



A COMPLETE
GUIDE TO

MILITARY SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

*Military spouses are as diverse as their career paths.
However, they share the challenges of finding and
maintaining gainful employment. MOAA is here to help.*

www.moaa.org/spouseguide



A Complete Guide to Military Spouse Employment

The military lifestyle includes travel, adventure, and new experiences. However, it also guarantees a transient lifestyle and challenges to maintaining a career. The goal of this publication is to provide a helpful resource to military spouses in pursuit of a career.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Chapter 1: Military Spouses and Careers	3
Chapter 2: Transitions	6
Chapter 3: Job-Search Strategies	13
Chapter 4: Self-Marketing Essentials	18
Chapter 5: Networking and Presenting Yourself	26
Chapter 6: Acing Your Interview	30
Chapter 7: Evaluating and Negotiating Offers	35
Chapter 8: Landing the Job	38
Appendices	
A: Accomplishment Statements and Action Verbs	40
B: Sample Self-Marketing Materials	42
C: Sample Correspondence	49
D: Additional Resources	52

Prepared by the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). Copyright 2019. All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted without the express written consent of MOAA. To request additional copies for distribution, please call the MOAA Member Service Center toll-free at (800) 234-MOAA (6622).

The information contained in this publication is intended for personal use by spouses of U.S. military servicemembers and is not meant to substitute for legal or professional services. The regulations covering the entitlements discussed herein are constantly amended — the information within is current as of the publication date.

Introduction

THIS IS A GUIDE FOR MILITARY SPOUSES WITH INPUT FROM MILITARY SPOUSES. ITS GOAL IS TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE YOUR NEXT TRANSITION AND ASSIST YOU IN KEEPING YOUR CAREER AS YOU MOVE.

You will find this guide is packed full of information about job hunting and ways to manage your career. It outlines the basics while focusing on creative strategies and approaches that tackle some of the complex challenges military spouses face.

The information provided is not designed as a one-size-fits-all approach, so be sure to select what is applicable to your journey. Each chapter has an accompanying activity sheet to help you better understand the main points of the chapter as well as guide your planning and execution efforts.

If you are just launching your career or need additional information about job-search basics, consider the Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) career transition programs. MOAA's Spouse Programs, in partnership with IVMF, developed content specifically geared toward military spouses. For additional information, visit <http://vets.syr.edu>.



Contact MOAA Spouse Programs for more resources and information.

- Email moaaspouse@moaa.org.
- Visit the MOAA website at www.moaa.org/spouse.
- Call the MOAA Member Service Center at (800) 234-MOAA (6622).
- Mail MOAA Spouse Programs
201 N. Washington St.
Alexandria, VA 22314



Become a part of the MOAA spouse community. Follow @MOAA_MilLife on Twitter or MOAA Spouse on Facebook.

Chapter 1

Military Spouses and Careers

Military spouses are diverse, coming from all walks of life and different stages of career.

However, they all share the trait of being married to a servicemember or veteran — active duty, National Guard or Reserve, or retired — and regardless of branch, rank, or service status, their spouse's military service probably affects their life and career trajectory.

MILITARY-SPOUSE LIFE

Military spouses have more in common than just their spouse's connection to the service. Military-spouse life offers camaraderie and often cultivates individuals with strong marketable skills. Common characteristics military spouses share include:

- adaptability
- resiliency
- independence
- flexibility
- problem-solving
- hard-working
- loyalty
- motivated

Many military spouses live a mobile lifestyle, moving often from state-to-state or even country-to-country. But military life also can affect spouses who are able to remain in one location for an extended period of time. Remarkable multitasking and coping skills are required to carry the load of household and family responsibilities during periods of separations and transition. You are continually put to the test through the rigors of your lifestyle.

Resource Tip

You might qualify for unemployment compensation if you left a job due to your spouse's PCS orders.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, "Recognizing that spouses of military service personnel who quit their jobs due to a military transfer may not be quitting so 'voluntarily,' state legislators have amended unemployment compensation laws to help military families who are relocating between states." Research to see where your state stands on this important issue.

See Appendix D for additional resources.

COMMON CAREER CHALLENGES

You probably have invested a lot in your education and professional development. You might also feel an urge to contribute to a better world, make a difference in someone's life, or put your knowledge and talents to work. So it is not uncommon to meet military spouses who are frustrated and exhausted when it comes to employment and maintaining a satisfying career path. Even the most driven military spouses will encounter career challenges related to their lifestyle, such as:

- limited or no work options for your skills and education level;
- unusual or worrisome career trajectory;
- paid-employment gaps;
- lack of specific work experience required for qualifications;
- license transferability issues;
- lack of a local network at future duty stations;
- pegged as a “short-timer” by potential employers;
- difficulty finding affordable child care;
- lack of flexible work options; and
- limited time to find a good job and work during temporary assignments and short tours.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND MENTORS

A strong support system will help you rebound when needed and carry extra weight when military life throws a wrench in your best-laid plans. Consider looking to your spouse, friends, neighbors, local military-spouse organizations, church, fellow career-minded spouses, colleagues, past employers, or any other source that will build you up and support you as you pave your path.

Consider establishing a formal mentor relationship as well. A mentor can give you guidance, direction, and insight on every stage of the employment process.

Choose a mentor who:

- is someone you respect and admire;
- is not necessarily in the same career field or the same organization;
- possesses the skill set you would like to further develop; and
- shares your values.

Check out American Corporate Partners (www.acp-usa.org/mentoring-program/active-duty-spouse-program) for help finding a mentor.

FINDING SUCCESS

Success is all in how you define it. Becoming a CEO and making six figures doesn't have to be your vision of success — or maybe it is. The point is, you have to decide how you define career success. Is it money? Hours? Flexibility? Telecommuting opportunities? Perhaps using your education? Work-life balance? It might even be something else entirely. Decide what is right for you.

The path toward your goals will be unique to you. What works for others might not work for you. You are the best decision maker when it comes to your life and your career. You also are your own best advocate.

The barriers and challenges military spouses face are not likely to disappear tomorrow, so a healthy dose of confidence is in order. Without confidence, you can lose sight of your goals and eventually succumb to living a life with your personal aspirations set aside.

Know what skills and qualifications you can offer employers, and commit to seeking out companies that will value your skills, abilities, and interests. Be confident that your career path is waiting for you: prepare, get your tools in order, take action, adapt when needed, and persevere.

The following chapters will touch on strategies and tactics to consider as you march forward to achieving your vision of success.

DID YOU KNOW?



of spouses have **more formal education than is needed** for their current position.

2017 HIRING OUR HEROES MILITARY SPOUSES IN THE WORKPLACE SURVEY

CHAPTER ONE ACTIVITY

DEFINE YOUR SUCCESS

As pointed out in chapter one, success is all in how you define it. Go through the list of items below, and qualify how important each one is in your professional life. Next, reflect on what career success means for you.

	Salary	Having the Ability to Telecommute	Working in an Office	Using Your Education	Learning Something New	Being Challenged	Full-Time Work
Not at All Important							
Somewhat Important							
Important							
Very Important							

GO FOR THE GOAL!

Now that you have measured what career success looks like for your life, write down three professional goals you would like to achieve this year. Is it landing a job in the field you desire, developing marketable skills, or earning a full-time income?

Goal #1: _____ **Goal #2:** _____ **Goal #3:** _____

FIND A MENTOR

Before looking for a mentor, it is important to understand what you are looking for in your mentor/mentee relationship. Use this worksheet to develop what you want to achieve in your role.

List three things you would like to take away from your mentor/mentee relationship. _____

List two ways you could help your mentor. Mentoring is a two-way street! _____

List three characteristics of your ideal mentor in order of priority. _____

List people in your network you believe have these characteristics. _____

Chapter 2

Transitions

One of the mistakes people make when preparing for a career transition is waiting until they are actively transitioning or unemployed. An effective job search in today's market requires a well-developed strategy. Most people experience a learning curve, and those who wait can find themselves struggling or quickly becoming desperate to find suitable employment.

As a military spouse, you are likely to have a career transition when your servicemember receives orders to PCS or transitions out of the military. This often means you resign from your current position to find a new position with a new company at your new location. This type of transition is difficult because you are unemployed, competing on the open job market with a limited established local network, and feeling the pressure to secure work quickly while dealing with employers who might not be in tune with your values nor challenges.

TRANSITIONING WITH A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE

Licensure Portability

Transitions, such as PCS moves, can provide unique challenges for certain career fields that require professional licensure or certifications. Industries such as education, law, and medical fields require state-specific licensing, which can delay employment for military spouses on the move who have to apply for a new license in their new state. This process often can be long, expensive, and confusing. Below you will find resources to help alleviate licensure confusion.

Interstate compacts

One solution for professionals who move to another state is licensure reciprocity through interstate compacts. Some professional associations and licensing boards have allowed states to agree to

“privilege to practice policies” that allow licensed members to work in other states that are part of the compact. Specific provisions have been made to many of these compacts in order to assist servicemembers and their spouses. Interstate compacts with military-specific provisions include:

- Physical Therapy Licensing Compact (PTLC)
- Enhanced Nursing Licensure Compact (ENLC)
- Interstate Compact for EMS (REPLICA)
- Interjurisdictional Compact for Psychology (PSYPACT)

The Defense State Liaison Office in DoD is continuing to work with states to understand the unique challenges for military families, encourage states to join compacts, and to assist in development of new interstate compacts.

If you are unsure whether your profession has an interstate compact or whether the state you are



licensed in and/or moving to is part of an interstate compact, check the Department of Labor VETS (DOLVETS) site (www.veterans.gov/milspouses). You can determine which states are part of interstate compacts and what each state's rules are for temporary, expedited, and endorsed licensing for military spouses.

Cost of Licensing

Even though efforts have been made to increase use of interstate compacts, sometimes a servicemember may receive orders to a state that does not have licensure reciprocity. In these cases, some states will expedite the relicensing process for military spouses or allow for temporary licenses so individuals can start working while their license is being transferred. Even with these accommodations, relicensing in a new state can come with costly fees. However, military spouses can receive a \$500 reimbursement for licensing/credentialing fees associated with a PCS move. Contact Military OneSource (www.militaryonesource.mil or (800) 342-9647) or your military service for more information on how to apply for reimbursement.

TRANSITION OPTIONS

Resigning from your job and finding a new job in your new location is not the only transition option. Consider these alternatives:

- Before leaving your current position, approach your employer about remote or telecommuting options. Present a package outlining your proposed arrangement and how the employer

will benefit from this arrangement (continuity in the position with a proven employee who knows the job requirements and is familiar with the company, no difficult or costly searches for a replacement, etcetera). Be sure to stress the value to the employer, not to yourself. Don't ignore the potential downside, but offer reasons why the pros outweigh the cons.

- Explore freelance work or contract consulting. Consider this an option to get your foot in the door by demonstrating your value to a potential employer.
- Use strategic volunteer opportunities to enhance your skill set, demonstrate your commitment, build your network, fill résumé gaps, and open doors to paid work opportunities. Look for places where you can utilize the skills you want to strengthen or new skills you desire to develop. Skills obtained or fortified through volunteering are no less valuable than those gained through a salaried position.
- Earn additional credentials or training. Go to school for an advanced degree, earn a certification, or pursue professional-development opportunities through additional coursework, seminars, or workshops. Visit <https://mycaa.militaryonesource.mil/mycaa> to determine whether you're eligible for \$4,000 of financial assistance to pursue a license, certification, or associate's degree in a portable career field and occupation.
- Explore entrepreneurship. One helpful resource is Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE), which enables

female veterans and military spouses to find their passions and learn business-savvy skills to turn their ideas or businesses into a growth venture. The program is hosted through Syracuse University's IVMF.

- Take a career or employment break.

CAREER PLANNING

Plans are important when you want to accomplish something and prepare for unexpected situations. Start with goals, steps to achieve those goals, guiding principles, an idealistic vision, and an idea of possible twists and turns that can affect your plans.

Some great career-planning questions to ask yourself:

- If you could control your career trajectory, what would it look like?
- What are your short- and long-term career goals?
- What are your major milestones?
- Do small businesses or big companies interest you?
- What type of flexibility do you need?
- When do you need to revisit your plans?
- What gives you a sense of fulfillment?

Don't just think about your plans, tell someone about them or, even better, write them out. Writing and talking about your goals helps solidify your thoughts. Plus, you can refer to your documents when it is time to revisit your plans.

WHEN PLANS CHANGE

As you continue down your career path, you might find yourself stuck at a fork in the road.

