

10 TIPS FOR VETERANS LOOKING TO WORK IN THE FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

By Christopher Perkins
Global Head of OTC Clearing, Citi
U.S. Marine Corps, 1997-2006

Making the transition from military service to a civilian career is a defining point in one's life. For veterans interested in pursuing a career in the financial services industry, the great news is that many skills developed in the military are transferrable and very much in demand. Here are 10 tips for a successful transition:



1 / Network, Network, Network!

The first and perhaps most important step in the transition is leveraging the vast network veterans already have ... but might not even know about. This network will provide support throughout the transition process. Many former service members have successfully navigated the same transition and stand by ready to help. The key is to find them.

A strong thread of patriotism runs through much of the U.S. financial services industry and you'll find many non-veterans equally passionate about helping veterans as those who themselves served. In the past, this network was mostly informal — but today many financial services firms have organized and institutionalized their approach to helping veterans make the transition.

2 / Don't just search for the right job, search for the right people.

Finance is a people business — products come and go, but people form the backbone of our industry. Key to launching a successful career is to find the right people, and in my experience finding a "people" match inevitably results in the right "product" match. Remember, the right group of people will provide invaluable technical expertise and training to transitioning veterans as they begin their career. Find the right people and the right career will follow.

3 / Know what you want.

Many veterans have no idea about what they want to do following their military service. The financial services industry is vast and careers paths vary widely. But with a bit of research, it is easy to narrow one's choices.

Many veterans tell me they want to be "investment bankers" without knowing what it really means. Being an investment banker is much different than working in sales and trading. Do you like getting up early, or working late? Are you transactional in nature or looking for more strategic deals? Additionally, each firm has a different culture — some may fit better than others. It is important to narrow one's choices quickly, so the focus can shift from information gathering to an active job search.

4 / Attitude is everything.

A transitioning veteran's attitude and approach is clearly within his or her control. It is important to project passion, enthusiasm and hunger. Adding someone to the desk is a big decision for any firm, and it is important that any new hire adds value as soon as possible. A positive attitude shapes the culture of the business, and this is a great way to add value immediately.

5 / Walk the walk, talk the talk.

As a transitioning veteran gains familiarity with the industry, it is important to start looking and sounding the part. Like many professions, finance has a unique vernacular. A huge part of a successful transition is learning the language — the quicker you can understand workplace conversations, the better off a newly transitioned veteran will be. Similarly, it's important to look the part. Dressing for success helps potential employers envision a candidate in the workplace; looking and talking the part helps build that mental picture and demonstrates that a veteran understands an organization's culture.

6 / Understand and stress your strengths.

Veterans bring to the workplace unique and highly coveted qualities, many honed through experiences that cannot be taught in the classroom: teamwork, leadership, performing under pressure; comfort with foreign cultures. In financial services, the ability to make timely and accurate (often quantitative) decisions while managing risk is crucial — and it's a skill many veterans not only have, but one they should actively highlight.

7 / Address your weaknesses.

While veterans spent time serving their country, many of their civilian counterparts were developing their technical expertise through academic and on-the-job training. This can seem daunting, unless job-seekers understand that it is much easier to learn the technical aspects of the business than it is to develop qualities that cannot be taught on a desk. There are plenty of ways to increase your technical proficiency — it is simply a matter of hard work and dedication. One tip is to seek out opportunities for accreditation, like working to become a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA).

8 / Be present and persistent.

Timing is a huge part of any job placement. Someone once told me that luck is when opportunity meets preparation. Don't be dismayed if people don't respond to inquiries — many people want to help, but their own responsibilities often take precedence. The key is to stand out from the crowd through polite persistence. It's always a good idea to simply ask for an informational interview — spending time in the workplace really helps a veteran better understand a potential role and also helps the hiring firm get a better understanding of his or her potential.

9 / Find a senior sponsor.

Senior-level professionals have a wealth of experience, robust networks and often know a number of hiring managers both within their companies and around the industry. A senior sponsor does not need to be a military veteran — some of the most passionate and supportive advocates I've met in the industry never served themselves.

10 / Never forget where you came from.

After a successful transition, a veteran will have plenty of lessons learned — and a network — that can be shared with those who come after. It is important to stay involved in a veterans network and treat others with similar consideration and understanding.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN LOOKING AT A POTENTIAL CAREER OPPORTUNITY:

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| a) How does the business make money? | d) What is a good day? | g) What is the career progression? | j) What are the hours? |
| b) Are there regulatory hurdles on the horizon? | e) What is a bad day? | h) How is compensation structured? | |
| c) Is the business growing or consolidating? | f) Who are the clients? | i) What is expected of a junior employee? | |