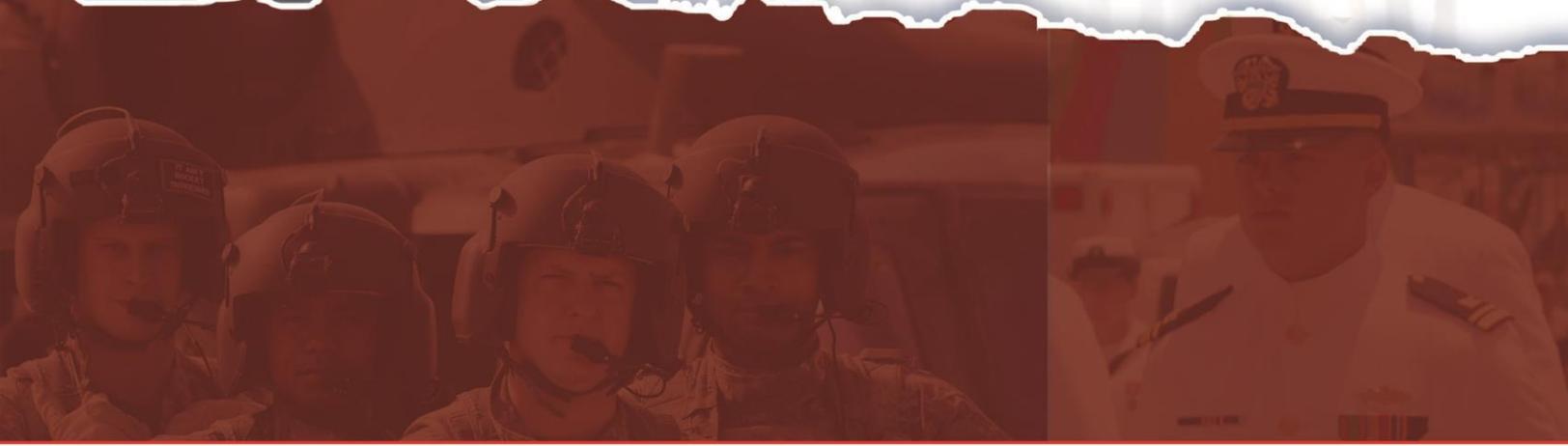




Military Transition Guide



Orion Military Transition Program

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Section 1

Beginning the Transition

Section 1 - Beginning the Transition

Orion International was founded in 1991 by five former Junior Military Officers who met while working for a recruiting firm in Atlanta, Georgia. The team had successfully thrived as a cohesive unit in the midst of a fiercely competitive environment due to their cooperation, idea sharing, and their ability to put the interest of the group ahead of their individual interests. When the firm they were working for was no longer meeting their personal and professional standards, the team of five decided to venture on their own and focus exclusively on serving job seekers transitioning from the military.

Since 1991, Orion International is proud to have helped more than 30,000 military leaders find jobs in Corporate America, and we have placed more veterans than any other military recruiting firm. Our company consists of former military professionals representing all branches of the Armed Forces. The Orion International family is now comprised of five regional offices located in San Diego, Austin, Cincinnati, Virginia Beach, and Raleigh; with corporate headquarters also located in Raleigh.

Throughout our company's history we have maintained certain values that set us apart, including personal integrity and professional ethics, dignity and respect for every individual that we work with, and an unyielding commitment to teamwork. Put into practice, these values allow us to deliver superior customer service, personal attention to each and every candidate and client, and an unmatched dedication to establishing the best fit between job seeker and employer.

Orion International exists to strengthen the fabric of America by providing ethical leaders to America's companies. We provide our honorable service members with what is in short supply when they exit the military - we listen, consult, and treat them with the honesty and dignity they deserve.

Orion's Core Purpose and Values

Our Purpose

To strengthen American Business with Best-in-Class Military Talent, through the relentless pursuit of excellence and unwavering commitment to our Nation's Military Professionals.

Our Values

- Excellence
- Teamwork
- Innovation
- Warrior Ethos
- Commitment

How We Can Help

We understand that preparing for and making a career transition can be a very stressful life event. We are here to help. Here is an overview of the services we can provide and what we can do to help you.