Think through what is happening, and try to plan for the unknown, such as:

- What if your next duty station lacks employment opportunities? If you are unable to find employment, what volunteer positions might benefit you?
- What if you and your spouse encounter an unexpected deployment, temporary duty assignment, or a PCS?
- What if your spouse transitions out of the military?

Developing a plan will help you feel prepared and able to come up with solutions so you can put your plan into action, adjust, and still reach your end goals. Invest in yourself and the planning process so you can make the right decision for you and your family.

WHEN PCSING OVERSEAS: UNDERSTANDING STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENTS (SOFA)

What is a Status of Forces Agreement?

A SOFA determines the legal status of U.S. Armed Forces stationed abroad. Each military installation is governed by a country-specific SOFA.¹ Some SOFAs impact military spouses' employment prospects in the civilian job market within the country, but it isn't always easy to determine "how" because SOFA agreements (1) do not always address spouse employment specifically or (2) because they are written in legal language that can be confusing to understand. You might need to seek additional information from the installation's employment or legal offices about overseas employment because SOFAs usually are specific to each country and installation. Therefore, you are advised to seek location-specific guidance regarding local laws and regulations concerning taxes, visas, work permits, and other employment-related issues that especially impact spouses who choose to work on the economy.²

Overseas Career Options

As a military spouse, living abroad can offer unique opportunities for enriching your knowledge-base and enhancing your long-term career prospects. However, PCS moves overseas do not come without significant challenges. For example, experiencing long periods of unemployment due to on- or off-base restrictions, underemployment, or even accepting a job outside of your preferred career field can be the norm for many military spouses seeking employment while overseas. Thus, knowing in advance the type of employment you are interested in pursuing overseas can help determine if and how your employment will be impacted by the SOFA.

Types of Overseas Employment for Military Spouses³

The following section was adapted from Military OneSource, "Overseas Career Options."

Federal Jobs

- **Nonappropriated funds (NAF) positions.** NAF positions are federal forms of employment synonymous with the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (F&MWR) office. NAF salaries are derived from self-generated revenue from the

military Exchange and base recreation areas, activities, and programs (e.g., restaurants, auto skills and craft centers, military clubs, etcetera). NAF appointments offer comprehensive and competitive benefits packages for military families. NAF positions also can offer portable options and provide opportunities for advancement. Employment through Family and MWR programs, specifically, offers ease of accessibility with a convenient on-base location and is a good choice for those who prefer a portable job.

- **Civil service or appropriated funds (AF) positions.** AF positions are government positions funded by Congress and include a variety of career fields (e.g., public affairs, contract procurement, and office administration). To search federal NAF and AF positions, visit USAJobs (www.usajobs.gov/help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/military-spouses). “Military spouse preference applies to appropriated funds (AF) vacancies in all positions designated for U.S. citizens. Military spouse preference also applies to

nonappropriated fund (NAF) positions at grade NF-3 and below.”⁴ For more on military spouse preference, refer to DoD’s *Priority Placement Program Handbook*.

- **Defense and civilian contracting.** Contractors working with the federal government often conduct business on overseas installations. While DoD employees are granted SOFA protections, contractors who work for civilian businesses might not be granted these same protections, and they might require visas, etcetera. Visit Federal Government Jobs (www.federaljobs.net/overseas.htm) to see a list of overseas jobs in both government and the private sector, and visit www.yourpoc.com for a list of overseas contracting jobs.

Installation Exchanges

- **Job posts on the Exchange website** (<https://publicaffairs-sme.com/applymyexchange>) are a good way to stay updated on new openings in food service, retail, business operations, and other employment opportunities on an installa-



tion. Positions include intermittent, part-time, full-time, and temporary work. If applicable, spouses can apply for military spouse preference. Visit <http://publicaffairs-sme.com/applymyexchange/> for more information.

- **Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA)** is the military installation grocery store. DeCA can be a good employment choice for spouses who would like to work on the installation while receiving a comprehensive benefits package. Employment opportunities at DeCA include jobs in customer service and retail from entry-level to management positions. For more information on working at your installation's commissary, visit DeCA (www.commissaries.com/our-agency/careers-with-deca) and click on "Careers with DeCA" at the bottom of the page.

Telework or Remote Work

- **A remote or telecommuting position** may be the best option for spouses working overseas. If you currently are working with an employer, check in advance to determine whether this is an option as well as eligibility requirements and SOFA regulations that impact remote work overseas. Consider the Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) (<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/msep/jobsearch/>) and the Spouse Ambassador Network (<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/content/view/1494>) to help you search for remote and flexible employment opportunities.

Self-Employment

- **Home-based businesses.** Spouses who would like to run a home-based business (HBB) might require special guidance, legal, and tax assistance, although many military spouses have success operating an HBB overseas. It is important to realize income derived from self-employment and other part-time or full-time jobs on the local economy may be subject to host nation tax laws. For example, in Belgium, income derived from self-employment is taxable under Belgian law, regardless of whether the goods or services are exclusively provided to U.S. personnel. Self-employment in Belgium means you hold status as an ordinary resident. This affects your privileges with respect to taxation as well as visa and work permit

requirements. Under Belgian law, you cannot concurrently have SOFA status and be engaged in commercial activity, as doing so would result in the loss of SOFA status protections. Nonetheless, running an HBB may be a viable option for spouses stationed in areas where the availability of on-post jobs are limited or restricted. Be sure to check with a legal advisor before considering starting an HBB.

- **Small Business Owners.** SOFAs determine whether you can work on the local economy without a visa and/or work permit or whether you need to apply for these while stationed overseas. For example, in Italy you must obtain a *Missione Visa nd Missione Soggiorno* Permit to be eligible for employment on the installation under SOFA-protected status. To work as a small business owner, you must obtain an Italian work visa and work permit. In general, you may lose SOFA status protections when engaging in business operations in the host nation, and regular tax laws will apply.

Other Resources for Military Spouses Seeking Employment

The following are resources where spouses can seek more employment-specific information for overseas work and help with SOFAs.

- **U.S. Department of State Global Employment Initiative**, established by the Family Liaison Office, helps support family members exploring employment options while stationed overseas. For more information, visit www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21627.htm.
- **U.S. Department of State Resources for Teaching Overseas**
Visit www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c21946.htm for more information.
- **U.S. DoD Education Activity Partnership and Department of Defense Dependent Schools**
Visit www.dodea.edu and search under "Employee Resources" to learn more about potential teaching opportunities.

An installation employment readiness expert or judge advocate general (JAG) or legal officer can help determine the possible impact of SOFA on your employability in an overseas location. Also available at local military installations are family support and



tax specialists who can assist with understanding regulations and labor laws that impact employment. It is important to know tax laws can vary widely in scope with respect to individuals covered, and some countries may have several sets of tax rules that apply. For example, while SOFAs generally afford certain tax exemptions, factors such as dual nationality, residence status, and the decision to work on the economy can influence tax requirements.

The Military Installation Locator

To find out what each individual installation's restrictions are for spouse employment, you can locate overseas installations via the www.military.com base guides (www.military.com/base-guide/browse-by-location) for locating your overseas installation. This site also provides addresses, phone numbers, and additional information, such as points of contact, human resources, and personnel support.

Military OneSource's Military Installations website will help you find the right person at your existing or new duty station. You can search by installation, state, or program to find information relevant to you. For more information, visit the Military OneSource's Military Installations

Directory (<https://installations.militaryonesource.mil>). Enter "spouse education, training and careers" under the Programs drop-down menu and your installation or postal code to find a point of contact to advise on employment overseas. Alternatively, under Program or Service, select "Legal Services/JAG" to search for points of contact by overseas installations.⁵

Thank you to Prudential Veterans Initiatives and Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families for providing the content for this section on SOFAs.

Footnotes:

1 Retrieved from: <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/content/view/669>.

2 Retrieved from https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Job-Portability_Research-Brief_Final-7.9.18-004accessible.pdf.

3 Retrieved and adapted from <https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/content/view/1431>.

4 Retrieved from www.militaryonesource.mil/education-employment/for-spouses/career-connections/understanding-military-spouse-preference-overseas.

5 <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil>.

CHAPTER TWO ACTIVITY

CAREER PLANNING

As chapter two states, planning is important in achieving your career goals. Reflect on the following list of career planning questions, and jot down your thoughts.

If you could control your career trajectory, what would it look like? _____

What are your short- and long-term career goals? _____

Do you plan to pursue opportunities at small businesses or big companies? _____

How much flexibility do you need? _____

When do you need to look to your support system? _____

What gives you a sense of personal or professional fulfillment? _____

PLAN FOR CHANGE

As you continue down your career path, you might find yourself stuck at a fork in the road. Advanced planning for the unknown can ease some of the stresses you may face as a military spouse.

What if your next duty station has a lack of employment opportunities or if you're stationed overseas? _____

If you are unable to find employment, what volunteer positions might benefit you? Strategic volunteering can help build your professional skills and make you more competitive in the future.

What if you and your spouse encounter an unexpected deployment, temporary duty assignment, extended overseas rotation, or PCS? _____

What if your spouse must unexpectedly transition out of the military? _____

Chapter 3

Job-Search Strategies

Hiring practices are very complex and can vary by region, industry, company size, and the state of the economy. Educate yourself on various strategies, and create a job-search plan that works for you.

There is no single way to job search, but if you aren't seeing the results you want, change your strategy.

JOB-MARKET RESEARCH

Successful, strategic job searches start with research. Understand the big picture:

Economic climate

- Are companies hiring?
- Will many qualified applicants be competing for jobs?

Industry trends

- Is your target industry in need of your skills?
- What are the recent changes in the industry?

Regional nuances

- How do people conduct job searches in your area?
- What industries are prevalent in your region?

Research specific companies and opportunities through:

- networking,
- career events,
- employment or transition office on the installation (if applicable),
- local job centers, and
- online (start with LinkedIn's job-search tool).

ONLINE JOB SEARCH

The Internet is a great source for job-market research, company and opportunity research, finding career events, social media networking, and applying online.

You can find opportunities online through:

- employer websites,
- job boards,
- the Military Spouse Employment Partnership website and career portal (<https://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil>),
- the Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes website (www.uschamberfoundation.org/hiring-our-heroes),
- alumni association job boards, and
- social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook).

Applying online

Online applications typically are processed through systems called Applicant Tracking Software (ATS). ATS systems are designed to automatically sift candidates based on data input by the employer. Every employer has different specifications, which makes figuring out how to create a perfect résumé and application virtually impossible.



The best strategy for applying online (or for any job, for that matter) is to tailor and target your application to the specific needs and interests of that employer. Include relevant information to communicate your qualifications in a concise and compelling way, while populating your résumé with keywords found within the job announcement and throughout the company website.

Applying online is a way to actively job search, but it should not constitute all of your efforts. If you limit yourself to applying online, then you might find yourself within the large pool of frustrated people saying, “I applied to hundreds of jobs and didn’t receive a single interview!”

Although most companies require an online application before they extend an offer, very few candidates are selected for interviews from this pool.

REFERRAL NETWORKING

The Internet is full of information, but networking and personal connections are a powerful part of an effective job-search strategy.

Getting an internal referral is not only a way to increase your chances for being selected for an interview, but it also is a great way to be part of the process before jobs are even posted or announced publicly.

Think about this example: How many times have you found yourself shopping and thought, *Wow! That is so cool. I really need that.* The item was never on your shopping list. In fact, you didn’t even know it existed until you saw it. If your friend says it is great, too, aren’t you going to add it to your shopping list? You might very well give your future employers the same response. Businesses and organizations are running 100 mph, so when a solution to their problems (even ones they didn’t know they had) knocks on their door with a trusted referral and a plan in hand, smart employers will create a position, if possible. While employers usually rely on hiring from posted jobs, given the unique experiences of military spouses, this might be an approach worth considering.

Many times, employers already have an idea of positions that soon will be created or vacated. No job

opportunity is posted yet, but they know it's coming, so they have their radar on and are considering people with whom they already have a relationship. If they identify a viable candidate, then they might proceed with the interview without ever posting the position. If they are required to post it, they probably will include the candidate they previously identified. This is why candidates have a stronger chance of getting the job when they are referred by an internal source.

This method is particularly challenging if you don't have a network at your next duty location. But, if you include this as part of your job-search plan, your attention and efforts soon will lead to a robust network that can open up opportunities. Consider anyone you meet as a potential networking contact.

RESEARCHING AND EVALUATING OPPORTUNITIES

A job search involves not only identifying opportunities but also evaluating opportunities to determine which ones are worth pursuing.

To evaluate a job opportunity, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are potential opportunities with that employer?
- Where are they finding new employees?
- What are they looking for in a candidate?
- Who are the decision makers?
- How are they different from their competition?
- What is the organization's culture?

