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Today's Military-Friendly Corporation

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Victory Media: Today's Military-Friendly Corporation

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The Military Veteran Population Demographics & Business Case

Today's consumer conscious corporation is looking to connect with the military active duty and veteran populations. The business case for this connection can vary by company, industry or consumer sector, but usually includes the following one or more backgrounds:

-Consumer Base: Demographic data shows that the U.S. veteran population includes 25 million veterans, 20 million spouses, 45 million siblings and 55 million children. The purchasing power of the U.S. veteran population is well over \$1 trillion annually.

-Small Business Community: U.S. Service members are twice as likely to go into business for themselves when compared with their non-military experienced peers. One out of every seven veterans owns a business, compared with one out of every 14 non-veterans who own a business. Corporations looking to connect with the small business community are in tune with this demographic. Over 3 million veteran-owned businesses exist in the U.S. today.

-Diversity: The active duty and veteran military population is a true cross-section of the country, representing all ages, races, sexes, and populations. In fact, over 45% of the veteran population consists of minorities and women. Connecting with and recruiting (suppliers, employers and more) from the military is an effective way to support and grow cross-corporate diversity programs.

-Leadership Development & Recruitment: Unlike their civilian counterparts, military service members are given opportunities to experience leadership (teamwork, integrity, resolve and ingenuity) from day one in their careers. They are challenged with higher budgets, larger teams in more critical environments than their civilian counterparts. These leadership skills translate into greater results and performance levels in new employees or suppliers. With 400,000 men and women leaving the military annually, the military is a continuous pipeline for strong employees and suppliers.

-Recession-Proof Consumer Market: Military families are largely unaffected by drops in consumer confidence brought on by recession. With \$80 billion in household income, married military families represent one of the most powerful yet underserved consumer market segments in the world. Military wives are in their 20s and 30s, raising young children, buying homes for the first time and in general, establishing brand loyalty that could last a lifetime.

-World Events: Current world events drive a strong consumer and corporate desire to support our military members that defend our freedoms daily.



Military-Friendly Corporation Best Practices

In our efforts to identify best practices across Fortune 1,000 companies looking to become "Military Friendly," certain program traits present themselves as contributing to success in this area. These examples are taken from companies such as: Home Depot, Anheuser Busch, AT&T, Chrysler and Microsoft that approach the concept of being "Military Friendly" from multiple fronts.

- **Centralized Military Awareness/ Program Leadership:**

Military friendly companies bring together their military outreach effort under one cross-functional person, team or department. They realize that the best way to leverage the military connection with employees, suppliers and recruitment efforts is by providing a centralized leadership effort. In some cases, this effort falls under an overall "Diversity" department, human resources group or other.

- **Established Internal Military Veteran Affinity Group to Guide Program Efforts:**

Military friendly companies develop a strong connection with their internal veteran employee population. Many times this connection is used as the compass to direct the overall military outreach program. Regular reviews and brainstorming sessions with these groups provide valuable input and direction to the ongoing effort to increase the company's connection to the military community.

- **Strong Military Veteran Recruitment and Hiring Program:**

Military friendly companies see the value of hiring from the military. References can be found on their websites, in trade magazines and publications talking of their successes and promoting their military recruitment programs.

- **Strong Military Veteran-Owned Business (VOB) Supplier Diversity Program:**

Military friendly companies see the value of connecting with VOBs across the country. They actively reach out to veteran suppliers on their websites, by attending supplier diversity trade events and in trade magazines and publications.

- **Military-Focused Philanthropic Effort:**

Military friendly companies tend to get involved in active duty and military veteran causes such as: care packages to the military, housing assistance for returning veterans, transition assistance to returning veterans. Many times these efforts are led by internal military veteran volunteer affinity groups.



- **PR Campaign:**

Military friendly companies make it a marketing priority to tout their connection with the military community to the benefit and satisfaction of their employees, suppliers and consumer groups. A couple of examples are noted here:

Sears Holdings-

<http://www.searsholdings.com/careers/military/shc-military-recruitment.htm>

Anheuser Busch-

Long running television commercial of returning war veterans being applauded during airport walk through.