We represent you in your Career Search

Our team is here to help you. The Orion Candidate Recruiter is your representative in the hiring process. Your Recruiter will assist you in preparing your resume and with preparing for interviews. Once a Recruiting Manager introduces you to a career opportunity with one of our clients, an Account Executive will serve as your liaison to that client. Our Account Executive team works with thousands of companies nationwide to give you the largest number of career opportunities possible. Together, we work to find that win-win situation: the right “fit” for both you and the company.

The Hiring Process

Orion places candidates in one of 3 ways: hiring conferences, mini-conferences[®], or direct placements. These are not mutually exclusive methods of placement; we may utilize any or all of these methods in your career transition. We will tailor a customized plan for you based on your unique situation.

Hiring Conferences

Hiring Conferences are not job fairs. Hiring Conferences are regional hiring events that feature multiple companies looking to hire for specific opportunities. Hiring Conferences are the most efficient way to find a position, because they enable you to receive professional interview training and interview with multiple companies at the same time and place. Day One of the conference is a preparation day that consists of an interview workshop and briefings on the companies in attendance. Day Two consists of individual interviews personally matched for you by your Orion Candidate Recruiter based on your personal qualifications and preferences. You should receive an invitation about one to two months before the event, possibly closer as new clients confirm and new opportunities appear. We recommend that you plan to attend a hiring conference 90 days prior to your planned start date. Conferences are invitation only and spots are limited, so confirm attendance with your Orion Candidate Recruiter as soon as possible.

Distinguished Candidate Conference

Orion has created the Distinguished Candidate Conference (DCC) to provide exceptional career opportunities for our candidates that have distinguished themselves in education, performance, and experience, while meeting our top clients’ needs for an outstanding pipeline of talent from which to grow their future leadership. DCCs are national hiring conferences and are attended by Senior Leaders from our highest caliber clients, seeking Officers who will make an immediate impact within their new roles. High growth positions are available in Operations Management, Engineering, Sales, and Leadership Development Programs across the country.

Mini-conferences[®]

Your Orion Candidate Recruiter will contact you as mini-conference[®] opportunities arise that are a match for your qualifications and personal preferences. Mini-conferences[®] are hiring events held for a single company with multiple positions available. Typically, interviews will be conducted onsite and the hiring process is expedited. Mini-conferences[®] are our second most effective means of helping you find your next career.

Direct Placement

Direct Placement is a means of helping you by presenting you an opportunity with a specific company. Your Orion Candidate Recruiter will contact you as direct placement opportunities arise that are a match for your qualifications and personal preferences. Typically, the hiring process for direct placement is more deliberate and will involve a screening interview (typically on the telephone) followed by an onsite interview.

Most companies find it more cost efficient to conduct their hiring in a conference format, where they have the opportunity to evaluate several candidates at one time. As a result, fewer companies are choosing to go the direct placement route. What this means to you is simple: Hiring Conferences are our most effective means of helping you find a position.

Cost

Our services are completely FREE OF CHARGE for you. Companies pay us a fee to recruit and prepare qualified candidates. As a transitioning military leader, you have many traits that companies desire: responsibility, dedication, discipline, leadership and a maturity that surpasses that of your civilian peers. These companies understand the investment needed to hire candidates of your quality.

Preparing for Your Transition

This is an important step for both you and Orion International as we begin to form a mutually rewarding partnership. To accomplish this, we both must be focused on certain responsibilities. We can assure you that we will employ every resource available to assist you in your transition. You will also have certain responsibilities as you prepare for your transition:

- Dedicate yourself to a detailed self-analysis of your strengths, areas that need improvement, special skills, abilities and desires. Commit to interview practice and professional reading. Only YOU can articulate your value to a company.
- Set aside time to attend scheduled interview workshops, as well as one-on-one interviews by phone or during base visits with your Orion Candidate Recruiter. We will always let you know in advance when we will be at your base. It is critical that you make your career search a priority.
- Keep your file current at all times. Please be proactive and let us know of any updates to your transition plan (timeline, preferences, etc.) or any changes to your resume so we can best assist you. Ensure that we have all pertinent contact information (work, home, cell and civilian email address).
- Please be responsive. As you approach your transition date/window, we will need to reach you at all times. Check your email frequently. Opportunities come open with little notice; if we cannot contact you, we cannot submit you for that opportunity. Never hesitate to call us if there is anything we can assist you with!