After you understand the opportunity, you can start formulating how you will provide value to the employer compared to other candidates. Nail down a solid response to the question, "Why should we hire you?"

Questions that help uncover your qualifications and competitive advantage include:

- Do you meet most of the minimum qualifications? If not, are you still capable of being successful in this role? What evidence do you have to support this claim? What is your plan to request consideration if you do not meet the specified qualifications?
- What do you have to offer that is above and beyond their desired qualifications?
- What makes you different from other people they

might be considering?

- Do you have a unique skill set or perspective?
- Are you passionate about the work?
- What are your motivations?

PRESENTING YOURSELF AS A CANDIDATE

After you have identified which opportunities you plan to pursue and you understand your level of qualification, you should decide the best way to approach the employer:

- Apply online.
- Meet face-to-face at a career event.
- Get introduced by a networking referral.
- Introduce yourself via a cold phone call.

Some employers require applicants to apply online and do not want any contact before interviews. On the other hand, some employers welcome networking and want to build relationships with potential employees.

After you develop your strategy to approach your target employers, prepare your self-marketing materials. Put your best foot forward, but keep in mind, employers might view your LinkedIn profile at any time, so keep it updated and consistent with your other self-marketing materials.

DID YOU KNOW?



of spouses surveyed said the **employment search process created stress** between them and their active duty servicemember.

2017 HIRING OUR HEROES MILITARY SPOUSES IN THE WORKPLACE SURVEY

CHAPTER THREE ACTIVITY

UNDERSTAND THE BIG PICTURE

Answer these questions concerning your potential fields of interest.

Are employers hiring in this field? _____

What skills are needed to thrive in this field? _____

Are any recent policy changes or new laws affecting the industry? _____

How do candidates conduct job searches in this industry? In your local area? _____

After gaining an understanding of the industry, select three employers that interest you, and make sure you can answer these questions about the employer and yourself.

What potential opportunities exist with that employer? Does the company offer room for growth?

Where are they finding new employees? Who are the decision makers? _____

How does the company differ from industry competitors? _____

What is the organization's culture? This is critically important to determining whether you will be a good fit for potential roles and a happy member of the team. _____

Do you meet most of the minimum job qualifications? If not, are you still capable of being successful in this role? What evidence do you have to support this claim? _____

What do you have to offer above and beyond the company's desired qualifications or expectations?

What makes you different from other candidates? _____

CHAPTER THREE ACTIVITY CONTINUED

JOB SEARCH CHALLENGE

There are many different ways to search for a job. Find the way that works best for you. The challenge is to use each of the suggested searches below. Take notes on your results as you navigate each one.

ONLINE APPLICATION

CAREER FAIR/NETWORKING EVENT

NETWORK REFERRAL

COLD CALL

Your Brand

Reflection and Self-Discovery

Professional Portfolio

Elevator Pitch

Correspondence

Résumés

Cover Letters

Online Reputation

Other Essentials

Chapter 1

Self-Marketing Essentials

One of the most important aspects of the job search is the ability to market yourself effectively. Your self-marketing materials need to be professional and compelling, conveying all the key information employers and your referral network need to see to be enticed to continue a conversation with you. Most people think of their résumé as the cornerstone. Although résumés *are* an important and necessary part of the job-search process, your ability to network and successfully market yourself will be the most important thing you do. All of the pieces you include in your bag of essentials should convey a consistent message — your brand.

YOUR BRAND

What comes to mind when you hear the word “brand”? Products on a store shelf? Brand is what differentiates those products. It’s recognizable and distinguishes one product, or seller, as the one that will truly deliver what the employer needs or wants.

The key to self-marketing is communicating your unique brand. How can you portray yourself as the best solution to your future employer’s needs? All of your self-marketing materials, in addition to the

way you speak and conduct yourself, should align with your brand. A good brand:

- delivers your message clearly
- confirms your credibility
- motivates your audience
- generates loyalty

Take these four steps to create your personal brand:

1. Determine your target.
2. Determine your ability to solve their needs.
3. Determine your competitive advantage.

4. Integrate this information into your self-marketing materials and your conversations in a succinct and compelling way.

REFLECTION AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Spend time reflecting on and capturing your activities and accomplishments. Acknowledge your achievements, which builds self-confidence, and understand who you are, what you want, what you have done, and how well you did it. Don't forget your transferable skills — skills you developed through a variety of experiences that enable you to perform in your current and future roles.

Use the form on page 25 to capture your self-discoveries for future use:

- Compile summaries and examples of your most notable items and create a professional portfolio.
- Generate a running list of experiences, awards, activities, accomplishments, attributes, strengths, etcetera.
- Use the sample accomplishment statements in Appendix A (see page 40) for ideas to create powerful statements.

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

According to the *Military Spouse Employment Report*, military spouses will move, on average, 10 times more often than their civilian counterparts. Assembling a comprehensive professional portfolio will save a lot of time as you move from duty station to duty station or transition out of the military lifestyle.

Create a digital folder, along with a notebook, to track your current job search and ongoing career development. This will become your professional portfolio. You should include:

- résumé preparation materials;
- draft résumés and cover letters;
- a list of professional references;
- certified and sealed copies of educational transcripts (high school, college, graduate school);
- copies of any professional licenses or certifications;



SEE ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS IN APPENDIX A.

- copies of all of your awards, honors, and performance evaluations;
- writing samples (newsletters, blogs, articles, etcetera); and
- public speaking experience examples or videos.

ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a fundamental piece of your professional process. Whether you are networking for job placement or seeking a project for promotion, your elevator speech is your marketing tool. It allows you to provide to your listener a quick summary — between 30 seconds and one minute — of your skills and qualifications.

Your elevator pitch should cover:

- Who are you?
- What do you offer?
- What problem will you be solving?
- What are the main contributions you can make?

Be concise and to the point. No one wants to be trapped by a person talking endlessly about himself or herself. Outline your pitch using bullet points, and expand each bullet point into a sentence.

How does a polished and practiced elevator pitch give you an advantage? You are equipped with a preplanned answer to the questions, “What do you want to do, and what qualifications do you have?” Sure, it will feel artificial the first couple of times you do it, but that will pass with practice. Don't memorize it; know your bullet points and then respond naturally to answer questions or to provide additional information. You will feel confident you are consistently giving your listeners the right information about who you are, what skills you possess, and your relevant background and experience — all in a short and compact sound bite.

CORRESPONDENCE

Your written correspondence is a small peek at the real you. It is an additional opportunity to communicate your brand and enhance your relationships and reputation. Always try to respond within 48 hours, use professional language, proofread, and select relevant and precise subject lines for emails. Types of professional correspondence include:

- emails
- handwritten notes
- LinkedIn messages (called In Mails)

RÉSUMÉS

A résumé is your primary self-marketing document. It is you on paper. It is a reflection of your capabilities, experience, and accomplishments. Everything counts. Style, format, and accuracy are as important as the content.

Résumés no longer follow a strict format; résumés now focus more on qualifications, results, and employer benefits rather than on past position descriptions. Seek out examples, and explore ways to craft your résumé, so you are presenting your information in a compelling way.

Although many aspects of a résumé are not standardized in length, section titles, and structure, you can find general rules of thumb and examples to use as guides. Your résumé is not a biography. Every entry should support your objective and emphasize skill sets the employer is seeking. Use the job announcement, key words, and internal contacts as sources for the employer's needs. Add specific results, impacts, and accomplishments to prove you can add value to an organization. Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible.

Basic parts of a résumé

Every résumé should contain these basic parts:

- identification and contact information (name, email, phone number, city and state, LinkedIn public profile URL);
- summary of qualifications (brief professional profile, credentials, or career history);
- professional and volunteer experience;
- education and professional development; and certifications and licenses.

NOTE: It is no longer standard practice to include a personal home address. In most situations, it is acceptable to include city and state only and in some situations, omit it completely. However, for a job application, provide all information requested by the employer.



SEE SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS IN
APPENDIX B.

There are two ways
to make your résumé
phenomenal:



Résumé types and styles

When it comes to résumés, one size doesn't fit all. Different kinds and styles are used in different situations and designed to generate slightly different results.

There are two general types of résumés:

Networking

- provided to those in your network but never to a potential employer for a specific job;
- usually a broad-based document; and
- written in language any reader can understand.

Job-specific

- focuses on the needs of an employer and tailored to reflect required skills and experience;
- targeted and branded (conveys you as the solution to the employer's needs);
- summarizes your relevant skills and experience (paid and volunteer); and
- includes an experience section full of specific accomplishments showcasing the results and impact of your work.

Next, consider the style you want to use. There are three core styles of résumés:

Functional

- showcases a wide variety of skills and experiences that fully support your job and career objectives;

NETWORKING JOB-SPECIFIC CHRONOLOGICAL FUNCTIONAL HYBRID

- cites experiences and accomplishments in specific functional areas for skills critical to a specific job or industry;
- useful when you have strategic volunteering experiences, an unusual career trajectory, are making a major career change, or are pursuing a position that is not directly aligned with your most recent position;
- useful when you want to highlight relevant skills but downplay previous position titles, employers, dates, or experiences related to specific positions; and
- used when seeking to return to a function or skill set you employed early in your career, enhancing details that would be lost in a chronological format.

Chronological

- starts with the most recent job and works backward through your work history, including all relevant paid and unpaid work experiences, typically covering the past 10 to 12 years;
- useful when past experiences and accomplishments align with or are directly related to the type of job you are seeking;



SEE SAMPLE RÉSUMÉS IN APPENDIX B.

- useful if it shows a track record of progressively increasing responsibilities (avoid unexplained gaps in work history); and
- used when applying to federal government jobs.

Hybrid/Combination

This style combines characteristics of both the chronological and functional-style résumés and can take on more aspects of one or the other depending on the strategy needed for your document.

- typically starts with a functional style and includes specific accomplishments and
- is followed by a short chronology of work experience, typically starting with the most recent position and working backward, emphasizing the most relevant work experience.

There is no one right way to prepare a résumé. When deciding which type and style of résumé works for you, consider your brand, your unique challenges, and how you intend to use your document. You likely will need several different versions. View a variety of résumé samples and craft your résumé to position yourself in the best light. Consider your risks when deciding whether to include or exclude information and always be in search of better ways to phrase and present yourself. Leverage your transferable skills when you have a break in career, employment gaps, long-term unemployment, or multiple jobs.



Business cards are effective when used during networking.

Review the sample résumés in Appendix B for ideas on how to handle common challenges military spouses face.

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter is your opportunity to introduce and supplement your résumé.

Memorable cover letters include:

- an opening explaining how you learned about the job (if through a company contact, mention them by name);
- why you want the job;
- how you will add value to the company;
- examples of your performance (evidence of your claims); and
- a strong call to action conclusion (ask them for an interview).

In many fields, a cover letter is a necessity. When you construct your cover letter, make sure it enhances your résumé but will not be detrimental if it is not read or considered as part of your application.

Cover letters are one page in length and usually have three parts:

- Opening paragraph — tells the person why you are sending the letter and résumé and how you learned about the position.
- Body of the letter — should gain the attention of the reader and connect your skills, experiences, education, and passion to the job requirements.
- Closing paragraph — thanks the reader for his or her consideration, states you are looking forward to interviewing with the organization, and provides your contact information.
- Always try to address your cover letter to a specific person. Use Google or LinkedIn to determine the best target.

If you are writing an email to accompany a résumé, send it promptly after your last interaction with the following cover letter format:

- Subject line
- Body



SEE A SAMPLE COVER LETTER
IN APPENDIX C

- Closing
- Résumé attachment (named with last name, first name, RESUME)

Consider these email subject-line examples:

- Human Resources Manager, Job# 5498 — Susan Smith Application
- Job Application: Susan Smith for Human Resources Manager, Job# 5498
- Referred by John Green for Human Resources Manager – Susan Smith

ONLINE REPUTATION

With the exception of background checks and credit reports, even 10 years ago, employers would usually see only what you provided them. With our Internet-connected world, sophisticated search engines and data-collection software give employers access to a whole new source of information they use when it comes to hiring decisions.

According to the *2014 Social Recruiting Survey* results by Jobvite:

- Recruiters take social media profiles seriously when evaluating candidates.
- Ninety-three percent of recruiters will review a candidate's social profile before making a hiring decision.
- Fifty-five percent have reconsidered candidates based on their social media profile, with 61 percent of those reconsiderations being negative.

Beyond LinkedIn, social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter can help you to expand your professional network and communicate your brand. Use them to your advantage, but remember employers also will take into account what is available and visible to the public. Will your social media activity or Google results put your candidacy in jeopardy?