Specifics to Military-Friendly Supplier Diversity Programs

Each year, Victory Media works through the NaVOBA (National Veteran Owned Business Association) brand to identify and to recognize "military friendly" supplier diversity programs across the country through the *NaVOBA Best Corporations for VOBs* List. Here is some background on the selection criteria or best practices.

Veteran Owned Business Outreach

Be sure your supplier diversity website is easy to find and clearly welcoming to VOBs. Be sure to set clear guidelines for VOBs on doing business with your firm. Do your best to avoid the "black hole" syndrome where suppliers enter your online registration and disappear. Be clear about industry and procurement needs, timelines and expectations and communicate clearly.

Assets Dedicated to VOB Supplier Diversity Outreach

World Class supplier diversity programs are far-from the 'additional duty' phase of program leadership. Dedicate permanent resources to develop and to lead the strong supplier diversity program that you are looking to achieve.

Mentor and develop VOBs, Coach them on how to do business with you

Attend supplier diversity networking events. Contribute to industry websites and publications to front load information that makes it easy for veteran suppliers to do business with you. Provide guidance on best practices that you've seen with other diverse suppliers.

Track VOB and other supplier diversity spend, Set goals to improve

It is true to say that what gets measured gets improved. As you work to lead change across your organization in the form of an effective supplier diversity program, include spend targets within procurement functional areas. Consult with these functional areas to assist in meeting their goals. Incorporate diverse spend goals into your tier 2 supplier diversity programs to further extend your reach.

Attend and sponsor supplier diversity expo events

VOB suppliers and Supplier Diversity professionals agree that face to face communication is a priority for their programs. Attend and sponsor industry events to get your name at the forefront of the VOB suppliers' minds. Let them know that you are looking to buy from them.

Consider media outreach to extend your reach

Most supplier diversity programs are small, far-reaching teams. Travel and sponsorships are effective, but expensive. Use media channels for cost-effective extension of your supplier



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diversity team outreach. Continue to communicate with new diverse suppliers and to direct them to your program website and team.



MILITARYSPOUSE

NaVOBA

VETREPRENEUR

Specifics to Military-Friendly Hiring & Recruitment Programs

Each year, Victory Media works through the G.I. Jobs brand to identify and to recognize "military friendly" hiring programs across the country through the *G.I. Jobs Top 50 Military Friendly List*. Here is some background on the selection criteria or best practices.

Reserve/Guard Policies

Some companies follow the letter of the law, some go above and beyond. To maximize this section of the survey:

- For reservists establish a program to pay full salary or 100% of the differential pay without a time limit on this benefit.
- Plan to extend medical coverage during deployments for the employee and their dependents, again with no time limitation.
- Plan to extend life insurance coverage during deployments for the employee and their dependents, again with no time limitation.
- Upon return, ensure that service members are returned to the same or similar positions of employment.

Assets dedicated to military hiring

Leading companies have three or more dedicated military recruiters, advertise to build their brand in the market, attend many military hiring events and in general, dedicate substantial financial resources to recruiting and hiring military veterans.

Percentage of new hires who are veterans

By putting together a robust hiring program this percentage should increase year on year. Not all companies track veteran status and not all divulge this information. Please note that any figures given to us are used for ranking purposes only and never published or released to any outside sources. If you are not currently tracking this information or do not release these figures, consider doing so.

Internal military programs plus veteran community involvement & outreach

Important programs include: on-boarding support or veteran mentor programs, helping the families of deployed troops, sending care packages to your deployed local units, or sponsoring and/or participating in local patriotic events. These are all great ways to build your image as a military friendly company.



Important things to remember

- Have corporate backing – underfunded or unsupported programs will fail.
- Be as pro-active in this community as possible.
- Utilize editorial opportunities through G.I. Jobs or other industry publications.
- Have a dedicated military section on your website example: www.bnsf.com/careers/military
- Placement agencies are great for hot fills but can be expensive when looking at 10+ new hires. Consider a long term outreach and branding strategy to be successful.