Orion International is here to make your transition a successful one! With a combined effort of five regional offices throughout the nation, 50+ regional hiring conferences per year, trained consultants and several thousand client companies, no other firm can provide you the same depth of resources, experience and exceptional customer service. Please feel free to call your Orion Candidate Recruiter with any questions or concerns. We look forward to helping you find your next career!

Your Transition Timeline

We typically start working with candidates who are approximately 18 months from their planned start date. Based on that timeline, you can use the following checklist as a guide to ensure you are doing everything possible to prepare yourself for your transition:

18-7 months out

- Attend a base visit presentation and/or schedule a base visit interview.
- Conduct an initial phone screen with an Orion Candidate Recruiter to determine initial interests and establish general target locations. Your recruiter will send you an initial preparation packet.
- Establish your timeline. Let your recruiter know your planned Earliest Start Date.
- Complete a rough draft of your resume using one of our approved formats.
- Read *Interviewing Handbook for The Military Leader* by Paul Kreider or *Knock 'Em Dead* by Martin Yate.
- Begin your professional reading in targeted areas using our suggested reading list.

6 - 4 months out

- Attend a base visit presentation and/or schedule a base visit interview, if not previously conducted.
- Complete a final draft of your resume with the help from your Orion recruiter.
- Complete the interview preparation sections of the Orion Military Transition Guide.
- Continue professional readings.
- During this time, we will be in contact with you every couple of months in order to answer any questions and confirm your transition plan.

4 months out

- Finalize plans to attend a conference, as recommended by recruiter.
- Speak with an Orion Recruiting Manager to ensure clarity on the event and to begin researching targeted companies.
- Continue professional readings and interview preparation.
- Conduct a mock interview with Orion recruiter.

3 months out - Separation

- Attend a hiring conference. Communicate with your Recruiting Manager to conduct follow up interviews, solicit offer advice, and finalize accepting an offer.
- Should the conference not provide the targeted career opportunity, coordinate with your recruiter to attend another regional hiring conference, mini-conference, or be submitted to an opportunity via direct placement.
- Start work in your new career with Orion's assistance.

Military Officer Transition Checklist

Suggested Months from Transition	Action Item	Date Complete
13 months	<p>Visit Orion's Transition Corner to learn about the transition process from the perspective of fellow veterans who share their experiences with all aspects of the process from finances, to logistics, to challenges faced when starting a civilian career.</p> <p>Download and read Military Transition Guide – Beginning Your Transition.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12 months	<p>Visit Orion's Job Seeker Success page. Search our database on branch, pay grade, location, industry, company or even job title, to learn about the specific experiences of hundreds of Orion alumni enjoying success in the civilian workforce.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 months	<p>Attend our Career Transition Webinar which will cover all the basics of planning your transition – what you can do to make yourself most marketable, current market conditions, careers you may want to consider, working with a recruiter, and much more.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 months	<p>Check out our list of suggested books for Professional Reading, and commit to reading at least one book on sales and one additional book, prior to beginning interviews.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 months	<p>View our Resume Writing Webinar, which covers all of the basics of resume writing – why a resume is so important, what you should and shouldn't include, how to write a resume that is easily understood by a civilian hiring manager, and much more.</p> <p>Download and read Military Transition Guide – Resume Preparation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8 months	<p>Attend our Interview Preparation Webinar, which will cover all the basics of Interview Preparation – how and what you should prepare, do's and don'ts during any interview, practical assignments to help guide you, and much more.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 months	<p>Download and read Military Transition Guide – Introduction to Interviewing & Detailed Interview Preparation. After reading, work through the sample questions to apply what you have learned.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 months	<p>Attend our Sales Overview and Preparation Webinar which will provide you with an understanding of why sales can be a great starting point in the private sector, help you determine if sales is a good option for you, and give great pointers to winning a sales interview.</p> <p>Download and read Military Officer Career Preparation: Management and Sales. Prepare answers for the sample questions and begin assembling your 'brag book' if you will be interviewing for sales positions.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5 months	<p>Download and read Military Transition Guide – Researching Your Background. After reading, develop your interview stories and examples utilizing the STAR format to clearly demonstrate your most marketable skills and experiences.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 months	<p>Download and read Military Transition Guide – The Final Stages of the Hiring Process.</p> <p>Congratulations, you have completed Orion's Military Officer Transition Program! Please email this completed checklist to your Recruiter.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Documentation Orion Will Need from You Prior to Beginning to Interview