According to the *2017 Social Recruiting Survey* results by Jobvite, the following are the top four red flags employers look for in social media profiles online:

- drug and/or alcohol use
- political rants
- spelling and/or grammar errors

The following are positive signs employers like to see on social media profiles:

- examples of written or design work
- volunteering/mentoring/nonprofit experience
- mutual connections

LinkedIn

LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet with more than 500 million members in more than 200 countries and territories. Employers often seek out talent online and integrate the review of online profiles into their hiring processes.

If you want to find a fellow professional online, the first place to look is LinkedIn. Can your future employer find you? Do they see the right message? A LinkedIn profile gives you access to a network of professionals that was never possible before. A branded, concise, and compelling profile is a great self-marketing tool that can communicate a strong message and enhance your relationships. Customize your public profile URL by changing it to reflect your name. This will optimize search-engine visibility. Be sure to include your URL on your résumé, business cards, and in the signature line of your emails. You also have access to special interest groups, company profiles, exclusive job posts, and a newsfeed to communicate periodically with your first-level connections. LinkedIn is an essential tool for self-marketing today.

LinkedIn members also have the option of adding a professional photo to their profiles. Many people recognize and remember faces of colleagues and classmates more easily than names. According to LinkedIn, members with profile photos receive 21 times more profile views than those without.

Your image should align with your personal brand. For this reason, many job-seekers today rely on professional photographers for a high-quality headshot, but at minimum, take a clean, crisp, professional snapshot with your personal camera against a neutral background. Your profile image might be the first time someone sees you.

OTHER ESSENTIALS

Biography

A biography is an excellent way to present a polished picture of yourself to someone other than a potential employer. While a résumé might scream, "I'm looking for a job," a biography is a softer approach that can be used to introduce yourself to a networking contact or as a read-ahead for a meeting or an engagement with someone you might not know well. What you choose to include depends on what you want to accentuate

What's in a biography?

- Biographies always are written in third person.
- Biographies can be up to one page long.
- Highlight at least one key accomplishment.
- If you prefer, yours can include a professional headshot.

and how you want to be perceived by those who are reading it. Maximum length is one page.

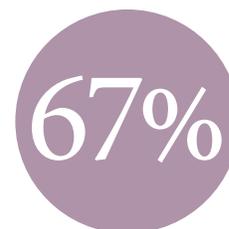
Networking cards

Order personal business cards to exchange when you network. Many companies today offer a very professional product for a low price. The cards will provide the recipient with a tangible reminder of your interaction with them. Include your name, your email address, a reliable phone number, your LinkedIn URL, and your target position or industry if you know what you want to pursue, though leaving this blank might afford you some flexibility.

Interview portfolio

Just as sales professionals use product demonstrations to sell their products, consider preparing a small collection of materials to supplement your discussions during interviews. Interview portfolios can contain examples of your work, letters of reference, awards, project descriptions, or any materials that will support your candidacy.

DID YOU KNOW?



of responding spouses have had to **quit or change their job due to a PCS** move?

2017 HIRING OUR HEROES MILITARY SPOUSES IN THE WORKPLACE SURVEY

CHAPTER FOUR ACTIVITY

WRITE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

A strong elevator pitch should be short, natural, and relevant. Below, list four bullet points you want to convey in your elevator pitch. Next, stand in front of a mirror and practice fleshing out the narrative to connect your bullet points. Additionally, consider practicing with a mentor, family member, or friend. It might feel awkward, but practicing your elevator pitch is a must. You might think you'll ace your first pitch without practicing, but don't take any chances. Practicing face-to-face will help your pitch delivery be comfortable and professional.

Questions to answer: Who are you? What do you offer? What problem will you solve for your potential employer? What are the main contributions you can make?

Things to remember: Be concise: Ideally, your pitch should be between 30 seconds and one minute. Be natural: Do not recite a memorized pitch.

Your bullet points: _____

QUICK QUIZ: WHAT RÉSUMÉ STYLE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Take this quiz to find out which of the three common styles of résumés is right for you.

- I have had consistent work experience (paid and unpaid) with infrequent gaps that directly aligns with the job for which I am applying.
 - This describes me perfectly.
 - This somewhat describes me.
 - This does not describe me at all.
- I am applying for a position with the federal government.
 - This describes me perfectly.
 - This somewhat describes me.
 - This does not describe me at all.
- With which of these statements do you most identify?
 - I am applying for jobs in my current field.
 - I am applying for jobs in a field in which I am educated but have no work experience.
 - I am switching to a new career field in which I have transferrable skills.
- With which of these statements do you most identify?
 - Each employment or volunteer experience I have had generally has been in the same or similar industries with progressively increasing responsibility added along the way.
 - I have had a wide variety of job positions that represent multiple skills I have developed over time.
 - I want to downplay previous positions I have held, but I have good experience in a particular functional area/skill. (Why would you want to downplay positions?)

MOSTLY "A" RESPONSES:

Chronological — This résumé style primarily focuses on previous experience and shows a track record for progression in a specific field. This is the standard format for federal government jobs.

MOSTLY "B" RESPONSES:

Hybrid/Combination — When the desire is to highlight specific skills while still recognizing on-the-job experience, this résumé style would be best for you.

MOSTLY "C" RESPONSES:

Functional — Maybe you have had an unusual career trajectory or are making a career change. This résumé style will highlight relevant skills you have developed along the way.

CHAPTER FOUR ACTIVITY CONTINUED

REFLECTION AND SELF-DISCOVERY FORM

Use this form to help you reflect on and capture your skills, experiences, and achievements. This will be helpful when you create your résumé and other self-marketing materials.

Hard Skills

Objective skills that can be documented, such as language proficiency, licenses, certifications, etcetera

Soft Skills

Subjective skills such as leadership, communications ability, etcetera

Accomplishments

Key results that highlight your specific skills or strengths

Certifications and Qualifications

Any that are required or desired for your profession

Career Highlights

Examples: promotions, awards, high-profile recognition, significant professional achievements

What Can I Do for You?

How your top skills and core strengths will be of specific benefit to your target employer.

Five Reasons to Hire Me

What makes you a strong performer?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

From Your Last Role

What is your specific contribution?

What is your proudest moment?

What wouldn't have happened if you hadn't been there?

Chapter 5

Networking and Presenting Yourself

Unlike local or nonmobile professionals, military spouses usually don't have time to build strong relationships in any one location. When relationships and referral networking are key to hiring and advancement, use your network and skill sets wisely to quickly navigate to the right people while being respectful and professional.

Here are three strategies to find people in order to focus on developing quality relationships:

1 If you have a large number of contacts, consider selecting a few that could open doors for you at your next installation.

SELECT KEY CONTACTS

SEARCH LINKEDIN

2 Search LinkedIn for people located near your next installation and former colleagues, former classmates, potential employers and groups.

3 Ask your network contacts if they would be willing to connect you with their contacts who are near your next installation or who work for companies that have a location in that area.

CONNECT WITH THEIR CONTACTS

DEVELOPING CONTACTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Networking is about relationships and is the main source of information, job leads, and interviews. You should ensure everyone you know — friends, family, professional colleagues, casual acquaintances — has a basic understanding of your brand and is aware of your employment interests.

Don't wait until you are transitioning to build your network. Make an effort and take every opportunity to meet new people and establish new relationships prior to a PCS. Even the most unlikely contact could be your connection to your next job opportunity. This includes everyone in your new unit. As you begin meeting new spouses, let them know you're actively looking for a job and speak with them about your qualifications and what field in which you hope to find a job. This is an easy way to make quick connections and increase the size of your network.

Take advantage of resources provided through the military. Examples include your installation or base Facebook page and Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Professional Network (check to see whether your installation has a local chapter). Reach out in advance of your move and begin to build your network before you arrive.

Consider all of the following when developing your networking contacts:

- former employers and past associates
- professional association members
- career fair attendees
- college associates and alumni
- references
- relatives, friends, and neighbors
- clergy
- community and volunteer group members
- people met while traveling
- sporting event fans
- club members
- civil leaders and politicians
- salespeople
- doctors and dentists
- lawyers and accountants
- insurance agents and Realtors
- bankers
- business owners
- consultants
- common-interest associates

Keep in mind, a large number of networking contacts might be beneficial if you need to reach out later, but it is difficult to develop quality relationships with a large network. Balance the quantity and quality of your network so you can achieve your ultimate goal.

During times of unemployment, volunteer opportunities can open doors to new connections. Be mindful of opportunities that could steer you away from your goal. Carefully select your volunteering commitments. Find roles that incorporate your development goals and expand your network. By demonstrating your work ethic and ability to produce results, strategic volunteering can lead to employment opportunities.

Many people don't enjoy networking because they feel it is only about promoting their self-interests. However, you should think about it as a two-way street: You are engaging in a relationship in which both parties are benefiting. How can you help or benefit them? Help others, and they will be more apt to help you.



It is conservatively estimated that 80 to 85 percent of all jobs come from networking.

REFERENCES

Consider the following tips to help manage your references:

- Carefully select four to six professional references.
- As a professional courtesy, ensure you obtain permission to use them as a reference.
- Keep them informed of your career progression and job-search activity.
- Send them your updated résumé periodically.
- Have your reference list ready to present when requested.
- Always keep your reference contact information updated.

CAREER EVENTS

Career events are a great way to meet several employers face-to-face. They are there to provide information about their organization and find great talent. Research the employers before you arrive at the event:

- Know which employers you are going to talk to first and what positions are available.
- Have a basic understanding of what they do, how they do it, why they do it, and what makes them stand apart from their competition.
- Develop a list of questions whose answers cannot easily be found by looking on their website or on a job announcement.

Use this opportunity to develop internal contacts and learn more about the company so you can understand their needs better and decide if they meet your needs and interests. Remember, employment is just as much about your needs as it is about their needs.

Resource Tip

For more information about career fairs, networking events, and professional development resources, go to www.moaa.org/career.

To make the most of a career fair:

- come prepared with self-marketing materials and a polished, professional image;
- discuss open and potential opportunities and what will make someone successful in those roles and within the company;
- gain additional information about the company's needs and challenges so you can position yourself as a solution;
- find out how the company sources and evaluates candidates along with how they conduct the hiring process; and
- inquire why employees like their company and their jobs to gain additional insight.

Even if you currently are not seeking employment, consider attending career fairs to practice your elevator pitch, develop new contacts, gather résumé feedback, gain confidence, expand your knowledge base of companies and opportunities out there, and get up to speed on what is really important to employers.



CHAPTER FIVE ACTIVITY

SELF-MARKETING CHECKLIST

Run through these checklists to make sure you are ready to present yourself to the job market. Refer to chapter four for details on refining your personal brand.

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

Be sure to have these items packaged together in a readily accessible binder or folder.

- Résumé
- Cover letters
- A list of professional references (including name, title, relationship, years known, email/phone)
- Certified and sealed copies of educational transcripts
- Copies of professional licenses and certifications
- Copies of awards, honors, and performance evaluations
- Writing samples
- Examples of public speaking experience or videos

LINKEDIN

- Professional headshot (self-taken photos are fine in the interim)
- Customized public profile URL
- Summary section
- Updated work chronology and volunteer history
- Updated skills and qualifications
- Three to four recommendations
- Membership in professionally relevant LinkedIn interest groups

OTHER SELF-MARKETING ESSENTIALS

- Elevator pitch
- A set of thank you cards
- Review social media for adverse or unprofessional content (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etcetera)
- Business cards

Chapter 6

Acing Your Interview

Résumés are all about getting noticed for an interview. Interviews are all about getting the job.

You can have the best experience in the world and the most compatible skills required for a position, but if you don't positively connect with the employer through the interview, the chances are very high you won't get the job. While job skills are important, employers know that for many positions, you can be trained.

Your interview is an opportunity to show you have the professionalism and skills necessary to make that connection. Interviews also are an opportunity for you to evaluate the organization and job opportunity so you can decide whether the position is a fit for you.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Formal interviews

Formal interviews scheduled by an employer usually occur in one of the following forms:

- phone interview,
- online video interview (such as via Skype, Jobvite, or HireVue), or
- in-person interview, one-on-one or panel.

Types of formal interviews:

- **Screening:** Initial discussion to review your experience, confirm interest, and validate data.
- **Skills Interview:** Detailed, probing questions on your skills and experience.
- **Behavioral Interview:** Open-ended questions to learn more about how you handle situations and the behaviors/values you demonstrate in those situations.
- **Case Interview:** Scenarios presented to gauge your ability to problem solve.
- **Assessments:** Specific assessments or tests to determine skill level for position.

