

Staples VP Loves Military

This quarter's focus is the Transportation Industry and the spotlight is on Scott Brown, Vice-President of North American Delivery in the Transportation Division of Staples, Inc., Fortune #152 and the largest Office Supply Superstore in the world.

Prior to joining Staples five years ago, his division was focused on hiring candidates from prestigious colleges and schools based on the reputation of their educational programs. Brown feels those candidates may have made great grades and had outstanding educational credentials, but had no real leadership experience. He saw the need for leaders, not pedigrees.

As an officer who served seven years in the Army in the Armor Branch, Brown reveals there are a multitude of reasons that he hires former military and that there are a number of positions where the transitioning officer or enlisted candidate can apply their training, leadership and skill sets in his organization and impact the operation positively from day one and far more rapidly than their civilian counterparts.

Brown hires military officers for management positions at Staples because he knows the caliber of those candidates is unmatched. He understands what military trained candidates bring to the table and knows that the market is relatively untapped--an advantage for him as a major player in a company that is number one in their industry. This allows him to hire the "best of the best." When asked what he looks for in officer candidates specifically, Brown simply responded, "Leadership". A particular branch or degree is not necessarily important to one's success in his company. If he can find a person with solid people leadership skills, self discipline, high energy and motivation, excellent communication skills, and the ability to problem solve in a fast-paced environment given limited information, then he will gladly teach that candidate all about the Transportation Industry. Brown avows, "The hardest part is teaching leadership skills." The military does that training for him, and he can then take that "raw talent" and turn strong leaders into exceptional transportation managers. Certainly, a candidate with a logistics or transportation background from the military will have less of a learning curve, but above all else, good LEADERSHIP is the key to success. Transportation managers at Staples have ample opportunity for growth and success in the company and are constantly being groomed for the next promotion.

Enlisted candidates have plenty of opportunity at Staples as well. Brown explained that while Staples' Transportation Division does not have a Maintenance shop with needs for electronics techs and mechanics as others in his industry do, there are still numerous career opportunities for a talented NCO. The profile is essentially the same for enlisted candidates as for officers. Simply put, that equals leadership.

Staples has Service Delivery Operations and Courier Support Operations which offer opportunities for officer and enlisted leadership candidates in every region of the country with multi-directional advancement opportunities. In the past two years, Brown has hired military leaders for his positions nationwide and feels his departments are better and more efficient because of that initiative.

In summary, the Transportation Industry is an area that well-trained military candidates can transition into with relative ease and find a long term "second career" in a stable and exciting environment. Companies like Staples that are willing to train the basics of their industry while recruiting the best leadership talent around are many steps ahead of the game and can provide the security and growth that the career minded go-getters crave!