?
- Do you have a plan for managing your finances?
- Are you dealing with stress and its causes?

Actions to take

- Identify any needs that your family will have during your career transition.
- Create a plan for managing your finances based on your new job.
- Recognize any personal needs — and plan to address them.

Dress codes: The civilian uniform

Your civilian employer will usually specify the type of dress that is acceptable at the workplace. In some jobs, the kind of work also determines what you must wear. Many employers include the dress code in a larger employee handbook; others may have a separate description or document. To make things more confusing, some employers allow more casual dress only on certain days, such as Fridays. Others allow it all of the time, and some employers do not allow for less than professional dress at any time.

Here is a general guide to the difference between business casual and business professional dress:

Business casual

Business casual dress policies combine a business (professional) image with a more relaxed look. It can be easy to violate this dress code by being too casual. Avoid clothing that you might wear while working in the yard, attending a sporting event, exercising, or going on a date. A business casual dress code could allow the following:

- » Khaki or solid-color slacks, or dress slacks
- » Button-front collared shirt, polo shirt or dress blouse
- » Subtle patterns
- » Sport coat or blazer
- » Dress shoes or loafers
- » Nothing too relaxed or too revealing
- » No jeans unless allowed



Business professional

Professional or business dress policies require a more formal image. A business professional dress code could require the following:

- » Suit with tie (conservative pattern) for men, suit with jacket or skirt for women
- » Dress shoes
- » Minimal jewelry and accessories
- » Belt appropriate for the suit and with simple buckle
- » Conservative colors (white, gray, navy blue, pinstripe, etc.)



» Dealing with the stress of career transition

It should not be surprising that the civilian workplace is a stressful place. Deadlines, budgets, meetings, quotas, and personality conflicts contribute to stress at work. Stress is also a part of our personal lives as we deal with financial issues, health concerns, relationship changes and challenges, and other issues.

As the boundary between work and personal life has blurred, personal stress and workplace stress can also mix more easily. Added to these everyday causes of stress is the stress of a career transition from the military back into civilian life. Transitioning from the military can involve a significant change in your career, your location, and your everyday working relationships. These changes are bound to cause stress.

What is stress? It is a physical response by the human body. Stress sets off an alarm in the brain. The brain responds to this alarm by preparing the body for defensive action. Hormones are released to sharpen the senses, quicken the pulse, deepen respiration, and tense the muscles. This response — also known as the fight-or-flight response — is important because it helps us defend against threatening situations. Everyone responds in much the same way, regardless whether the stressful situation is at work or home. When stressful situations go unresolved, the body remains in a constant state of readiness. As a result, the body's ability to repair and defend itself can become seriously compromised over time.

How can you recognize stress? Here are some clues to look for:

- Constant fatigue
- Headaches
- Difficulty sleeping
- Sleeping too much
- Stomach problems
- Nervous feeling
- Smoking, drinking, or eating more than usual
- More frequent colds and other illnesses
- Being irritable or more angry than normal
- Wanting to be alone or away from people

Stress will not completely disappear; it is a feature of modern life. However, you can do many things to reduce the amount of stress in your life and in your work. Here are some of the things you can do:

- Recognize the causes of stress in your life.
- Know your goals and expectations, and how you plan to reach them.

CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE »

Dealing with the stress of career transition

« CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

- Prioritize your concerns and tackle them one at a time.
- Talk about your concerns with people you trust.
- Get enough sleep.
- Exercise regularly.
- Improve your eating habits.
- Know when you need to ask for help — and ask.
- Keep a positive attitude.
- Use your work breaks to walk, read, stretch — whatever relaxes you.
- Make time outside work for hobbies and other interests.
- Keep a journal.
- Hang out with a new crowd — avoid surrounding yourself with negative people.
- Celebrate your daily accomplishments.
- Build your confidence.
- Learn to say “No.”
- Improve your time management.
- Let go of things you cannot change.
- Prepare for life changes and major events — don't wait for them to happen.
- Spend time with friends and family.
- Volunteer in your community.
- Inspire yourself with positive messages and quotes.
- Take control — learn from mistakes and move on.
- Put your problems into perspective — think about the concerns of others.
- Listen to your body and manage your health.
- Look for humor — in everyday events, on the comic pages, etc.



- Avoid dwelling on disappointments — focus on things and people you like.
- Avoid blame.
- Learn from the past and focus on the future.
- Stand your ground during meaningful conflicts — and know which fights are not worthwhile.
- Avoid having to have the last word.
- Break your own habits — use your time differently, take a different route to work, etc.
- Use the employee assistance program where you work, if available.

