

Military-Civilian Transition Readiness Workbook

It's time to serve, yourself.

Who is this for?

Pre-transition service members, unemployed, or underemployed veterans

What are the benefits of completing this workbook?

- Gain the answer to the question, “What are you going to do next?” by identifying your skills, capabilities, potential and desires.
- Assess your transition readiness and identify ways to prepare yourself and your dependents for your transformation.
- Increase your awareness about a complex process and gain self-confidence in your ability to be successful and gain meaningful employment.

Where is all of this coming from?

The design and questions included are based on an Organization Development change model called Appreciative Inquiry (AI), which is: To search, investigate, seek for information through questioning. It's the creation of meaning through a process of exploration and discovery.

The philosophy says that the more positive the questions, the longer lasting and effective the change effort. *Key points include:*

- People and organizations move towards what they inquire about.
- A positive focus generates energy and commitment- critical factors for change.
- Positive questions lead to meaningful and lasting change.
- By focusing on the capacity, identifying and leveraging strengths, we sow the seeds for creating our desired future.

By exploring your past, you will uncover more about yourself, which is important when planning a meaningful second career.

Why did I write this?

Because I could. Many years in the civilian workforce and with pre-transition service members and veterans has given me a unique perspective on transition. I understand where you've been, and where you're going. While I've never worn a uniform, I feel like I've walked in your boots.

My hope is that this workbook serves as a path to self-discovery and self-promotion that will empower you to start building your own bridge to a meaningful second career.

Let's get started!

Questions, or to schedule a follow up: SDB Transition Strategies Consulting 949.338.9753
sara@sdbtransitionstrategies.com

Written permission required for distribution.

Prepare to complete this workbook

Schedule time to focus on this workbook. Take a break between sections. Have a hard copy of your resume, your fitness report, and all rewards/recognitions available to reference. Review your old posts on social media, as reminders of who you are, what you're proud of, who you represent and what's important to you. Be honest with your answers, and if you "don't know," call someone who does. There are no wrong answers. Incorrect grammar and spelling are good and indicate that you're not second-guessing your responses.

Suggestions while you're working

- Use the list of questions below as a guide in writing your professional narrative.
- Use one page per job or role, copy/paste the list of questions and add your answers
- Start with your first job, (including jobs in high school or college) and end with your current or most recent.
- Make special notes for specific stories to share in interviews.
- Note that recognizing accomplishments, mistakes, bad decisions, impact, outcomes and learnings are important to show personal development.
- Begin with "In (enter year), I worked as a _____ because_____."
- For your military service, include specifics about your "why" statement. Why did you enlist, get commissioned, survive bootcamp etc. What did bootcamp graduation mean to you?

Narrative Builder- Write your story

Civilian-Military Transition

What was transition like? What was your story and experience. What did you endure and accomplish? What would your bootcamp peers say about you?

Professional work experience is the military

1. Job and Organization

- a. Name of company, unit, employer
- b. Job title or MOS
- c. Role summary
- d. Job title
- e. Job function
- f. Time spent in role (months/years)
- g. How many direct reports did you have?
- h. How many people were you accountable for?
- i. Why did you select that role/specialty?
- j. What are the top three responsibilities in this specific role
- k. What is the equivalent civilian job title and/or responsibilities (ask a mentor!)

Questions, or to schedule a follow up: SDB Transition Strategies Consulting 949.338.9753
sara@sdbtransitionstrategies.com

Written permission required for distribution.

2. Results, Contributions, Impact

- a. What were your contributions to the organization in this specific role? (Think: If I had not done my job, the outcome would have been different. How different?)
- b. What were the results and evidence of my contributions and impact on the organization?
- c. What were the contributions to the individuals on the team (be specific, name names)?
- d. What were the results and evidence of my contributions/impact on the individuals?
- e. What would your coworkers say it was like to work with you?

3. Personal Development

- a. The skills I gained through this specific job experience were:
- b. The challenges or learning opportunities I had while in this role were:
- c. What I learned about myself and how I developed as a leader through those learnings were:

4. Recognition and awards

- a. The recognition I received was _____ for accomplishing _____:
- b. When compared to my peers, I stood out because of _____
- c. I felt recognized when _____

5. Leadership

- a. The person who influenced / inspired me the most in this role was _____
- b. If you were the leader, what would you have done differently and why?
- c. As a follower, how did you support the leader?
- d. As a follower, this leader taught me: _____
- e. As a leader of people, I did not enjoy _____
- f. As a leader of people, I enjoyed _____

6. Likes and dislikes

- a. While in this role, I enjoyed: _____
- b. While in this role, I disliked: _____
- c. The best part of that role was: _____
- d. Every day when I got home from work, I felt _____
- e. Having that job title, field, or place in the organization made me feel: _____
- f. Some aspects of this job I might like to find in a future job are _____

7. Transition

- a. I left this role because _____
- b. While in this role, I prepared for my next role by _____
- c. The experience from this role that will serve me the most in my new or potential role are: _____

Now what?

When complete for every role, write a brief summary of your career progression that ties all your experience, key learnings, accomplishments and professional development stages together in a logical story.

Focus on the significant events and major career pivots that you made. Include why you made the decisions you did and right or wrong, how those decisions aligned with your values and/or goals at that time in your life.

Write a paragraph that summarizes all of the positive, desirable elements of the roles you've held.

There will be themes that emerge throughout your story that will help you understand yourself a little better. You will gain clarity around your passions and your purpose, which will get you started on "what you're going to do when you get out."