Item Needed	Date Complete
<p>College Transcripts. Request a copy of your College Transcripts from your undergraduate and/or graduate school(s). Send a copy to your Recruiter. This does not need to be sealed, and an unofficial copy is fine.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Evaluation Reports. Send a copy of your last 3 observed reports to your Recruiter. We use these to get an idea of what you have accomplished in the military, and they are a great starting point in writing your resume. Additionally, reviewing your evaluations will help your Recruiter identify key points to highlight when preparing you for interviews.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Professional References. Using the link included in your email (please ask if you have not received this link), provide us with your professional references. You will be asked for the names and contact information of 2-3 supervisors, and 3-4 peers. It is a good idea to let the person know that you would like to use them as a reference during your job search. Please note, they do not need to write you a letter of recommendation, they just need to be willing to answer a few questions over the phone and provide a quick review of your performance.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Final Resume. Once you have completed your resume, email to your Recruiter for review.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Career Opportunities for Veterans – Industries and Typical Positions

What are you qualified for? We've been asked this question many times. Just as the positions in the military vary widely, so do the career tracks in the corporate world. We realize that you may still be in the process of deciding what you want in a new career. Your next career should be based on your qualifications, skills, goals, and the type of work you would like to do. Below we have listed some of the industries and career fields that the vast majority of transitioning officers move into as they separate from the military, to give you a better idea of what opportunities exist and where you may best fit.

We highly recommend being open to a wide range of industries and position types during your career search. Much like being flexible on geography, being open on 'fit' allows you to find the best possible career choice. The positions listed below are generally where most JMOs begin their civilian career. Keep in mind that these positions are only a starting point. You can expect promotions to more appealing shifts or other positions that will draw upon your leadership from the military and your newly acquired business skills.

Manufacturing Management

Why Manufacturing Management?

Manufacturing management is a great place to begin a second career, as the U.S. manufacturing sector is a robust, dynamic industry. The U.S. manufacturing sector by itself is the eighth largest economy in the world per the Manufacturing Institute, producing more than 21% of the world's goods. It employs more than 12 million Americans (9% of the U.S. workforce) and U.S. manufacturers conduct two-thirds of all research and development in the U.S. A management or engineering position in manufacturing can provide you an excellent understanding of the core business operations required to move on to more senior leadership roles in the company. Manufacturing management is very well suited for JMOs with a very strong leadership background. A technical background is sometimes required to fully understand the operations and maintenance of mechanical, electrical, and hydraulic devices that are typically found in a manufacturing setting.

Each manufacturing plant varies in the complexity of its machinery and the skill level of the people on the production line. Some plants are very labor intensive, requiring strong managers to motivate the work force. Other plants vary from semi-automated to fully automated plants where computerized machines do the manufacturing and the work force is limited to those machine operators that maintain quality assurance aspects. As companies introduce newer and faster equipment, the production line constantly changes. An individual in manufacturing must be able to adapt to change. It is the job of the Production Supervisor and the Plant Engineers to maximize efficiency of operators, assemblers, and machinery to increase production, lower cost, and improve product quality. The transition to Manufacturing is one of the best areas for JMOs due to the direct correlation of your military experience and leadership style. Unlike many other career paths, you can hit the ground running and make an immediate impact on the organization's bottom line and profitability.

