

Winning Strategies from Talent Acquisition Leaders

Explore TA Trendsetters, an Orion Talent publication dedicated to exploring how industry experts are boosting productivity, precision and predictability



Mary Collins, of S&C Electric Company, shares the Business Case for Military Hiring



The Business Case for Military Hiring

Mary Collins Shares an Insider's Perspective on Recruiting & Hiring Military Talent

As the Service Manager for the Southeast Region Field Services, Mary Collins is responsible for the acquisition, management and development of skilled, knowledgeable and service-oriented technical professionals for S&C Electric Company. Prior to joining S&C, Mary worked at GE for 12 years running a nationwide technical program while managing the GE Industrial Solutions Field Engineer Training Program as their Resource Manager.

[Business Case for Veterans →](#)





What is the business case for hiring Veterans?

Military Veterans come with soft skills already built in. They know to show up on time, how to fill out documents, update customers on progress and turn in a time card. With new grads, those are skills we often have to teach. It might be surprising to hear, but I can't tell you how many times I have had to coach a college grad through filling out paperwork properly or train them on how to politely answer the phone. These skills are built into the military talent we hire, which distinguishes Veterans from other job candidates in the marketplace. We find that Veterans are great at team play and understanding how to work as part

The case for hiring Veterans is you are hiring talent that comes with many strong soft skills and workplace know how.

of a team within an organization. This is something that a civilian often must be taught. The case for hiring Veterans is you are hiring talent that comes with many strong soft skills and workplace know how. Everyone wants to hire employees who are ready to jump in and get to work and that is what I have found to be constant among the military Veterans we hire.

[Veteran Leadership →](#)

What, if any, leadership qualities are you more likely to see from Veterans than those without military experience?

Most military Veterans have been through tough and demanding situations. It's not easy to ruffle their feathers, and they are ready to respond to needs and challenges. We also notice that whatever is asked of them is usually a non-event in their world. For example, if I ask a military hire to come in for training for two weeks the response is usually, "Only two weeks? No problem! I can do that with my eyes closed." On the other hand, a new college grad is much more likely to hesitate or bring concerns to me about the timing, the duration or having to rearrange plans.

We see great willingness among military Veterans to dive in and embrace the learning and training opportunities with a "whatever it takes to get the job done" attitude. It sets a powerful, go-getter tone for our customers and the company.

We have also noticed that in general, military Veterans tend to be very good under pressure. That's probably due to the fact that they are used to tough customers, such as the military's senior officers, who once pushed them with serious intensity to get their jobs done. Even if they are young, military Veterans come to us with experience in overcoming challenges and implementing tough orders. They often tend to be results or mission focused and that is a very distinguishing feature. They don't run away from a challenge. In fact, they tend to embrace it.

We see great willingness among military Veterans to dive in and embrace the learning and training opportunities with a "whatever it takes to get the job done" attitude. It sets a powerful, go-getter tone for our customers and the company.

One more notable advantage to us are service skills. Our customers may be utility and industrial industry professionals, but we are a service business. Everyone we support needs a high level of customer service. They want service providers who are safe, polite, on time, able to carefully listen to their needs and be willing to explain their approach to meeting those needs. With civilian talent, we tend to find there is a greater learning curve in getting them to understand and support the client. They are able to learn it, but military Veterans (in most cases) come in with those abilities already finely honed.

[Performance Boosts →](#)

How different is it hiring a civilian versus a Veteran?

It is naive to think a military person is really that different from a civilian who has worked for a larger corporation or any structured environment. There is no larger corporation than the federal government, and military Veterans come in with that big-organization experience. The military has training, bosses and opportunities to advance as skills and experience advance, which is valuable experience that hiring managers will recognize.

For example, one difference we have noticed between our civilian versus military hires is equipment management. Like I said, the U.S. military is the biggest corporation in the world and it has a lot of resources. As a company, when equipment breaks, it is a cost that we have to manage and consider. The protocol is different than it is in the military, and we have noticed our Veterans often have to adjust to the budget realities.

As troubleshooters and problem-solvers, military hires can save businesses time and money with their competence and willingness to push forward for the client. That makes clients willing to sign longer service contracts and invest in our company and people over the long term.

Have you been able to tie boosts in performance and/or profitability to your military hiring efforts?

In organizations I have worked for, I have seen “boosts” based on the customer service skills military Veterans offer. If there is a challenge in the field, military Veterans do not shy away. They are ready to solve the problem, take a different approach and get the client a solution that works. They always find a way. As troubleshooters and problem-solvers, military hires can save businesses time and money with their competence and willingness to push forward for the client. That makes clients willing to sign longer service contracts and invest in our company and people over the long term.

At GE, we were able to hire over 120 technicians and field engineers that were trained and engaged in work areas of installation, troubleshooting and repair of industrial electrical equipment. By threading former military technicians and engineers into our program, we have been able to take on more business, compete on projects with multiple price points, reduce backlog and accelerate revenue – all while realizing higher profit margins on many projects!

[Key Points →](#)

The Military Talent Opportunity

In a market where skilled talent is scarce, the trained, experienced military professionals who are transitioning into the civilian job market have a tremendous amount to offer. Moreover, their skills, training and experience make an ironclad business case for hiring military—a case that Mary Collins of S&C Electric Company outlined with these key points:

SKILLS. Military Veterans come to the job with strong soft skills and on-the-job experience.

COLLABORATION. Military Veterans know how to work as a team and value collaboration.

RESILIENCE. Because they have worked in demanding environments, many military Veterans are resilient to the ups and downs of work environments or unexpected challenges.

EAGER TO GROW. Most military Veterans benefited from the learning opportunities they received while in service and are eager to take advantage of on-the-job learning opportunities to gain skills and improve performance.

PROFIT-DRIVING PERFORMANCE. Above and beyond commitment to getting the job done results in greater client satisfaction and retention, which boost bottom-line profitability.

Great businesses are built on skilled, motivated talent, which makes hiring military one of the easiest and most rewarding business cases a talent acquisition executive will ever make.





About Orion Talent

Orion Talent provides a total talent solution for businesses nationwide, including skilled talent acquisition, recruitment optimization and military hiring solutions. As a military recruiting leader for 25+ years, Orion Talent has a long history of supporting Veterans in their search for meaningful careers and has found employment for more than 40,000 Veterans. Orion Novotus, an Orion Talent company, provides a full range of recruitment optimization and consulting solutions. Orion Talent has offices nationwide, a dedicated team of 200-plus recruiting experts, and holds more than 400 hiring events each year.

OrionTalent.com →

← Back