Self-assess, based on findings from the narrative

Review your employment history and identify relevant skills, capabilities, desires and potential. Think about what you can do today, what you are capable of doing with minimal training, and what your potential (based on desire) is for future contributions.

1. **Hard skills:** What are your task-related skills that are transferable into a civilian role AND skills that are desirable in your civilian career (accounting, project management, logistics, inventory management, contracts)?
2. **Soft skills:** What are your people-related skills (leadership, resourcefulness, innovativeness, resilience, relationship building, communication, intuition, relatability, empathy, emotional agility, emotional intelligence etc.)? Be prepared to share stories about when and how you demonstrated these skills and characteristics along with the specific *outcomes of your actions on people and results*.
3. **Nontransferable skills with transferable capabilities:** What skills (e.g., tank driving) can you reference that demonstrate transferable strengths and capabilities (like operating heavy equipment, navigation, orienteering, mechanical and automotive engineering)? What character traits enabled you to be successful in that "nontransferable" role, (like laser sharp task focus, attention to detail, responsiveness)?
4. **Potential skills, desires and capabilities:** What skills are you capable of, despite the fact that you've never done them before? What makes you believe that you are capable of doing these tasks (similar prior experience, curiosity, confidence, courage, interest etc)?

Envision the future: What is my desired end-state?

The basics

1. Where will home be? (List city of residence)
2. Determine acceptable radius of commute to work location
3. Identify companies within that radius to research
4. Identify primary career field
5. Identify personal goals, short and long term
6. Identify professional goals, short and long term
7. Complete the Gallup strengths finder personal assessment

The possibilities

1. What are the specific skills and capabilities that you intend to leverage in your next role?
2. Brainstorm a list of 10 possible career paths, and pick 2-5 to focus on for now. Then reach out to people to see if those would be a good fit. Periodically revisiting that list to see if it's still an appropriate list, revise as needed
3. What are three types of jobs that provide the opportunity to do the things you enjoy? How do you know this? What research have you done to verify assumptions/hearsay? Who have you talked to that is currently in the role?
4. How will **you serve** your next employer? How will your prior experience, unique talents, and individual capabilities—when applied—help your employer make money, save money, solve problems, deliver results, achieve growth objectives, and positively impact the workforce?
5. Ideally, how will your next employer and job role **serve you**? How will it support your personal and professional goals?

How to get there- Assess your transition readiness

1. How prepared are you for transition? What would help you feel more confident?
2. What are you most afraid/anxious of when it comes to leaving the military? What can you do to overcome that fear?
3. How does your military service give you a sense of purpose in your life? Aside from your future employer, where can you contribute in a way that aligns with your purpose?
4. How important are your current social connections and peer communities to you? What are some ideas you have to establish new communities and civilian peer connections?
5. How will you stay connected and engaged at a healthy distance with your military communities after leaving service?
6. How can you engage with and include your immediate family in your emotional and psychological transition, career search, new role and immersion into civilian organizational culture? How do you think this would benefit all?
7. How can you assess the needs of and support the people around you who are also in transition because of your decisions?

Questions, or to schedule a follow up: SDB Transition Strategies Consulting 949.338.9753
sara@sdbtransitionstrategies.com

Written permission required for distribution.

8. Who is on your Transition Team of supporters? Do they know they have a role to play?

Experience the new culture-Introductions and conversation starters

Include your experience, contributions, application of skills, and motivations.

- My name is _____.
- I have more than (xx) years of professional experience gained through (enter number) different job accountabilities in the (enter military branch).
- My primary career focus is in _____, because _____.
- I'm uniquely qualified to apply my (enter skills/capabilities) to help companies (insert a need like improve efficiencies, productivity, increase revenues, reach growth targets).
- I've demonstrated my abilities through (enter experience and contributions) that resulted in _____.
- I'm motivated to be successful because (what is your purpose/inspiration/special interest).

Inquire: If you don't have the answers (which you likely don't), ask the questions.

For example, when asked "What are you going to do when you get out?" respond by saying something like, "I'm still looking at a few options, like operations management and entrepreneurship, but I was mostly hoping to talk to you about project management." Or, "I'm in career discovery phase because I have a lot to learn about the civilian workforce, organization structures and unique cultures. I am growth-minded and humble, and would like to ask you a few questions....."

- How did you land in your current role?
- What do you like about it?
- What are you working on, what project are you most proud of?
- What was the last thing you or your team was recognized for?
- What is unique about the culture?
- Why do employees stay?
- What does your organization do to help others?

Additional resources:

Books

Christensen, Clayton. [How Will You Measure Your Life?](#)

Watkins, Michael D. [The First 90 Days](#)

Bridges, William [Transitions](#)

Klaus, Petty [The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing it](#)

Videos

Cuddy, Amy. –“[Fake It Till You Make It.](#)”

Sinek, Simon. “[How Great Leaders Inspire Action](#)”

Junger, Sebastian, [Tribe](#)

Mentorship, Internship and Networking

[LinkedIn for Military & Veterans-](#) Networking, jobs search, community connection

[Veterati-Mentorship,](#) self-select

[American Corporate Partners-](#) Mentorship, matched

[Corporate Fellowship Program](#) – Internship to hire program

[Shift.org-](#) Paid and unpaid internships for Veterans

Final note:

This is hard. You’ve done hard things. And you can do this.

Sara



Questions, or to schedule a follow up: SDB Transition Strategies Consulting 949.338.9753
sara@sdbtransitionstrategies.com

Written permission required for distribution.