Typical Positions

Listed below are some of the most common positions available to transitioning military officers in the Manufacturing field:

Production Supervisor

A Production Supervisor, also often called Area Manager, Team Leader or Shift Supervisor, is a mid-level manager that leads a team of plant operators or assemblers and is overall responsible for day-to-day operations in their area of responsibility. Production Supervisors ensure maximum production by regulating schedules, ensuring safety, and assigning operating quotas. These roles often require candidates to be open to shift work. You also work closely with the Maintenance Supervisors, Quality Assurance Personnel, and Inventory Control to maximize efficiency. Strong leadership experience is required.

Maintenance Manager

A Maintenance Manager is responsible for maintenance personnel to ensure routine maintenance and emergency maintenance is taken care of quickly and efficiently to minimize “line-down” time. A solid background in maintenance operations is typically required.

Process /Manufacturing Engineer

Process Engineers establish and monitor ongoing processes, and look for problems within a company’s processes and offer solutions to increase efficiencies where possible. Process Engineering also involves developing new processes and troubleshooting existing procedures. Process Engineers are typically trained in, or receive training in, Six Sigma and other Lean Manufacturing processes.

Career Progression

From these roles, you can expect to move into other roles of increasing responsibility to include Operations Manager, Engineering Manager, Plant Management and ultimately into executive leadership positions within a company. Due to the robust nature of manufacturing in the U.S., workforce aging, and a resurgence of domestic manufacturing, starting a career and gaining experience in manufacturing in our current economy will prove to be a very rewarding decision.

Operations Management

Why Operations Management?

The operations field consists of general management positions in Corporate America. Operations is an excellent field for transitioning military leaders because of variety of roles available, and in some roles like distribution or transportation, because of the fact that you can transition from a very similar capacity in the military.

An operations management role will put a premium on your leadership, organization and communication skills. As an operations manager, you are a mid-level manager in the company. Your specific duties will differ from company to company.

Typical Positions

Listed below are some of the positions most commonly available to transitioning military officers in the operations field:

Distribution Manager

A distribution manager is in charge of scheduling operations, personnel management, and day-to-day operations in a distribution environment. You are overall responsible for the timely and efficient movement of products. You typically work in a warehouse or in a section of a manufacturing facility dedicated to distribution. Logistics or supply chain management experience may be preferred.

Transportation Manager

A transportation manager is in charge of scheduling operations, personnel management, and day-to-day operations in the transportation industry. You are overall responsible for the timely and efficient movement of transportation assets in support of company operations. Innovations like satellite communication systems and faster, more efficient transportation have taken this industry into the information age. Transportation or supply chain management experience is usually preferred.

Project Manager

Project managers are the key managers responsible for the overall direction of key projects. The projects differ significantly depending on the industry, from construction to manufacturing to defense, but the overall position requirements are pretty similar – manage resources to get an assigned project done on time and at budget. Most positions in project management require a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and/or previous project or program management experience.

Retail Manager

A retail manager is responsible for day to day operations of a retail store. Common responsibilities include personnel management, profit and loss, and community relations. Retail often requires flexible working hours, as the company needs to adjust to customer needs. Significant bonuses based off of profitability are not uncommon.

Other Operations Roles

We also see operations management roles in Marketing, Finance, Consulting, and Human Resources from time to time. These roles are often not the ideal entry point for a military officer, since they may require subject matter expertise in that functional area. But, they are often roles that our candidates move into after gaining experience within the company.

Career Progression

There are several career paths you can follow from all of these types of positions. You can stay in Operations Management or move into Technical Services, Engineering, IT, Human Resources, or Loss Prevention with the right qualifications. A successful Operations Manager can move into a Senior Manager position as early as two years. The willingness to relocate will increase promotion potential significantly.

Engineering

Why Engineering?

Engineering is the most in demand career field. Engineering encompasses a broad range of positions. Many JMO candidates do not feel qualified for a position in this field since they have been out of school and “out of practice” for several years. In many cases, it does not matter if you have an engineering degree or not, or how recently you have used it. Companies may take a candidate with a hard science degree, strong technical aptitude and practical experience for some engineering roles. Serving as an Engineering Division Officer on a ship or the Quality Assurance Officer in your squadron may qualify you for an engineering role.

