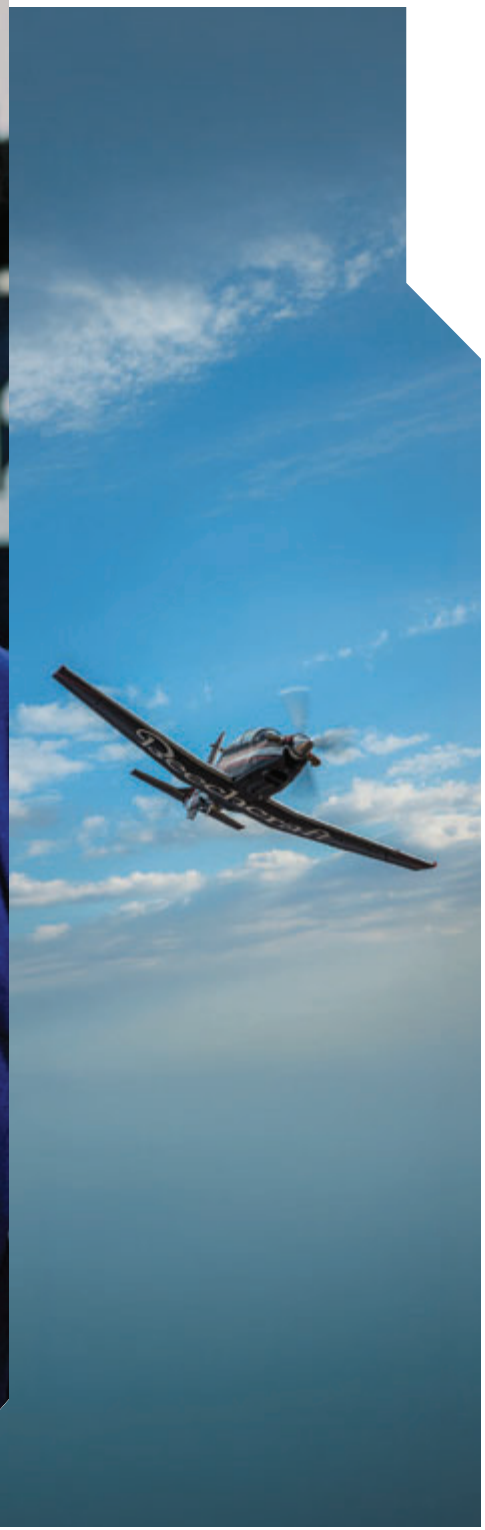
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MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN TRANSITION GUIDE

THE ULTIMATE PLAYBOOK FOR THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

FOREWORD

Despite 33 years of service to our nation – including multiple combat and peacekeeping tours – my transition into the private sector was one of the most difficult periods in my life. As an honorable soldier though, I conducted an after-action review to capture my lessons learned. A summary of my notes is presented in this transition guide so you might benefit and enjoy an easier transition into your new civilian career.

I began my transition woefully unprepared for the challenges that awaited me. I was wildly shooting resumes downrange in hopes of hitting an unseen target – a blind, Kentucky windage-style approach. I received no feedback in return. It wasn't until I put structure to my problem and began using military problem-solving tools that my performance and results improved. Sun Tzu, a military strategist and philosopher, became my guide:

"If you know the enemy and know yourself,
you need not fear the result of a hundred battles."
– Sun Tzu

I realized to achieve success in my military-to-civilian transition "war" I needed to properly prepare for combat. So, I studied the "enemy" (the recruiter), their methods of war (the application process) and myself (by defining my own career interests). Soon, I stood victorious.

"I will never leave a fallen comrade!"
– Warrior Ethos

The Warrior Ethos, the principles that define my values, was the driving force behind the development of this guide. I won my transition battle, and I knew I had to turn around to help the next transitioning military member. Whether you are transitioning into the private sector from active duty or a Department of War (DoW) civilian career, looking for civilian employment while continuing to serve in the reserve component, or completing your advanced degree, exploring a change in civilian careers, or are a military spouse, I am confident these tips will help you endure the rigors of your transition and lead you to an overwhelmingly successful career in the private sector.

"Charlie Mike,"