Chemistry and rapport, crucial factors in a hiring decision, are initially discovered during the interview and are much easier to establish in person. Make a positive first impression and use professional, common customs and courtesies:

- Arrive no more than 10 minutes before the scheduled interview time, as early arrivals can be as annoying as late ones.
- Offer a firm handshake, make (comfortable) eye

Resource Tip

Video interview software is being used by more and more companies to help hiring managers lower costs and save time screening candidates, especially for remote applicants. Common software platforms include Breezy HR, Clear Company, and Jobvite, to name a few.

- contact, and maintain good posture.
- Be prepared for the exchange.
- Remember names, or write them down on your notepad/portfolio.
- Listen, don't interrupt, answer their questions, and keep your responses concise.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Thank them for their time and consideration.
- Send thank-you emails or notes and follow-up correspondence promptly.

Informational interviews

Informational interviews are interviews conducted at your request so you can gain additional insight about a particular company or position. Not every employer will accept informational interviews, but many do. An informational interview could turn into an actual job interview or an internal referral. Because you request the interview, come prepared to facilitate the discussion.

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Preparation is the key to success for an interview. Always do your homework, which includes gathering all the information and documents you might need for the interview.

- Research the company (consider the company website, Google, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube).
- Look for background on the interviewer

(via LinkedIn).

- Review details of the job description and why you are a great fit for the job, and ensure your qualifications speak to your ability to perform in that role.
- Bring copies of your tailored résumé along with an interview portfolio or other materials that will supplement the conversation (examples of your work, expanded project descriptions, reference list, etcetera).
- Review the route to the location, and check traffic and parking availability.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Most people dread interviews because they don't know what questions will be asked and fear the questions will be challenging and difficult to answer. Interviews are not inquisitions, and the interviewers are not deliberately trying to trip you up. Look at interviews as an opportunity not only to convey information about yourself, but also to learn more about the company.

Common questions military spouses are asked

Even if an employer is "military-friendly," the interviewer might be unfamiliar with the military lifestyle. Military spouses often are asked specific questions. Anticipate the questions the interviewer will have, and then take the time to plan a response to them.

Sample Interview Questions

Interview questions generally fall into two categories: behavioral and technical. Be prepared to answer both types. In response to behavioral questions, spend some time reflecting on your past experiences when you faced difficult work or personnel-related problems and how you were able to resolve them.

Sample interview questions you might be asked include:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What will you bring to this job?
- Why do you want this job? What about our company appeals to you?
- What is the toughest work-related or personnel problem you ever faced, and how did you resolve it?
- What are your top three achievements?
- Where do you see potential gaps between our requirements and your skills/experience?

Q: When will you move next?

A. Employers are interested in seeing a return on their investments. A potential employer will invest resources, training, and time in you for your new role. They might be concerned whether you will be in the position long enough to give them a return on that investment. There are a number of ways to answer their questions and address their concerns so it becomes a nonissue or no longer part of their decision-making process. You can even flip your response into a competitive advantage.

Consider this when planning your responses:

- Emphasize strengths you bring to the table that make you a worthwhile investment.
- According to 2016 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median number of years workers had been with their current employer was just over four years.
- Create a plan to produce results within the first 30, 90, or 180 days of employment to demonstrate your interest and commitment to contributing to their return-on-investment. Back up your plan with evidence of performance and results in other work situations.

Q: Are you a military spouse?

A. From the *Military Spouse Employment Survey* results released in 2014, nearly 47 percent of female respondents with active duty spouses indicated a potential employer has asked them if they are/were a military spouse. More than 40 percent of all respondents said they would not inform a prospective employer of their military spouse status. When asked, “Why not?” the highest percentage of responses was, “I think it would make an employer less likely to hire me.”

This question might be asked through indirect questions like, “What brings you to the area?” Many employers make it a priority to hire military spouses, while others are reluctant. Thus, their interest in the answer to this question might help or hurt your candidacy.

NOTE: It might not take an interview question to determine you are military spouse. A military address or a string of successive jobs in various states might signal your status, and these indicators might be included within your LinkedIn profile.

Consider the following when planning your responses:

If the employer is military-spouse friendly, use their understanding of and appreciation for military spouses to your advantage. Ways to gauge their level of friendliness:

- Does the employer have a military spouse- or veteran-hiring program?
- Did they commit to hiring military spouses through initiatives like DoD’s Military Spouse Employment Partnership or the Chamber of Commerce Hiring Our Heroes initiative?
- Do other military spouses work for that employer?
- Tackle the employer’s underlying concerns like longevity and reliability.
- There is not a single perfect response that works for everyone, but it is important to be honest.

Questions to ask the interviewer

At the conclusion of an interview, you will be asked whether you have any questions. Be prepared with a thoughtful list. Choose questions that have not already been addressed. This also is an opportunity to communicate additional information supporting your candidacy that was not discussed previously. Consider the questions in the graphic to the right.

AFTER AN INTERVIEW

It is imperative to send a thank-you email or note immediately following your interview. Even if you don’t think the interview went well or you have doubts about the culture of the company, a well-written thank-you note will help preserve future options with the company.

It is recommended you send an electronic thank you (email) the same day, followed by a handwritten note sent through the mail.

The thank-you note serves several purposes. It:

- expresses your appreciation for the opportunity to interview;
- can be used to support any points or clarify important issues that surfaced during the interview;
- reinforces your interest in the position and company; and
- helps you to stand out from the other candidates.



IF YOU DON'T SEAL THE DEAL

If you don't get a call back from a potential employer or you receive the infamous, "thank you for your interest, we have selected another candidate" letter, remember the selection process is just as much about you finding the right fit as it is for them.

An unsuccessful interview process can be a tremendous learning experience, even though it might be difficult to obtain useful feedback. Many employers have policies preventing them from telling candidates why they were not selected. Many factors might have influenced the selection process besides the strength of your résumé and the quality of your interview, such as an internal candidate, a referred candidate, or the company's determination that you were not a good fit with their organization. Or perhaps they simply did not have a position open at that time.

Here are two tactics to help you gather feedback:

- Write a thoughtful turn-down letter to the employer thanking them for the opportunity to interview with the company and saying that

while disappointed in your nonselection, you still desire to be part of their team and would like to be considered for future positions. This is a professional way to reaffirm your interest and stand out in their minds.

- If you practiced with a coach, mentor, or friend, circle back with them and discuss areas for improvement.

As part of your analysis, ask yourself: What did I do well in this interview? What areas need reinforcement? What percentage of the interview was spent listening as opposed to talking (the goal is a 50/50 balance)?

Stay focused, and remain positive. You might now be one step closer to getting the perfect opportunity. It is all about knocking on the right door at the right time with the right message.



SEE A SAMPLE THANK-YOU LETTER IN APPENDIX C.

CHAPTER SIX ACTIVITY

ACE YOUR INTERVIEW

Schedule a time to meet with your mentor and/or a friend to practice mock interviews. Make sure you know how you are going to answer these common interview questions. It might seem awkward at first, but with more practice, you will be able to walk into a job interview with confidence and be able to answer questions naturally.

Practice Interview Questions:

Tell me about yourself (use your elevator pitch).

What will you bring to this job?

Why do you want this job? What about our company appeals to you?

What is the toughest work-related or personnel problem you have ever faced, and how did you resolve it?

What are your top three achievements?

Where do you see potential gaps between our requirements and your skills/experience?

What is your greatest strength?

What is your greatest weakness?

Are you a military spouse?

What are your salary requirements?

Have two to three pertinent questions ready to ask the potential employer at the conclusion of the interview:

Chapter 7

Evaluating and Negotiating Offers

When an offer is extended to you, make sure you understand, evaluate, and negotiate the offer.

SALARY

The salary negotiation process is not adversarial. Negotiate in good faith and assume your target company is doing the same. It is best to avoid discussions about salary until a formal job offer is made. This allows you to evaluate the full compensation package of salary plus benefits.

If the salary question is introduced early in your discussions with a company, the best ways to respond include:

- Defer: “I’d be more comfortable discussing salary once I have a better understanding of the position.”
- Toss back: “My range is probably more flexible than yours. What is the range you are considering for this position?”
- Respond with market information: “Based on my research, I understand salaries are between \$X and \$Y for similar positions. Is this consistent with your salary range?”

Keep in mind, salaries vary depending on the local market, so you might take a salary cut simply based on location. Perhaps a lower salary is acceptable if the job is a perfect fit for you and the benefits are attractive.

BENEFITS AND PERKS

There is much more to consider than just salary. Think of an offer as a complete salary and benefits package, and look at the whole picture when evaluating a job offer and consider how it fits into your priorities.

- alignment with career strategy
- 401(k) or retirement plans
- vacation and sick leave
- medical benefits
- life and disability insurance
- maternity/paternity leave
- work satisfaction
- cultural compatibility
- internal support programs
- mentoring opportunities
- skill and experience diversification
- skill development
- work schedule and flexibility
- telecommuting options
- employer match programs



SEE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SALARY INFORMATION IN APPENDIX D.

- start date
- job title
- company reputation or brand strength
- reporting relationships
- management style
- hiring bonuses
- commissions
- methods of evaluating and rating performance
- advancement opportunities
- association fees
- professional-development programs
- reimbursed expenses
- office space
- computers, phones, or equipment
- corporate wellness programs
- gym memberships
- travel requirements
- transportation
- frequent-flier miles
- hotel points
- commute time

DID YOU KNOW?



of military families have discussed leaving the service, with the **availability of career opportunities for both spouses** cited as one of the top deciding factors.

NEGOTIATING

In the realm of negotiating salary and benefits, knowledge is power. Do your homework. You should have a general idea of the salary range for a position. This will prevent you from asking for too much or too little, both of which might remove you from consideration.

Before negotiating, ask yourself:

- What do I want?
- What are my priorities?
- What do I want to negotiate?
- What am I willing to negotiate, and how much am I willing to compromise?
- What is nonnegotiable?
- How will I provide a courteous response as to why those items are nonnegotiable?
- Am I prepared to walk away from an offer if I am asked to compromise on items that are nonnegotiable?

Resist the urge to avoid negotiation simply because you are grateful to have the opportunity. Identify your most important priorities — preferably not more than two or three. Signal flexibility to thoughtfully consider any reasonable offer that recognizes your skills and experience, as well as the business outcomes you can drive.

If an increase in salary is important, consider negotiating for an early performance review to be considered for a merit-based pay increase.



If you waive health care, consider negotiating for additional compensation in lieu of benefits.

CHAPTER SEVEN ACTIVITY

EVALUATE AND NEGOTIATE OFFERS

As expressed in chapter seven, when you are extended an offer, make sure you understand, evaluate, and negotiate the offer. Use this worksheet to help identify your must-haves and clarify points where you are willing to compromise.

Do your research. What is the typical salary range and what benefits are standard for the type of position you are offered? What benefits are the norm? _____

What are they offering you? Is it the position you want? What additional benefits do you need or desire?

Look through the list of benefits and perks listed on pages 35 and 36. Is there anything missing from your offer package you think should be included? On what are you willing to compromise? What is nonnegotiable? _____

Chapter 8

Landing the Job

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU GOT THE JOB!

Now what? What's your plan for the first 90 days?

First, close out your job search.

Approach your new job with a positive attitude and a determination to provide immediate value while respecting and adapting to the culture and team dynamics.

As a new hire and employee, you want to exude self-confidence, intelligence, and success in everything you do, but you have to be very careful not to let these positive attributes become negative, in the form of arrogance. It doesn't matter how talented you are — if your coworkers think you are arrogant, it will become a hindrance to the team concept of the workplace and a stumbling block to your success.

It is important you hit the ground running and make an impact quickly to position yourself for continued growth. Focus on your critical few objectives. Create coalitions and alliances to maximize your effectiveness. After all, you might only have a short time to give your employer the return on investment you promised.

If you presented a plan of action during the hiring phase, ensure you follow through with your plans. Document your milestones and achievements. If you negotiated an early performance review, prepare a summary capturing achievement of your goals and schedule a review with your employer to remind them to increase your salary or benefits as agreed.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

In addition to performing in your current role, think about your career plans so you can continue to make career decisions that will set you up for long-term success. Share your new contact information with your network, and stay connected.

Be proactive by integrating career-management activities into your everyday life. You will be more confident and fulfilled. In addition, you will become a more compelling candidate prepared to capture or take advantage of any opportunity that arises.

Position yourself for future success:

- Enhance your skills and credibility through professional development, continuing education, and conferences.
- Continue building your network. The best time to expand your network is while you are

employed or volunteering.