TIP



Meet your neighbors. A neighbor may share your interests, in addition to a property line. You have many opportunities to meet your neighbors:

- » When you (or they) first move to a new neighborhood
- » At neighborhood or community gatherings
- » At a picnic, cookout or party that you host
- » As you work in the yard or on the house
- » While you volunteer in the community
- » As you take a walk or walk your dog



» A blueprint for managing your emotions

Expressing your own emotions

- Wait before you respond:
 - » Pick your battles; decide if an issue is worth a response or argument.
 - » Take a deep breath; count to 10.
 - » Take a walk or do some kind of relaxing physical activity.
 - » Remind yourself to calm down. You might feel differently if you back away from the issue and the moment.
- Use I-statements. I-statements allow you to talk about yourself. This can help prevent the other person from becoming defensive. It also keeps the focus on the issue, not on the person.
- Choose your words carefully — avoid using words that imply a judgment (*better, stupid, crazy, etc.*).
- Avoid exaggerating. It could shift the focus away from the real issue.

- Do not raise your voice.
- Use humor carefully. It could help to calm another person — or be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Receiving another person's emotions

- Recognize how your own emotions could affect your communication with another person.
- Acknowledge and respect the other person's feelings.
- Restate what you heard the other person say. This allows you to check your understanding of the issue. It also demonstrates to the other person that you understood his or her feelings.
- Agree on the issue and how you will resolve it together.
- Apologize if you have made a mistake or hurt someone's feelings.



» Managing personal finances

You can manage your personal finances using one or more of three methods. These methods are prevention, preparation, and coping with financial challenges.

Prevention

- Develop good savings habits.
- Practice sound money management.
- Use credit wisely.
- Purchase enough insurance protection.
- Use reasonable caution in financial matters.

Preparation

- Get a better education to qualify for a better job.
- Stay current in your career field to qualify for promotions and pay raises.
- Establish an emergency fund

equal to 3-6 months' pay, enough time to assess the crisis and take action.

- Manage your lifestyle to meet unexpected expenses or adjust to a lower income.

Coping with financial challenges

- Accept and acknowledge the crisis.
- Contact creditors immediately if debt is part of the crisis.
- Avoid making new credit purchases.
- Avoid predatory lenders, such as quick loan or paycheck-cashing businesses.
- Look for free financial counseling.
- Adjust spending habits and cut expenses.
- Look for every possible source of income.
- Investigate federal and community sources of assistance.

Steps in achieving your personal savings goals

Start now. Make the decision to save and act on it today.

Set a realistic goal. Write short, realistic, achievable goals, or find a picture of what you are saving toward. Post your list or picture where you can see it often.

Plan to save a realistic amount. Create a budget that accounts for your fixed and variable expenses.

Pay yourself first. Before you pay any bills or spend any money from your paycheck, set aside the amount of your savings.

Save regularly and consistently. Save the same amount each pay period.

Place your savings in a savings account. This removes temptation. It also keeps your money safe. You should also take advantage of any savings plans offered by your employer, such as a matching offer (matching your contributions).

CAREER FOCUS ACTIVITY»

The **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation** publishes a free newsletter online called **FDIC Consumer News**. Each issue offers helpful hints, tips, and strategies for protecting and stretching your hard-earned money. Read each issue at:

<https://www.fdic.gov/consumer-resource-center/fdic-consumer-news>

Turning setbacks into steppingstones in the civilian workforce

The transition from the structured, mission-driven world of the military to the ambiguous, often chaotic civilian workforce is one of the toughest battles you'll face. *But here's the good news: you're built for this.*

Time to dig in

Transitioning to civilian life is the ultimate test of will — a challenge that demands resilience, adaptability, and relentless determination to succeed. It means starting over, learning new rules, and proving yourself all over again. It's humbling, frustrating, and, at times, exhausting. But you've faced worse. You've led through chaos, persevered when others quit, and accomplished the impossible. This is not a time to shrink back. It's a time to dig in. Own the discomfort. Turn setbacks into steppingstones. This moment is your opportunity to show the world what you are made of.