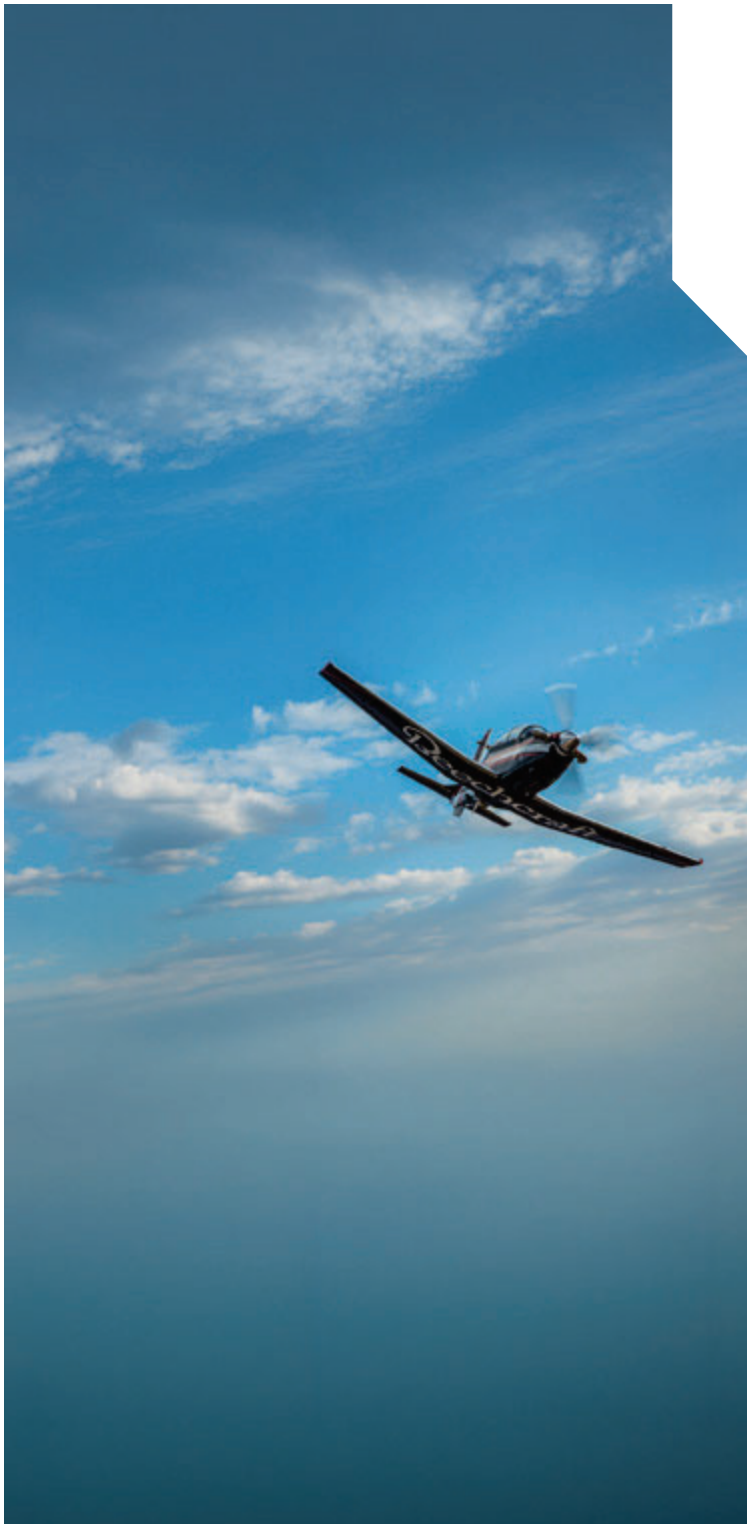


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This guide uses military terminology such as "war," "enemy" and "combat," as a strategic lens to help translate your operational planning experience into career transition success. These terms are not literal. Recruiters and hiring teams are not adversaries. On the contrary, they are key players and important potential allies in your success. This framework simply enables you to approach the hiring process with the same discipline, preparation and strategic mindset that defined your military service.



NEGOTIATE A WIN-WIN RESULT

You nailed the interview, and you're waiting to receive your offer. When that happens, the company will deliver its best offer. They worked hard to screen and review hundreds of applications and resumes and hosted quite a few interviews to find and select the best suited and most qualified professional. They do not want to lose you at this point. But they will be prepared for you to negotiate. So, let's make sure you're fully prepared for this critical step in your military-to-civilian transition war.

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INITIATING TRUST

Every company will anticipate negotiations; however, they typically prepare a quality offer, so you don't have to.

- It is important to consider the post-negotiation relationship because those sitting on the opposite side of the table may soon be your new teammates, or even your new boss.
- Everyone wants a long-term association and a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Reaching a win-win conclusion will initiate trust between you and your new manager or boss.
- Your trustworthiness will determine your success in this role and career.
- If you trust others, chances are they will reciprocate.
- Trust in the workplace increases productivity, improves morale and reduces stress.

GOAL MUST BE "WIN-WIN"

- The person with whom you are negotiating is most likely going to be your teammate or boss.
- So, it is imperative you focus on achieving an outcome where everyone comes away happy, or at least all parties are satisfied.
- Work towards a mutual "Yes."



PREPARE BEFORE YOU NEGOTIATE

Technically, it is best to identify the company culture, acceptable work arrangements and salary ranges before you apply. Orienting your networking, informational interviews and interview questions on these same topics will put you in an advantageous position.

THINGS TO DO WEEKS BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Defining your negotiation strategy should begin long before you receive an offer – preferably during the self-evaluation and career research phases of your military-to-civilian transition. Use this time to reflect on your needs, wants and your worth so you're prepared to receive, analyze and negotiate any offer that comes your way.

