

AUTHENTICITY IS THE KEY TO RECRUITING VETERAN FRANCHISEES

Franchisors talk a lot about wanting to recruit more veterans to become franchise owners, and for good reason: Veterans make awesome franchisees.

Many franchises consider veterans among their ideal franchise candidates. The same character traits that help veterans succeed in the military – discipline, organization, leadership and being self-motivators – help them succeed in whatever business they decide to pursue after they conclude their service.

For most franchisors, the question is not whether to pursue veterans but how to go about reaching them and persuading them to join your ranks. Most franchise recruitment efforts lean heavily on advertising, brokers and portals – but with veterans, those methods do not always work.

What they really want is for you to speak to them authentically.

A Tough Sell

Veterans tend to be a skeptical lot. Probably because of the training they have received, they are distrustful of ads that target them simply because of their veteran status. They also are unlikely to look favorably on advertising that touts a company's gratitude for their service when it seems more like a sales pitch than an authentic expression of thanks.

Many businesses think attracting veteran franchise owners is as easy as showing a picture of a soldier in their ads. And don't even think about featuring a photo



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of a franchisee wearing his old uniform: Department of Defense regulations prohibit advertising that depicts a current or former military service member in uniform.

Using such photos and tactics may discredit a business in the eyes of the very demographic they are trying to attract.

Focus on the Positive

Instead of targeting veterans with hokey ads, franchises that successfully recruit veterans focus on sharing authentic

information about what is important to their company.

At Office Pride, for example, we talk a lot about our culture and our core values. Our company was built on a set of strong core values, and we live and work by them every day. That's important to us, and it matters to our franchisees. Veterans respect that, because similarly, military code dictates how men and women in the service are expected to conduct themselves.

In talking with franchise candidates,



we also stress our proven processes and support systems. With nearly 30 years of experience, Office Pride has been able to adopt best practices, refine procedures and create systems that work. Veterans appreciate established procedures and understand the importance of following them. You may never have a more compliant franchisee than a veteran!

We also love to tell success stories about our veteran franchise owners. All franchisors know that franchise candidates must be able to envision themselves working and succeeding in a franchise before they will commit. That's why we proudly share the successes of our owners who are veterans on our social media platforms and with the media.

Support Veterans Causes

Finally, we support the veterans in our franchise system as well as those who haven't found the right franchise fit yet. One way we do that is to partner with

objective third parties who assist military personnel in transitioning to the civilian sector and determining if franchising is a suitable path for them.

We have a long and proud association with VetFran®, a program of the International Franchise Association Foundation. VetFran was established after the first Gulf War to build a network of brands that encourage veterans to explore opportunities within franchise systems. We also partner with Orion Talent to provide franchise opportunities to military personnel who have been honorably discharged from the U.S. military.

Authenticity is the key to successfully recruiting veterans to join a franchise system. They want to know what your company stands for. They want to know that you invest in helping veterans find the right opportunity to own their own business. And they want to know that veterans in your system get the support they need to succeed.



Pat Durkee is Chief Operating Officer of Office Pride Commercial Cleaning Services and a U.S. Navy veteran. Office Pride is a five-star participant in the IFA's VetFran program and is ranked among the "Top Franchises for Veterans" by both *Entrepreneur* and *Franchise Business Review*.

How To Recruit Veteran Franchisees

Be direct and honest.

Talk about the things that matter to you and to veterans.

Tell success stories of real veterans who are franchisees.

Support veterans causes like VetFran and Orion Talent.