Adaptation is your superpower

In the military, adaptability was the backbone of every mission — a skill honed under pressure and essential to overcoming any challenge. Plans changed mid-mission. Equipment failed. Weather didn't cooperate. And yet, you found a way to get the job done. The civilian workforce is no different. The tools, processes, and language may feel foreign at first, but the principles of success remain the same. To succeed, focus on these principles:

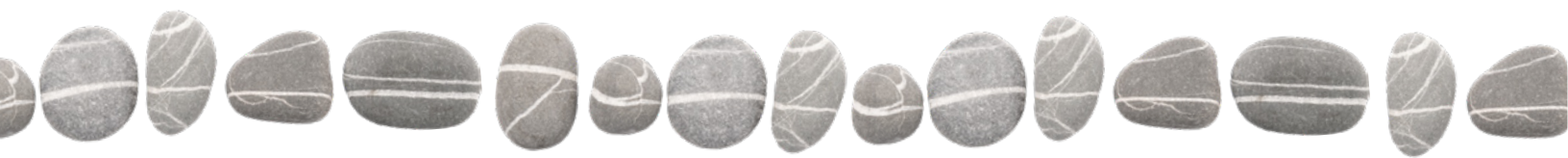
- **Learn quickly.** Embrace the mindset of a perpetual learner. Whether it's mastering new



technologies, understanding business operations, or decoding workplace dynamics, approach every unfamiliar situation as an opportunity to grow. Leverage your ability to absorb information rapidly and apply it effectively.

- **Pivot effectively.** Adaptability means being flexible and solution oriented. When your initial approach doesn't yield results, treat it as a recalibration rather than a failure. Use your experience of navigating unexpected obstacles — whether it was finding alternate supply routes or troubleshooting complex systems — to pivot with confidence in the face of challenges.
- **Stay mission-focused.** In the military, the mission was everything. In your civilian
- career, maintaining clarity about your objectives will keep you grounded. Set measurable goals, prioritize tasks, and stay committed to achieving your vision, no matter how unpredictable the journey becomes. Each step into uncharted territory is an opportunity to demonstrate your resilience and lay the groundwork for future success.
- **Adaptability means thriving in the face of change.** Every time you face uncertainty, you're not just reacting — you're proving your ability to lead, innovate, and excel in unfamiliar territory. These qualities make you not only a valuable team member but also a driving force for progress in any organization.

CONTINUED, NEXT PAGE »



« CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Lead from the front

Authentic leadership in the civilian workforce, much like in the military, isn't defined by rank or title — it's earned through actions and results. The principles that guided you in uniform can become your foundation for success in any civilian role. Impactful leadership is about influence, trust, and the ability to inspire others to rally around a shared vision. To lead effectively in the civilian workforce, focus on these core tenets:

- **Take ownership.** Leadership begins with initiative. Don't wait for others to identify problems or chart a course forward — step up. Assess the situation, offer actionable solutions, and execute with the precision and decisiveness you honed in the military. By taking responsibility and driving progress, you'll position yourself as someone others look to for direction.
- **Build trust.** Relationships are the cornerstone of success in the civilian workforce. In the military, hierarchy establishes authority, but leadership is earned through respect and trust, developed by demonstrating integrity, competence, and commitment. Deliver on your commitments, maintain transparency, and always prioritize the team or mission over personal gain. By consistently acting with integrity,

you'll build a network of allies who respect and support you.

- **Inspire others.** Actions speak louder than words. Your work ethic, discipline, and professionalism will naturally set you apart. Arrive prepared, give your all, and set a standard that others aspire to match. When you embody the values you expect from others, you'll motivate your peers and teammates to perform at their best.

Leadership involves creating a vision that inspires others and fostering an environment where they can succeed while working toward a shared goal. As a veteran, you've demonstrated these qualities countless times under pressure. Now, they'll become your greatest strength in the civilian world, making you not just a leader but a force multiplier in any environment.

Humility fuels growth

Starting over can feel like taking a step back. You may find yourself in a role that doesn't fully reflect your potential, learning from people who don't understand what you've already achieved. It's easy to feel frustrated, but humility is a weapon — not a weakness. Every great leader knows that growth comes from being willing to learn, adapt, and prove yourself all over again. Take each task, no matter how small, as an opportunity to build trust, show your value, and develop new skills.

Remember: no mission starts at the finish line. Build momentum brick

by brick, and your actions will speak louder than any résumé.

The power of grit

Civilian life won't always be easy. There will be setbacks, rejections, and days when you feel like giving up. But grit — the ability to push forward when things get hard — is what separates those who succeed from those who don't. Veterans know grit better than anyone. It's what kept you moving during the longest deployments, the hardest trainings, and the toughest losses. Lean into that same grit now. Take each challenge as it comes, stay focused on the mission, and never lose sight of the impact you're capable of making.