Typical Positions

Below are some of the most common positions available to transitioning military officers in the Engineering field:

Process Engineers

Process Engineers establish and monitor ongoing processes, and look for problems within a company’s processes and offer solutions to increase efficiencies where possible. Process Engineering also involves developing new processes and troubleshooting existing procedures. Process Engineers are typically trained or receive training in Six Sigma and other Lean Manufacturing processes.

Quality Engineers

Quality Engineers perform quality inspections and analysis in conjunction with Process Engineering that help to optimize plant layout, improve process flow, and reduce cycle time and costs. Quality Engineers are typically well versed in ISO standards and Six Sigma and other Lean Manufacturing processes. Quality Engineers want to ensure that there is little variation in a product that is produced (QC) or verify that all specifications are met and adhered to (QA).

Application Engineers

An Application Engineer is a liaison position where you will provide information on the selection, application, and performance of company products with a customer. Responsibilities normally include counseling customers on product use and maintenance in addition to keeping current with standards and innovations in product design and development.

Project Engineers

Project Engineers are commonly found in the construction industry, but they can also be found in other fields. The role normally requires strong project management skills and the ability to work in a variety of areas. In the construction industry, it would include possible work on roads, bridges and/or commercial construction. In other industries, it may involve commissioning or installing new equipment. Strong interpersonal skills are a must since you will be negotiating and working with vendors. Project engineers also work to ensure the technical specifications, proper materials, compliance issues and rate of work are being met as you work up to becoming a certified Project Manager.

Test Engineer

Test Engineers are responsible for testing new products prior to full scale manufacturing to ensure they can be profitably manufactured and supported logistically through the field service force of the company.

Power Plant Engineer

There are many engineering and operations roles well suited to those military officers who have been involved with power production in the military. Navy submarine and surface warfare officers who have held engineering roles have the most transferable experiences to the power industry. Some companies will also be interested in those candidates with electrical or mechanical engineering degrees and a desire to begin a career in this field.

Manufacturing Engineer

A Manufacturing Engineer establishes and directs manufacturing practices, processes, procedures, facilities, tools and equipment in order for production to achieve safety, quality, and quantity objectives. Most manufacturing engineers utilize lean manufacturing principles to achieve these goals.

Reliability Engineer

This role focuses on providing maintenance reliability expertise for a wide range of equipment in a wide range of industries. Understanding predictive maintenance and root cause analysis is key, allowing the company to minimize equipment down time, or at least to predict when heavy maintenance needs will occur.

Career Progression

From these roles, you can expect to move into other roles of increasing responsibility to include Engineering Manager, Plant Management and ultimately into executive leadership positions within a company. You will find that companies that are technical in nature (Aerospace & Defense, Construction, Manufacturing, R&D) tend to have leaders that possess a background in engineering. Starting a career in engineering will lead to significant opportunities across the U.S. economy.

Sales

A career in sales can be a challenging but very rewarding field for former military leaders. A successful salesperson should be driven, able to work autonomously, an achiever, and somebody with outstanding communication and presentation skills. You should be goal-oriented. Companies want driven individuals to be the “face” of their organization.

A sales career can be very rewarding financially. Typically, a top performing individual in sales can make more than his or her counterpart in the Operations or Management fields. Sales is a pay-for-performance field. The better you perform, the more you earn.

Sales is a very autonomous career. You may work for a company as part of a sales team, but getting the job done on a daily basis is strictly up to you. Research, client calls, scheduling, presentations, follow-up, and closing a deal are ultimately driven by you alone. An individual’s success in sales is primarily defined by his or her personality, drive, ability to influence people, and time management skills.

Why Sales?