Evaluate yourself

- Know your current compensation package and determine what you need to retain your current quality of life.
- Define the minimum salary you need to maintain that quality of life.
- If relevant, know the value of your retirement paycheck.
- If relevant, know the value of your Veterans Affairs Disability Compensation package.
- If relevant, study the TRICARE retiree health and dental insurance programs – you can compare these to what the company offers.
- Learn if your final move benefit is still available and if it is sufficient to support any planned relocation.
- Be sure to include "higher household authorities" *(Household 6)* in your negotiation preparations.

Evaluate the company and location

- Learn the impact of state taxes on your total income, including any retirement pay.
- Learn what the cost of living is in the employment area.
- Research (Salary.com, Indeed, Glassdoor, etc.) what similarly skilled workers make in the employment area.
- In a humble way, assess your worth to the company – how much value you can create for them?
- Know that the company could care less what the military paid you – they won't take that into consideration.

USEFUL INFORMATION TO GATHER DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Ask questions to help you better understand the role requirements and duties and how it fits into the company's vision. This will help you assess the value you will create for the company, which is the biggest determining factor when negotiating an offer.

- Ask questions to help you understand potential growth and advancement opportunities. This will help you assess if this job will be professionally fulfilling.
- Waiting for a job offer can be a stressful period. Put yourself at ease by asking the recruiter about the company's selection timeline.

REVIEWING THE OFFER

Once you've received your offer, ask for time to review and consider it. Be sure to include time for "*Household 6*" to review and provide input. Salary is not the only thing to consider – review the entire deal.

Compensation packages may provide programs that will strengthen the financial offer and may also be negotiated, sometimes more easily than salary alone. They might include:

- Start Date
- Telecommuting or remote work
- Signing bonus
- Vacation and personal days
- Differential pay and authorized time off to enable service in the reserve components
- Medical and dental insurance, as well as vision assistance programs
- Life insurance
- Relocation support
- Investment programs with corporate matching
- Retirement plans with corporate matching

To reinforce the salary, companies may provide bonuses as an incentive for value creation and retention:

- Spot bonuses for accomplishments
- Variable bonuses for performance
- Annual compensation adjustments for performance and perceived increased potential and value creation
- Annual review for increased salary

Two often overlooked but critical items to consider with any offer are:

1. Does the company provide for developmental or "broadening" experiences, including credentialing and additional training and education? *(Progressing in the company will increase your responsibilities, authorities and experiences, along with corresponding increases in pay and benefits.)*
2. Will the company offer advancement opportunities? *(Adding to your portfolio increases future compensation.)*

YOU GOT THE OFFER – NOW WHAT?

Continue focusing on your "Top 10". They want you on their team, but don't get a big head or get emotional over it. Take the time to compile all the information you've gathered throughout this stressful process.

1. Thank the company for the opportunity and for their trust in you and confidence in your ability to create value for them.
2. Ask for time to study the offer – agree on a date and time when you will respond to their offer.
3. Review the offer:

- Compare the offer against your "Top 10" needs - validate your desired outcomes
- Re-evaluate what you learned about the company's culture
- Assess the company's predicted outcome

4. Review the opportunity and offer with "higher household authorities" *(Household 6)*.
5. Once you comprehend the entire offer, then prepare your response.
6. Respond on time.

SHOOT FOR A WIN-WIN CONCLUSION



- Establish a cooperative relationship to achieve the best outcome.
- Leverage your newfound cultural awareness and style of communication.

NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

Here are 10 steps to successfully negotiate a job offer:

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

1. **Review your "Top 10" needs.** Will this job with this company help you become the best version of yourself?
2. **Play detective.** Evaluate the company and confirm its culture and the opportunities it offers to grow and advance.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

3. **Validate your desired outcomes.** Ask questions to confirm your "Top 10" needs; assess the value you will create for the company and discover what that value is worth to them.
4. **Validate the company's predicted outcomes.** Ask questions about the role, its connection to the company vision and the value they expect you to create.
5. **Reduce the stress.** Waiting for the job offer can be painful, so ask about the company's selection timeline.

REVIEWING THE OFFER:

6. **Buy time to strategize.** Once the offer comes, ask for time to review, and talk it over with "Household 6."
7. **Salary is not the only thing to consider.** Review the entire deal including benefits, which are usually easier to negotiate: signing bonus, retirement plans, insurance, vacation and personal days, relocation support, etc.
8. **Assess the offer against your and the company's predicted outcomes.** Does the offer equal the value they expect you to create? Does it incentivize you to perform? Does the entirety of the compensation package strengthen their financial offer?

DURING THE NEGOTIATION:

9. **Stand firm on your desired outcomes:** But avoid ultimatums unless you intend to walk away permanently.
10. **Fixate on win-win: Get to a "yes."** Be reasonable, knowledgeable, flexible and enthusiastic.

HOW TO DECLINE AN OFFER

Sometimes there are reasons to decline the offer. It is just as important to prepare for this eventuality. In case you must:

- Be kind and polite.
- Thank the company for their offer and for their trust in you and confidence in your ability to create value for them.
- Tell them that unfortunately, you will have to decline.
- Provide them an appropriate reason for your declining their offer.
- Thank them again and wish them good luck in finding a quality employee for this role.