Your new mission

The civilian workforce needs you. It needs leaders who can act under pressure, adapt to change, and inspire teams to achieve more than they thought possible. It needs the discipline, resilience, and clarity that only veterans bring to the table. But your transition isn't just about what you can offer — it's about what you can build. Every challenge you overcome, every connection you make, and every skill you develop is a steppingstone to something greater. You've already proven yourself in the most demanding environments. Now, it's time to prove what you can do here.

*Source: Natalie Schibell, MPH,
President and Founder,
Mission to Commission Inc.
Edited with permission.*



OKLAHOMA
CareerTech

- Autry**—580.242.2750
1201 W. Willow St., Enid, OK 73703
www.autrytech.edu
- Caddo Kiowa**—405.643.5511
1415 N. Seventh St, Fort Cobb, OK 73038
www.cktc.edu
- Canadian Valley**—405.422.2200
Chickasha Campus—405.224.7220
1401 Michigan, Chickasha, OK 73018
Cowan Campus—405.345.3333
1701 S. Czech Hall, Yukon, OK 73099
El Reno Campus—405.262.2629
6505 E. Hwy. 66, El Reno, OK 73036
www.cvtech.edu
- Central**—918.352.2551
Drumright Campus—918.352.2551
3 CT Circle, Drumright, OK 74030
Sapulpa Campus—918.224.9300
1720 S. Main, Sapulpa, OK 74066
www.centraltech.edu
- Chisholm Trail**—405.729.8324
283 State Hwy. 33, Omega, OK 73764
www.cttc.edu
- Eastern Oklahoma County**—405.390.9591
4601 N. Choctaw, Choctaw, OK 73020
www.eocotech.edu
- Francis Tuttle**—405.717.4900
Danforth Campus—405.717.4900
3841 E. Danforth, Edmond, OK 73034
Portland Campus—405.717.4900
3500 N.W. 150th, Oklahoma City, OK 73134
Reno Campus—405.717.4900
7301 W. Reno, Oklahoma City, OK 73127
Rockwell Campus—405.717.4900
12777 N. Rockwell, Oklahoma City, OK 73142
www.francistuttle.edu
- Gordon Cooper**—405.273.7493
1 J C Bruton Blvd, Shawnee, OK, 74804
Aviation Campus—405.273.7493
2600 Airport Dr., Shawnee, OK 74804
Seminole Campus—405.303.2886
800 Harvey Road, Seminole, OK 74868
www.gctech.edu
- Great Plains**—580.355.6371
Frederick Campus—580.355.5525
2001 E. Gladstone, Frederick, OK 73542
Lawton Campus—580.355.6371
4500 S.W. Lee Blvd., Lawton, OK 73505
www.greatplains.edu
- Green Country**—918.758.0840
1100 Ok-56 Loop, Okmulgee, OK 74447
www.gctcok.edu
- High Plains**—580.256.6618
3921 34th, Woodward, OK 73801
www.hptc.edu

- Indian Capital**—918.687.6383
Coweta Campus—918.897.3734
31350 State Hwy. 51, Coweta, OK 74429
Muskogee Campus—918.687.6383
2403 N. 41st St. East, Muskogee, OK 74403
Sallisaw Campus—918.775.9119
401 E Houser Blvd., Sallisaw, OK 74955
Stilwell Campus—918.696.3111
470826 E. 810 Road, Stilwell, OK 74960
Tahlequah Campus—918.456.2594
240 CareerTech Way, Tahlequah, OK 74464
www.icctc.edu
- Kiamichi**—918.465.2324
Atoka Campus—580.889.7321
1763 W. Liberty, Atoka, OK 74525
Durant Campus—580.924.7081
810 Waldron, Durant, OK 74701
Hugo Campus—580.326.6491
107 S. 15th, Hugo, OK 74743
Idabel Campus—580.286.7555
3205 Lincoln Rd. N.E., Idabel, OK 74745
McAlester Campus—918.426.0940
301 Kiamichi Dr., McAlester, OK 74501
Poteau Campus—918.647.4525
1509 S. McKenna, Poteau, OK 74953
Spiro Campus—918.962.3722
610 S.W. Third, Spiro, OK 74959
Stigler Campus—918.967.2801
1410 Old Military Rd., Stigler, OK 74462
Talihina Campus—918.567.2264
13739 S.E. 202, Talihina, OK 74571
www.ktc.edu
- Meridian**—405.377.3333
1312 S. Sangre, Stillwater, OK 74074
South Campus—405.377.3334
3025 S. Division, Guthrie, OK 73044
www.meridiantech.edu
- Metro Tech**—405.595.4400
Aviation Career Center—405.595.5501
5600 S. MacArthur, Oklahoma City, OK 73179
South Bryant Campus—405.595.2202
4901 S. Bryant, Oklahoma City, OK 73129
Springlake Campus—405.424.8324
1900 Springlake Dr., Oklahoma City, OK 73111
www.metrotech.edu