- Consider how the skills you use today are transferable and how your experiences translate to other types of jobs.
- Capture your accomplishments and continue to build and refine your professional portfolio, self-marketing materials, and social media presence.
- As time permits, continue to strategically volunteer to supplement and enhance your skills and build your network.
- Thank those who have helped you along the way.
- Organize your search records.

Embrace all that is valuable and wonderful about being a military spouse. Advocate for yourself. Pave your own path. Be a guiding light, and reach out to help other spouses tackle their challenges and achieve their dreams alongside you.

CHAPTER EIGHT ACTIVITY

YOU GOT THE JOB. NOW WHAT?

Make sure to formally close out your job search, set goals, and prepare to make a great first impression.

List three short-term goals you want to achieve in your position in the first two months. Review your notes from the interview process to determine which goals align with the company's priorities.

List three long-term goals you want to achieve in your new position during your first year.

PREPARE-FOR-THE-FUTURE CHECKLIST

- Continued education, conferences, and professional development
- Expand your network
- Build your professional portfolio
- Strategically volunteer
- Thank those who have helped you along the way

APPENDIX A: ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS



Think beyond describing your job duties and responsibilities, and communicate your success and value through accomplishment statements.

The strongest accomplishment statements are relevant, start with an action verb, include quantified data, and include the action you took to achieve the results. Front-load your statements by putting the most important information first.

It's also important to note using numbers and symbols in your résumé has a stronger visual impact than words (e.g., % instead of percent, and “5,000” rather than five thousand).

Examples:

- Increased division's project completion rate more than 20% by elevating performance of coworkers through motivation and leading by example.
- Selected as 1 of only 10 delegates via competitive application to represent military

families in discussion for improved health care and benefits.

- Trained 75 employees in less than four weeks, exceeding six-week goal, and achieved all competency testing requirements thereby moving project completion date forward to capture additional market share.
- Improved warrior awards timeliness from 44% to 88% by streamlining processes and improving communication of user expectations.
- Saved \$25,000 annually through development and implementation of new cash-handling procedure.
- Boosted morale and enhanced quality of life for 315 military families by planning and overseeing the first base-wide scholarship program and morale dinner.
- Avoided penalties and equipped board of officers to make sound decisions for organization by keeping accurate records.





ACTION VERBS

This list of verbs might be helpful in writing résumés and letters. Use these powerful, positive verbs to describe your job functions in your résumé.

Analytical

analyzed
assessed
adapted
catalogued
coded
compiled
consolidated
critiqued
defined
diagnosed
diversified
evaluated
examined
identified
investigated
judged
researched
sorted
strategized

Creativity

conceived
conceptualized
innovated
invented
pioneered
proposed

Communication

answered
authored
clarified
communicated
composed
conveyed
drafted
edited
emphasized
illustrated
informed
instructed
marketed
persuaded

presented
promoted
publicized
reported
responded
summarized
translated
verbalized
wrote

Effectiveness

accomplished
completed
developed
devised
engineered
established
exceeded
generated
influenced
instituted
launched
reached
resolved
solidified
solved
structured
strengthened
succeeded

Hands On

assembled
built
constructed
delivered
designed
distributed

Improvement

enhanced
expanded
expedited
improved
increased

perfected
recommended
redesigned
reorganized
repositioned
restored
restructured
revised
revitalized
simplified
transformed
updated
upgraded

Organizational

filed
organized
planned
prepared
processed
recorded
scheduled

Interpersonal

acted
advocated
collaborated
connected
counseled
demonstrated
educated
energized
engaged
enlisted
facilitated
greeted
interviewed
mediated
motivated
negotiated
partnered
reconciled
recruited
rehabilitated

represented
taught
trained
tutored
unified
united
welcomed

Support

assisted
contributed
participated
served
supported

Technical

calculated
entered
designed
developed
formulated
measured
patented
programmed
tested

Savings

eliminated
reduced
saved
streamlined

Leadership

administered
advised
challenged
coached
coordinated
delegated
directed
eliminated
encouraged
founded
guided

headed
hired
hosted
initiated
inspired
led
managed
mentored
navigated
officiated
orchestrated
oversaw
presided
ran
supervised

Versatile verbs

ensured
explored
formalized
gathered
implemented
improvised
incorporated
integrated
introduced
leveraged
maintained
marshaled
modified
monitored
observed
performed
piloted
qualified
realigned
received
recognized
regulated
retrieved
reviewed
secured
selected
surveyed

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE SELF-MARKETING MATERIALS

B

In this section, you will find sample résumés and other self-marketing materials. There are many different approaches to effectively convey your skills and talents. These samples are provided as examples for your consideration and reference as you create your own versions.

Resource Tip

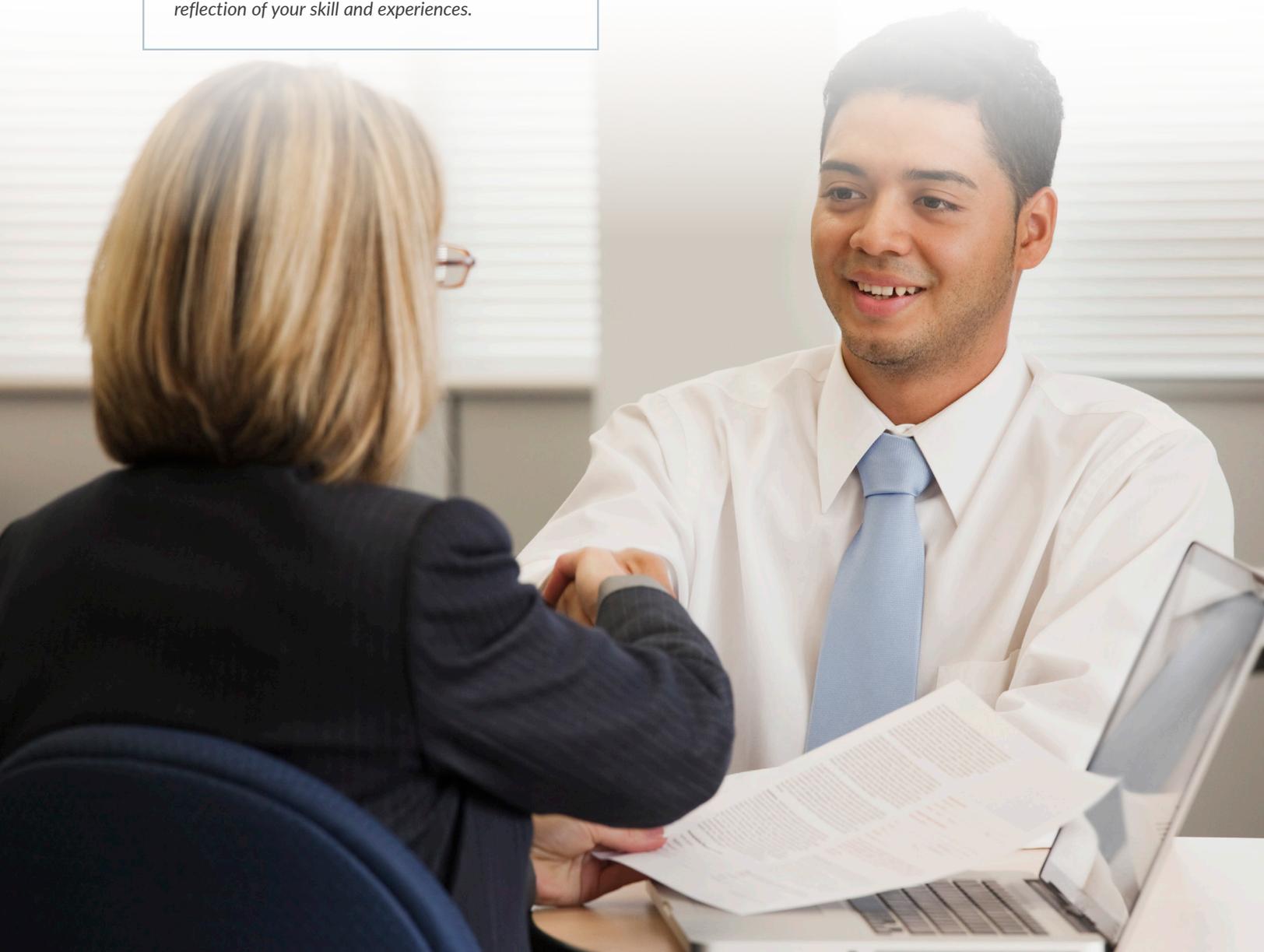
Unlike standard résumés, professionals in creative industries – think graphic designers, multimedia artists, animators, and fashion or floral designers (just to name a few) – often have more leeway in incorporating graphics, colored text, and other visual enhancements in their résumés. If you are in a creative profession, your résumé can be a visual reflection of your skill and experiences.

Need additional help? Consult a trained career services specialist for professional advice. Call MOAA's Transition Center team for help at (800) 234-MOAA (6622).

Résumé

As outlined in the chapter sections, every résumé should include a few basic elements, but there are numerous ways to organize a résumé. In these examples, we point out a few of those key elements.

Two pages is the generally accepted length for private sector, corporate-style résumés. However, one page résumés may be used if your research or networking contacts reveal they are preferred by a particular industry or company.



RÉSUMÉ: FUNCTIONAL

This résumé format is effective for minimizing common issues that would be emphasized in a chronological résumé format. This includes extended periods of unemployment, job hopping, and no clear career path. Instead, functional format résumés focus on skill sets and relevant work experience.

Marcus A. Jackson

San Antonio metropolitan area

(home) 555.555.5555
marcus.a.jackson@email.com
www.linkedin.com/in/marcusjackson

Marketing Professional

Creative and energetic marketing professional with 5+ years' experience planning, directing and coordinating marketing policies and programs. Adept in determining demand for products and services and identifying potential customers. Experience developing and evaluating marketing strategies based on extensive knowledge of organizational objectives, market characteristics, and cost and markup factors. Sound judgment and decision making exercised when considering relative costs and benefits of potential actions. Proven track record in developing, motivating and directing high performance teams. Additional strengths include:

Negotiation	Written and oral communication	Analysis and research
Sales forecasting	Brand development	Client satisfaction
Critical thinking	Cross-collaboration	Media outreach

Professional Experience

There is no information about employment (dates, job titles, employers, etcetera). This résumé style focuses solely on skills, experience, and qualifications.

This section is formatted to focus the reader's attention on the key skills that are important without connecting each item to a specific job or work experience.

There are many ways to prepare a functional résumé. This is just one style. The candidate's various work experiences made this style a logical choice.

This style can be effective when used during networking.

Market and Brand Awareness

Routinely exceeds performance expectations by reliably adjusting strategies to align with clientele and brand. Adept in applying critical thinking to the evaluation of financial aspects of product development, including budgets, expenditures, return on investment and profit-loss.

As marketing strategist for a mid-sized firm, designed and implemented a key marketing strategy that resulted in an elevated awareness of the firm's products and services. Coordinated and participated in promotional activities and trade shows to market products and services.

Created a data-driven campaign that identified target user behavior and influenced receptivity to a failing product. Sales increased in the quarter and trended steadily upward thereafter.

Customer-focused

Highly developed sense of integrity and commitment to customer satisfaction. Known for ability to communicate clearly and professionally in building customer relationships.

Continuously evaluates and identifies opportunities to drive process improvements that positively affect customer experience. Shortened company response time for customer feedback by 15%.

Able to handle complaints and disgruntled customers with a pleasant, patient and friendly attitude. Received the Customer Complaint Award for three straight quarters for exceptional customer relations.

Coordination and Management

Planned and allocated resources to effectively staff and accomplish necessary effort to meet departmental productivity and quality goals. Managing regular communication with other managers, directors, and other designated contacts within the organization.

Effectively negotiated contracts with key vendors and distributors to manage product distribution. Coordinated participation in promotional activities and trade shows by working with developers, advertisers and production managers to market products or services.

Utilizes strong judgment to consistently strike a balance between company policy and client benefit in decision making. Handles complex situations in the interests of both client and company.

Strong liaising skills with human resources personnel led to the recruitment and selection of a high performance marketing team. Promoted marketing vice president to coach, mentor and develop new employees during department onboarding. Increased organizational productivity and submission rate more than 20% by elevating performance of coworkers through motivation and leading by example.

Achieved a reputation for fostering a spirit of teamwork and unity among department members, while allowing for disagreement over ideas and an appreciation for diversity of thought.

