

June 6, 2013

HUFFPOST IMPACT

Edition: U.S. ▾

Search The Huffington Post

Like 42k Follow

FRONT PAGE POLITICS BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT WORLD TECH EDUCATION COLLEGE GOOD NEWS WOMEN LIVE ALL SECTIONS

A Vet's Job Search Community

Posted: 06/04/2013



Roger Wright

Author, 'Finding Work When There Are No Jobs'

Link to online version of article: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/roger-wright/a-vets-job-search-communi_b_3384965.html

How many vets go to sleep every night believing that finding work is something they must do totally on their own?

We can all see or even debate the estimates of unemployed vets. "How many" is always an important question. So are qualitative questions measuring the experience of each individual vet.

But analyzing the numbers must not become a diversion to the national conversation and the action on finding work for vets.

Prompting us to move beyond the numbers is author Stephen Covey's guidance from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, "Begin with the end in mind."

In a national conversation centering on a vision for making sure that any given vet didn't feel alone in their search, what would a Veteran's Job Search Community look like?

1. We'd start with the money. A national conversation on employing vets means putting up a tent to include a very big crowd. Welcomed under that tent would be anyone who honestly profited from the talents of a fairly paid vet. Printing "We like vets" on a job ad though wouldn't be enough.

2. Every person's job search would be different. Work search today is based on the assumption that if everyone pulls the same levers, follows the same steps, then they get a job. And every vet knows that simply isn't true. Oftentimes organizations that connect people and jobs resist the idea that every job search is different. So the Community we envision here must take into account different search paths.

3. Getting a job would be different than doing a job. The best resume, best interview, best networking or best qualified person does not always get the job! We all know this, yet we go along with job search training that doesn't finish the job. The way people get jobs is not always rational. That idea must be tacked up on a sign inside our giant tent.

4. Stories would replace instructions. Instructions would work only if there was one way to find work. I'm not talking about the basics of resumes and interviewing. I'm talking about vets who already know the basics and still haven't found work. The single most powerful learning tool is the story. Stories prompt individual thought and action.

5. Screeners & Deciders would both be addressed. A screeners job is to figure out who NOT to hire. Deciders figure out who wins and gets the job.

6. Talent would trump job history. The real heart of what the vet brings to the table is talent. And only the very best hiring operations are set up to select based on talent. The need here is training. The vet needs training in translating their experience into the language of talent. The company needs training in every aspect of what it means to select on talent. Because talent based hiring is rare.

7. Communitizing would scrap networking. The hidden diamond of hope in fixing the broken system that connects vets and jobs is that every single vet is a member of a common community - the United States Military. So the uncomfortable, awkward process of networking, which too often means trying to meet someone you don't know and have nothing in common with can be replaced by community building, or as I call it in *Finding Work When There Are No Jobs*, "communitizing." Working from INSIDE a community always wins out over trying to break into a community. The very real differences of experience in a post 9/11 deployment make it hard to remember and even find a common community. But its there. **Best practice firms like www.CivilianJobs.com are already fostering that community. Visit their site and immediately be welcomed home with the message "Where America's Military connects with Civilian Careers."**

8. Talent Scouts would look for "Music". In focusing on talents. "Music" is a way to think about what the vet brings that goes above and beyond the words and the data of the resume. For example, Walmart's site is, www.walmartcareerswithamission.com That "mission" is the "music."

9. Stewardship would be practiced. The vet has stewardship -- taking care of something larger than themselves -- in their very blood. Stewardship would be part of any conversation with anybody even potentially connected with an employer.

10. Finding "Fit" would be the mission. "Fit" is the term used by top level recruiters in describing how and why people really get jobs. "Fit" goes beyond skills, experience, past jobs and all the data one has to fill in on employment applications. Insuring vets are a "fit" is a national priority, as reflected in the "Joining Forces" initiative chaired by Michelle Obama and Jill Biden. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces> "Fit" is not objective. It is a judgment call on who the absolute best person is for a job.

What does that community of veterans searching for work look like? It's a giant tent where "Fit" is the mission.

Where the vet is the absolute best person for the job.

In honor of America's Veterans, "Finding Work When There Are No Jobs" will be available for free Kindle downloads on www.amazon.com on Wed, June 5th & Thurs. June 6th. Free Kindle reading apps are available from amazon. The book can also be ordered by any library.