- Mid-America**—572-215-2060
27438 State Hwy. 59, Wayne, OK 73095
www.matech.edu
- Mid-DeI**—405.739.1707
1621 Maple Dr., Midwest City, OK 73110
www.middletech.com
Tinker Training Center—405.739.1707
7605 5th St./Tinker AFB, Oklahoma City, OK 73145
- Moore Norman**—405.801.5000
4701 12th Ave. N.W., Norman, OK 73069
www.mntc.edu
- Northeast**—918.825.7040
Afton Campus—918.257.8324
19901 S. Hwy. 69, Afton, OK 74331
Claremore Campus—918.342.8066
1901 N. Hwy. 88, Claremore, OK 74017
Kansas Campus—918.868.3535
450 N. Hwy. 59, Kansas, OK 74347
Pryor Campus—918.825.5555
6195 W. Hwy. 20, Pryor, OK 74361
www.netech.edu
- Northwest**—580.327.0344
Alva Campus—580.327.0344
1801 S. 11th, Alva, OK 73717
Fairview Campus—580.227.3708
801 Votek Dr., Fairview, OK 73737
www.nwtech.edu
- Pioneer**—580.762.8336
2101 N. Ash, Ponca City, OK 74601
www.pioneertech.edu
- Pontotoc**—580.310.2200
601 W. 33rd, Ada, OK 74820
www.pontotoctech.edu
- Red River**—580.255.2903
3300 W Bois D' Arc, Duncan, OK 73533
www.rrtc.edu

- Southern**—580.223.2070
2610 Sam Noble Pkwy., Ardmore, OK 73401
www.sotc.edu
- Southwest**—580.477.2250
711 W. Tamarack, Altus, OK 73521
www.swtech.edu
- Tri County**—918.333.2422
6101 S.E. Nowata, Bartlesville, OK 74006
www.tricountytech.edu
- Tulsa Tech**—918.828.5300
Broken Arrow Campus—918.828.3000
4000 W. Florence, Broken Arrow, OK 74011
Lemley Campus—918.828.1000
3638 S. Memorial Dr., Tulsa, OK 74145
Owasso Campus—918.828.1400
10800 N. 137th East Ave., Owasso, OK 74055
Peoria Campus—918.828.2000
3850 N. Peoria, Tulsa, OK, 74106
Riverside Campus—918.828.4000
801 E. 91st, Tulsa, OK 74132
Sand Springs Campus—918.828.1300
924 E. Charles Page Blvd., Sand Springs, OK 74063
www.tulsatech.edu
- Wes Watkins**—405.452.5500
7892 Hwy. 9, Wetumka, OK 74883
www.wvtech.edu
- Western**—580.562.3181
Burns Flat Campus—580.562.3181
621 Sooner Dr., Burns Flat, OK 73624
Sayre Campus—580.928.2097
2002 N.E. Hwy. 66, Sayre, OK 73662
www.westtech.edu

17952 2.25.25

CareerTech-sponsored resources to help you succeed in your career transition



Connects transitioning job seekers to the Technology Centers to help prepare them for the career field that best suits their interests and retraining needs.

<https://oklahoma.gov/careertech/students/military-resources.html>



Explore careers, develop career awareness, set career goals, build a résumé and cover letter, create an online portfolio, take assessments, connect to business and industry, and develop an individual career plan. www.okcareerguide.org



Oklahoma's Career Readiness Certificate and WorkKeys can help you achieve and succeed more. The certificate documents cognitive skills valued by employers. You can earn the credential by taking three WorkKeys assessments. www.okworkkeys.org

YOUR JOB SEARCH IS YOUR NEW MISSION

- **Conduct a self-assessment**
- **Explore career interests and options**
- **Fill any skills gaps**
- **Find and apply for jobs**
- **Manage your career transition**

**USE THIS GUIDE TO
GET STARTED TODAY**



**OKLAHOMA
CareerTech**