Education

Master of Science, Marketing, University of Denver, Denver, CO
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science (with honors), Columbus State University, Columbus, GA

Additional Training:

- Agile Marketing Boot Camp (a rigorous two-day course of lectures and labs on the principles, processes, and terminology of Agile marketing)
- Mastering Google Analytics (hands-on, highly interactive course on how to better optimize and leverage Google Analytics)
- Advanced Course in strategic marketing

Member, American Marketing Association

MOAA

43



RÉSUMÉ: CHRONOLOGICAL

This type of résumé is one employers commonly prefer because not only are your skills easy to see but also where and when you acquired them. Ensure you keep the professional summary section brief, and start the experience section with your current position and go backward. Chronological résumé format works well when the candidate has a consistent track record of steady employment (i.e. no extended periods of unemployment) and when there is an identifiable career or profession.

Iolanthe Smithson

Midlothian, VA
(cell) 123-456-7890
iolanthe.smithson@gmail.com
www.linkedin.com/in/iolanthesmithson

Summary

Experienced project manager with a proven record of strong performance. Adept in successfully leading and implementing projects with knowledge of project management tools and techniques. High commitment to customer satisfaction. Consistent ability to effectively communicate both orally and in writing. Known and appreciated for strong decision-making skills and analytical abilities. Continuously evaluate and identify opportunities to drive process improvement to positively impact client experience.

Professional Experience

Project Manager, ABC Consulting Group, Inc., Richmond, VA

2017 - Present

Handpicked to manage \$1 million project portfolio. Identified and procured new clients, contracts and projects in the commercial sector. Conducted service assessment and analysis using site-specific quality standards and project-specific parameters. Manage all stages of project execution, and issue resolution to achieve client satisfaction.

- Consistently met assigned goals by clearly communicating ability to meet client expectations and special requirements prior to project start.
- Improved client notifications and timely resolution of identified issues by strengthening internal communication channels.
- Improved invoice accuracy from 85% to 93% by converting outstanding invoices to payments by more effectively managing relationships with overdue clients.

Project Administrator, Gordon Inc., Jacksonville, FL

2015 - 2017

Strong prior performance led to promotion as critical liaison between project managers and assistants. Supervised three full-time employees coordinating and managing customer projects through all phases of operations.

- Proactively identified and resolved issues that contributed to poor collaboration and communication between project teams.
- Professionally handled incoming requests from clients and ensured issues were resolved both promptly and thoroughly.
- Improved project teams' performance through development of a performance improvement plan for struggling employees, thereby retaining talent and avoiding costly personnel losses.
- Constantly monitored and reported progress of projects to all stakeholders. Delivered more than 20 written reports that defined project progress, problems, and solutions.

Project Management Assistant, Jaxtar International, Norfolk, VA

2013 - 2015

Selected to assist project management team and customers through all phases of client projects. Generated client deliverables while monitoring schedules and project events for quality, compliance, timeliness, and execution. Researched information to achieve demanding project objectives.

- Boosted the success rate for new hires after division manager implemented a user guide prepared from detailed notes collected during onboarding training period.
- Rapidly acquired understanding and knowledge of basic project management principles while thriving on tight deadlines in a new position.
- Trusted to act as interim project manager during vacancy periods. Formally recognized and praised for effectively maintaining client satisfaction despite junior position.

Lead Teller, Waterman Associates, Corpus Christi, TX

2010 - 2013

Promoted to lead role at branch following consistent performance and strong attention to detail. Routinely demonstrated effective management for myriads of tasks and responsibilities. Supervised six employees. Responsible for performing audits requiring sensitive codes and access keys. Ensured proper execution of opening and closing procedures.

- Stimulated employee performance by establishing efficient communication methods and encouraging open dialogue in the successful resolution of personnel issues.
- Worked with human resources director to identify, recruit, interview, select and hire prospective candidates for employment.
- Utilized managerial ability to provide oversight and direction to employees in strict accordance with the organization's policies and procedures.

Education and Certifications

Master of Science, Business Administration (Management), University of Richmond, Richmond, VA
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification (expected September 2019)

Account for all dates in a chronological format. The month and year are preferred, but if there is a gap in paid experience, presenting dates in just the year format is a subtle way to keep the reviewer's attention on the most important information — your skills and qualifications.

Keep your job descriptions short, and include only what is relevant.

Use formatting to emphasize what is most important. In this example, the job title is capitalized and bolded to attract attention.

Create powerful accomplishment statements for each work experience. Include accomplishments that demonstrate your ability to perform in your next role. Quantify if possible.

Two pages generally is the accepted length for private sector, corporate-style résumés. However, one page résumés may be used if your research or networking contacts reveal they are preferred by a particular industry or company.

RÉSUMÉ: HYBRID/COMBINATION

This résumé format works very well for those who have very strong skills and expertise in a specific field or profession such as medical professionals, lawyers, or engineers. A hybrid résumé format allows you to more effectively promote a few critical skills required for the industry.

Susan Greenhouse

Colorado Springs, CO

(123) 456 - 7890 (home)

susangreenhouse@yahoo.com

www.linkedin.com/in/sagreenhouse

This format **borrow**s favorable elements from both the functional and chronological résumé formats. It obscures gaps in employment and allows the reader to easily see key skills and expertise.

Youth and Family Art Program Coordinator

Passionate, creative professional with strong art education background and broad experience in art and design. Extensive expertise working in early childhood environments, educational settings, program coordination and management of projects. Shapes youth and families by expanding awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the use of art through the development and delivery of youth and family art programs.

Art history education programming
Content and design development
Program evaluation and reporting

Observational techniques
Learning strategies
Oral and written instruction

Focus on the top skills or abilities required for your field. Devote a bullet to each one, and be sure both the skill and your contribution utilizing the skill are clear.

Professional Accomplishments

- Created and implemented a training program for disadvantaged youth as the art program coordinator in an inner-city charter school. Program was selected by the city's school superintendent as a Bright Lights Award Recipient for calendar year 2017 in recognition of measurable contribution to overall academic achievement.
- As an esthetic education outreach program director, enriched the art exposure curriculum for an underperforming middle school by incorporating visiting artists, scholars and exhibition series despite a significantly constrained budget environment.
- Cultivated art appreciation by challenging students, staff and teachers to think beyond traditional arts and crafts and explore art history. Created lesson plans that incorporated background information on artists and provided interactive questions about specific works of art.
- Wrote a feature article, "Empathy as Artistic Thinking," for the *Newport Daily News*. Piece was widely praised by the local art community and picked up by local television media.
- Coordinated multiple school-based programs for a growing school district. The objective was to ensure curricula supported growth in cultural understanding through art experiences. The programs were very well received; they were rated No. 2 in popularity in the student academic experience surveys across all high school grade levels.

Susan Greenhouse, page 2

- Hand selected as the After School Program Coordinator at the Campagna Center for the City of Alexandria from a competitive pool of highly qualified candidates. Significantly expanded customer base through imaginative content and design development.
- Developed an innovative after school program as the After School Program Coordinator for The Salvation Army. The progressive curriculum was based on project-based learning for children ages 5-18 and included one-on-one tutoring in any subject area.
- Conceived, planned and delivered art workshops in various media for children and adults. Effectively liaised with departmental staff to plan and carry out special arts programs throughout the calendar year.
- Coordinated with supervisors and special donors to order and obtain art supplies for use in on-site art studios. Successfully negotiated \$14,000 in pledges for program-specific art materials during an annual philanthropic fundraising event.

Employment Chronology

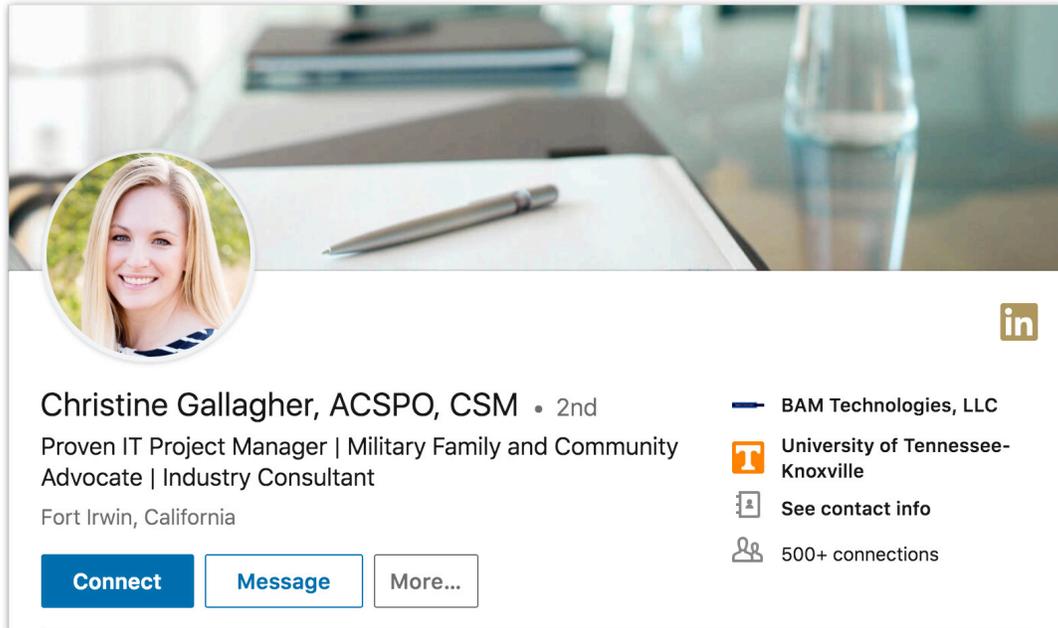
Teacher Associate for Early Childhood Education Centers Colorado Springs, CO	2016 – Present
Community Volunteer part-time student Santa Maria, CA	2013 – 2016
Art Program Director, East End Academy Newport News, VA	2012 – 2013
English Language Tutor, Morale, Welfare and Recreation Kadena Air Base, Japan	2010 – 2012

Education

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Studio Art, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX	2006
After School Program Intern, Side by Side Kids, Austin, TX	2006
“Learning Through Art,” Summer Institute, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX [A three-day workshop to introduce educators to a new way of thinking about curriculum and professional development in the arts]	2009
Member, National Art Education Association	

LINKEDIN PROFILE

Your LinkedIn profile is another opportunity to present yourself, so rephrase and summarize your experiences instead of copying your résumé. Keep your profile short and concise so it is easy to skim and digest.



SAMPLE SUMMARY:

I am an experienced and certified Agile IT project manager with a proven track record in leading the planning and implementation of a wide variety of projects. I have proficiency in communicating the product vision, defining web application requirements and actively engaging with the client, stakeholders, and cross-functional scrum development team to ensure timely and quality completion of project deliverables. I have excellent written and verbal communication skills, have implemented business processes to increase operational efficiency and perform well in all aspects of project management and execution.

- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Negotiating
- Leadership
- Budget management
- Risk management
- Adaptability
- Decision making
- Strategic planning

In addition to being a certified scrum master, my specific skills and strengths include the following:
I am seeking a challenging project management role in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. I may be reached at cggallagher@mail.com.

LINKEDIN PROFILE (CONTINUED)

LINKEDIN TIPS:

Photo:

Your profile must have a photo of yourself (and of you only!). LinkedIn says your profile is 21 times less likely to be viewed if it doesn't have a photo. You can take the photo yourself, just ensure you're wearing professional attire appropriate for your objective, have a neutral background, and a warm smile.

Headline:

This is where you establish your "brand" — what comes to mind when someone sees or hears your name. Use key attributes that define your professional persona. For example: Experienced Budget Analyst | Detail Oriented | Adept Problem Solver.

Summary:

Ensure your profile includes a summary. LinkedIn encourages the use of first person to help connect with readers. Focus on key skills, abilities, qualifications, and any certifications that you might have.

Experience:

Provide job title and company/organization for positions held going back at least 10 years. Provide brief content for each position, focusing on key responsibilities, skills, and achievements.

Skills:

Select skills required or related to your objective or your strengths. Be comprehensive in your selections — you can choose up to 50 skills overall, and they can be used as search terms for employers looking for talent with these attributes. The first three skills shown should be the top three skills required for your objective. You can prioritize the order of the skills in this section of your profile by dragging and dropping them to the desired location.

Your image should align with your brand and project the image you want.

Create a headline that communicates your brand quickly and grabs someone's attention. Only use your job title if you know that is what you want to do at future installations, too.

Most people use first person to be more approachable. Third person also works, but avoid personal pronouns.

What are your professional values and interests? List three to five examples.

Customize your URL to make it memorable and easy to type.

Highlight what is important to your target audience. This speaks to who you are as a person/employee.

How do you operate? Do you want people to know that you are interested in moving up? Give examples.

