

5 Tips for Military Veteran Job Seekers

Penn Johnakin planned to serve in the U.S. Army for life, until the discovery of a heart condition during a physical resulted in his medical discharge. He had to find a job, but, like so many other veterans, his return to the job market was difficult.

Johnakin's luck turned in a big way today on "**Good Morning America**," when Starbucks offered him a shift supervisor position at a Winston Salem, North Carolina, store, live on the air.

"I am very surprised," said Johnakin, who was also given a patriotic apron with his name and "Army Veteran" embroidered on it, as Starbucks does for all veterans.

"I'm excited to be here," he said.

Johnakin, 26, had no idea the offer was imminent; he thought he was being interviewed about his job search. Before receiving the offer, Johnakin, a Winston Salem native who was a logistics specialist in the Army, shared his story.

After he discovered his heart condition and was honorably discharged, he was upset "for about two weeks," he said.

"I was sad because I was going to be in the Army, be a lifer, 20 years-plus," he told "GMA."

Then, he decided to handle the setback, because life had to go on. It was hard.

"I've sent my resume out about 40 times and I've probably gotten five responses," he said.

Starbucks has a new military initiative for veterans and their spouses. Benefits for the coffee chain's employees include an online university program with fully paid tuition, and one pound of free coffee per week.

Johnakin interviewed at Starbucks for a shift supervisor position, and the team saw something in his skills and character.

Tom Tice, Starbucks' military recruiter, said of Johnakin: "I believe Penn's one of those individuals who is a diamond in the rough. We really hope and plan that he succeeds with us."

"GMA" had no involvement in Johnakin being selected for the job offer.

Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources at **CareerBuilder**, said that while the job market is still challenging, veterans have an edge over other job seekers.

In a nationwide survey of more than 2,200 hiring managers completed in September 2014, CareerBuilder found that 67 percent of employers said they would be more likely to hire a veteran over another equally qualified candidate.

Haefner shared with "GMA" five tips military veterans should keep in mind when looking for a job after returning from active duty.

1) **Don't Get Lost in Translation** - The No. 1 challenge for veterans, and the employers who want to hire them, is how to align military experience with the civilian workplace. It's important to draw parallels between the employer's job ad and the skills you acquired on active duty, but that can be easier said than done. Fortunately, sites like www.militarytimes.com/jobs house tools that can help veterans translate their skills and look for relevant job openings.

2) **Emphasize the Intangibles** – Employers like hiring veterans not only because of the functional skills they bring to the table, but also for the intangible qualities. Throughout your communications with an employer – from resume to interview to thank you letter – underscore some of the following attributes companies say they look for in veterans:

- Ability to work as a team
- Disciplined approach to work
- Respect and integrity
- Ability to perform under pressure
- Leadership skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Ability to adapt quickly
- Attitude of perseverance
- Communication skills
- Strong technical skills

3) **Tap Into Your Military Network** – One of the advantages of serving in the military is the large network of contacts you develop. Make sure to leverage those contacts to help you find new job opportunities and serve as referrals. Chances are someone knows someone who's hiring.

4) **Consider Going Back to the Classroom** – In a 2013 CareerBuilder survey of 300 veterans, around 32 percent reported that they took advantage of the **college tuition** credit after returning from activity duty. Continuing your education will only help to increase your marketability to employers and open up doors to career paths you may have never considered before.

5) **Advertise Your Service** – Another challenge companies face in recruiting U.S. veterans is that veterans don't always highlight their military service in applications. This is a great selling point for your resume – and something that will help you stand out from other candidates – so make sure to include your military experience with a bulleted list of accomplishments, quantifying results whenever possible.

http://abcnews.go.com/Business/tips-military-veteran-job-seekers/story?id=26187944&singlePage=true&utm_source=InTouch+Nov+10%2C+2014&utm_campaign=INTouch+Nov10-2014&utm_medium=email