A quote, personal testimony, or recommendation statement is a great way to end your summary section.

This is your introduction. Include what is most important and memorable. Touch on your competitive advantage.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCE/COVER LETTER



Cover letters should accompany your résumé anytime you send it to an employer. If you are sending your résumé via email, craft the appropriate text in the body of your email.

Susan Greenhouse

Colorado Springs, CO
(123) 456 - 7890 (home)
susangreenhouse@yahoo.com
www.linkedin.com/in/sagreenhouse

December 10, 2015

Mark Johnson
Museum Education Director
City Museum of Art
555 Market Street
Atlanta, GA 31131

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Subject: Volunteer for City Museum of Art Youth & Family Art Programs

Children exposed to art see life through a more vibrant lens. I am submitting this letter to offer my time and talents to the museum to enhance your youth and family programs through development and delivery assistance.

I have a strong passion for art and the ability to educate and relate to youth. I strive to see children's eyes light up when they make connections with art, provide insightful interpretations, and express themselves through art media.

For this reason, I am making a concerted career change with the goal of eventually securing a Community or Program Coordinator position within a museum setting. In order to facilitate the transition, I am seeking direct experience to acquire credible experience in this setting. I have included a copy of my résumé for your consideration.

My goals for enhancing the program will focus on helping participants experiment and explore art; I want participants to:

See art. Explore galleries, journey through art, learn about professional artists, thought-provoking tours, observation techniques, in-depth techniques using senses, and engaging youth.

Make art. Create art with traditional methods followed by displaying work.

Appreciate art. Develop a more in-depth relationship with art and critical thinking and use it as inspiration.

Thank you for taking time to consider my offer. I will call you on Friday, December 15 at 1 p.m. to provide you with any additional information you request to support my acceptance. I look forward to discussing this opportunity with you over the phone or in person. Please contact me at 555.555.5555 or susangreen@email.com to schedule.

Regards

Susan Greenhouse

Keep the letter to a single page.

Cover letters follow the standard business letter format.

In your opening paragraphs, indicate how you learned about the position. If it was through someone at the company, mention them by name.

In the middle section, briefly discuss how your main skills align with the requirements for the position. Avoid simply rehashing the details of your résumé.

In closing, thank the reader for their time and attention and let them know you welcome the opportunity to discuss your qualifications further. Be sure to include your email address and phone number.

Remember, the best avenue to connecting with a potential employer is through networking, not sending in a résumé with a cover letter and hoping you are noticed.

Address the letter to a specific person instead of "Ma'am or Sir": LinkedIn is an invaluable resource for determining who holds what role at a given company.

*"Creativity is coming up with ideas that pass it on."
- Albert Einstein*



LINKEDIN/EMAIL INTRODUCTIONS

When you are looking at a job listing, have heard about a job opportunity, or are considering a position at one of your target companies, try to identify someone in your network that is already at the company so you can network your way in first. Look at your LinkedIn networking connections: Does anyone you know currently (or even previously) work there? If so, reach out to them using LinkedIn instant messaging.

If you don't have someone in your network who works there directly, then find someone in your network who does. This is the power of LinkedIn — the premise that three degrees of separation are all that separate us from any other single person. Use your networking contacts as well as their networking contacts to make the connections you need to advance your objective. However, be thoughtful about what you can offer your networking contacts in return — networking is a two-way street. Always thank your connections, even if they are not able to help you.

If sending an email instead of a business letter, be sure to include your name and the position title in the subject line: "FirstName LastName — Administrative Officer Position." Be sure to include your contact information in your email signature block.

Dear Ms. Janzen:

It was such a pleasure talking with you at the coffee shop last week about the city's recycling efforts. There is a great article in the paper today about a new recycling program.

After our conversation, I realized you are in contact with Brian Lyons. I am interested in connecting with Mr. Lyons because he is head of the Environmental Sciences division at TGU. I would love to talk with him to find out more about TGU's involvement in the local recycling efforts. I am not sure how to connect with Mr. Lyons. Can you assist me? I realize you are extremely busy, so do not feel obligated. I appreciate any help you can provide.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Geiger

Make a personal connection first, then follow up with your request.

Always thank your connections even if they choose not to help you.



LINKEDIN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW REQUEST

Use LinkedIn to request information interviews — short meetings with a professional in your area of interest — to gather information about a specific company, profession, or industry. You can also send an email as a different means of connecting with a new networking contact.

Hi Kelsey!

I see from your profile that you have been a successful project manager for several years. I'm considering becoming a project manager once I complete my degree. Would you be willing to have a short discussion with me about how you got into project management and share some lessons learned from your experiences?

I'm not asking you for a job, I'm just doing research to learn more about what being a project manager is really like. I would be very appreciative for 15 or 20 minutes of your time at your convenience.

Sincerely,
Camille

Make a personal connection first, then follow up with your request.

Explain why you are writing to them.

Providing a few questions will help set the tone for your upcoming conversation.

THANK-YOU CARDS AND EMAILS

After an interview, send a thank-you card or email the same day to each person with whom you interviewed. Be brief, reiterate your interest in the company and the position, and thank them for the opportunity to interview for the position.

Dear Ms. Jackson:

It was a pleasure to meet you and the rest of the team at Acme, Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the financial management position. Everything I learned during our discussion reinforced my confidence that my deep financial skills and expertise align very well with the position's requirements, and I remain very interested in joining your team.

I look forward to the next step in the process, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Regards,

Lisa Powers

As always, take time to **thank your connections**.

If you know they will make a hiring decision within one to three days, you should **send an email so your letter arrives before their decision**. If you have additional time, a mailed letter can make a great impression.

This thank-you letter also could be in the form of a formal letter. Mail a thank-you letter promptly after your interview or meeting. If you do not have a physical address, an email is second-best.



MOAA Resources

- MOAA Spouse Program Resources and Overview: www.moaa.org/spouseandfamily
- MOAA Spouse Accounts: www.moaa.org/welcomespouse
- MOAA *Legislative Update* (subscribe at): www.moaa.org/email
- MOAA spouse and family blog posts: <http://moaablogs.org/spouse>
- MOAA Military Spouse Employment Survey: www.moaa.org/milspousesurvey
- MOAA Relocation Resources: www.moaa.org/relocation
- MOAA Spouse on Facebook: www.facebook.com/moaaaspouse
- MOAA Spouse on Twitter: @MOAA_MilLife
- MOAA's LinkedIn Career Networking Group: www.moaa.org/linkedin

Self-Assessments

- CareerOneStop's list of free and fee-based self-assessment tools and resources: www.careeronestop.org/explorecareers/selfassessments/findassessments.aspx
Note: CareerOneStop is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Military OneSource Spouse Education and Career Opportunities: www.militaryonesource.mil/seco

Market Research

- Business Research: www.linkedin.com
- Business Research: www.ceoexpress.com
- Business Research: www.manta.com
- An Inside Look at Jobs and Companies: www.glassdoor.com

Salary Information

- Installation's transition support office or career center
- Your closest American Job Center: www.careeronestop.org/site/american-job-center.aspx
- *Occupational Outlook Handbook*: www.bls.gov/ooh
- Trade and professional journals
- *Jobs Rated Almanac*
- Informational interviews
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: www.bls.gov
- www.salary.com
- www.glassdoor.com
- www.nacaweb.org (National Association of Colleges and Employers)

License Portability

- Blog post, "Legislation on the Move for Mil Spouse License Portability": <http://moaablogs.org/spouse/2012/03/legislation-on-the-move-for-mil-spouse-license-portability>
- DoD's State Liaison Office www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil

Unemployment Compensation

- Benefit Eligibility for Workers Who Voluntarily Quit Because of a Spousal Transfer, Congressional Research Service report, "Unemployment Compensation (Insurance) and Military Service," <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22440.pdf>

Employer Incentives

- On-the-job training funding benefits available to employers for qualified (dislocated worker) military spouse hires: www.doleta.gov/layoff/veterans_priority_service_policy.cfm
(Funding opportunities vary by state and year. Consult your state's job center representative for more information.)

Rights

- U.S. Department of Labor, Military Family Leave Provisions: www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/militaryflprovisions.htm
- "Military Family Leave Provisions of the FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act) Frequently Asked Questions and Answers," www.dol.gov/whd/fmla

Noncompetitive Appointments and Military Spouse Preferences

- U.S. Department of Labor, "Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Military Spouses Eligibility": www.dol.gov/oasam/doljobs/noncompetitive.htm
- USAJOBS, Special Hiring Options for Military Spouses: <https://www.usajobs.gov/help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/military-spouses/>

Federal Government Jobs

- USAJOBS (the federal government's official job site): www.usajobs.gov

Networking

- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com
- Facebook: www.facebook.com
- Twitter: www.twitter.com
- Hiring Our Heroes Military Spouse Program: www.hiringourheroes.org/hiringourheroes/milspouse

Spouse Life Research

- USA 4 Military Families, DoD's State Liaison Top 10 Quality of Life Issues: www.usa4militaryfamilies.dod.mil
- Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) Resources: <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu>
- 2013 *Military Spouse Employment Survey* (Syracuse University's IVMF and MOAA): www.moaa.org/milspousesurvey
- 2017 *Hiring Our Heroes/U.S. Chamber of Commerce Military Spouses in the Workplace Survey*: www.uschamberfoundation.org/reports/military-spouses-workplace

Government Initiatives, Legislation, and Federally Funded Services

- Military OneSource Spouse Education and Career Opportunities (SECO): www.militaryonesource.mil/seco
- Military Spouse Employment Partnership Career Portal: <https://msejobs.militaryonesource.mil>

Book Recommendations

- John T. Molloy's *New Dress for Success*, Molloy, Warner
- *The Woman's Dress for Success Book*, Molloy, Warner
- *Interview for Success*, Krannich & Krannich, Impact Publications
- *National Business Employment Weekly Interviewing*, Hirsch, Wiley
- *Sweaty Palms*, Medley, Ten Speed Press
- *Dynamite Salary Negotiations*, Krannich & Krannich, Impact Publications
- *How to Make \$1,000 a Minute: Negotiating Salaries and Raises*, Chapman, Ten Speed Press
- *Find a Federal Job Fast*, Krannich & Krannich, Impact Publications
- *Résumés that Knock 'Em Dead*, Yate, Bob Adams

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MOAA MEMBERSHIP

As the nation's strongest and most effective military service organization, the Military Officers Association of America supports military officers and their families at every stage of their life and career. MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families.

Some of the resources and benefits you'll enjoy include the following:

Legislative advocacy — Your membership helps support MOAA's critical advocacy efforts for better pay, health care, family support, and retirement benefits for uniformed servicemembers, veterans and their families.

Expert advice on issues important to you — Take advantage of Premium and Life members-only programs designed to help you advance your career, secure your financial future, and make the most of your hard-earned military benefits.

Affordable insurance products — Now you can get affordable member rates on life, health, and long term care insurance plans that supplement your military entitlements.

Financial services — Access powerful online tools as you make decisions about debt management, college savings, mortgage comparisons, retirement planning, and more.

Military Officer magazine — Look at today's issues affecting military officers and their families, get updates on your earned benefits, and read about what MOAA is doing for you.

Money-saving discounts — Enjoy exclusive members-only discounts on Dell and Apple computers, hotels, car rentals, vacation packages, and more.

Scholarships and grants — MOAA offers scholarships and grants for military children seeking undergraduate degrees.

IF YOUR SERVICEMEMBER ISN'T A CURRENT OR FORMER OFFICER

Voices for America's Troops champions the principle that sustaining a top-quality, all-volunteer military requires a fair package of career incentives — consistent with the extraordinary demands imposed on military members and families who have borne 100 percent of the burden of national wartime sacrifice. Voices membership is open to everyone over the age of 18 who shares an interest in maintaining a strong national defense and sustaining essential support systems for servicemembers and their families and survivors.

JOIN TODAY!

Download a complimentary copy of the *Complete Guide to Military Spouse Employment* at www.moaa.org/spouseguide.

MOAA publications

For 90 years, MOAA has been fighting for the interests of military members and their families. We understand the challenges you face because we're officers just like you, and we're ready to share our expertise and experience. The MOAA library of guides and reference tools is available to help you navigate the challenges that arise at each stage of life.

Estate Planning

Financial Planning

The MOAA Investors' Manual

Officer's Guide

Transition Guide

Former Spouse Benefits

Remarriage Guide

Caregiver Guide

For more information
about MOAA publications,
call (800) 234-MOAA (6622)
or visit us online at
www.moaa.org.



Military Officers Association of America
201 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314
(800) 234-MOAA (6622) • www.moaa.org