Sales is not a career field most military leaders immediately consider as an option during their transition from the military to civilian life. As military leaders, we tend to gravitate naturally towards operations, management and project management - because that is what we are comfortable with. But, those things that made you a great military leader are exactly what make a good sales representative: your intelligence, drive, your goal-oriented and competitive nature, great communication skills, strong interpersonal skills, a desire to be the best, and a desire to be challenged. Why not sales? We strongly recommend that you at least explore the option. Here are the facts:

Compensation

You are almost certain to make more money in sales than in most management or operations positions. Companies need to sell products or services to survive, and reward successful sales people extremely well. The compensation is designed to reward and retain performers. The better you do, the more you earn. Professional level sales roles are paid a base salary + commission and usually include benefits like car and cell allowances and an expense account.

Route Into Executive Leadership

85% of chief executives and senior managers either started their career or have spent some time in their career in sales and felt that their roles in sales were critical to their professional development and career progression. It gives you an appreciation of what happens at the ‘tip of the spear’—at the customer interface. As a military officer, you have already developed leadership skills and have solid leadership experiences. After performing well in a sales role, former military officers are routinely selected for promotion into leadership positions faster than their peers. Not all great sales people are good leaders; this can be a great advantage to you starting a new career.

Personal Control

In general, you are in control of your schedule. You make your own appointments, and run your own day the way you think is best. As long as you are producing positive results and meeting or exceeding your established goals, you have the freedom to set your own schedule.

Job Security

Companies know that successful sales people are not expendable. If you were to lose your job, or choose to leave it, it is relatively easy to get a new job if you can demonstrate a 'track record' of success in sales. A successful sales person should always be able to get a job and make a living. Sales is also a great way to build your reputation inside your company. The CEO will know who the top sales representatives are within their organization.

Helping Others

Sales is about assisting others in achieving their goals and solving their problems by introducing your company's products and services. It is not about forcing others to buy goods and services that they do not want. Sales is about working diligently to discover areas where your company's products and services will add value, having a clear understanding of the needs and desires of your customer, and then working to fill these needs. When done properly, problem solving in this way will earn their respect, gratitude and their business.

Typical Positions

Listed below are some of the most common positions available to transitioning military officers in the Sales field:

Industrial/Technical Sales

Industrial or Technical Sales is a specialized business-to-business sale of generally high cost technical products (machinery, specialized equipment, etc). Candidates should possess a strong sales profile and typically have some technical experience. The technical experience required can vary greatly from some basic technical aptitude to an engineering degree and hands on experience. Compensation generally consists of a base salary with commission or a bonus plan.

Pharmaceutical/Medical Sales

Pharmaceutical and Medical Sales are client focused sales careers with the primary end user being doctors and medical professionals. Candidates must possess a strong sales profile and outstanding communication and presentation skills. A strong technical or medical background is usually preferred. Both of these fields require significant preparation and research.

Outside Sales Rep/Account Manager

Most sales positions not mentioned above are generally classified as an outside sales representative. These positions are available across a broad swath of industries and while the products you represent vary widely, the position requirements do not – represent your company and products to clients in a professional manner through direct contact with potential clients. Strong communication skills and customer service skills are a must.

Career Progression

A position in sales can also open up a lot of doors for you in the future within an organization. An individual with a successful sales background and strong leadership experience from the military can successfully move into a wide range of roles in other areas of the company such as training, brand

management, marketing or operations. Some JMOs that enter a sales career when leaving the military choose to spend their entire career selling or in a sales manager role due to the great work/life balance that can come with a sales career, as well as the fairly unlimited earning potential.

Challenges

There is always a place for a sharp and enthusiastic sales person, and given the correct training and support, most bright people who are willing to work hard and learn will succeed in sales and make a better than average living. However, as in all things, every silver lining has a cloud or two.

Hard Work

A successful career in sales requires hard work and a strong overall work ethic. If it were easy, more people would be doing it. It is commonly said that for every one person who says 'Yes!', there are nine who say 'No!'. If you need to find five people a day to say 'Yes', you will have to talk to fifty people a day. If you aren't extremely motivated and don't have a great work ethic, a career in sales is likely not for you.

Results Matter

Sales is a profession where you are judged almost exclusively by your results. Being a 'nice guy' does not cut it, on its own. You will be expected to achieve certain levels of performance, and if you do not do this, you will be counseled, and may even lose your job. You must be goal oriented, organized and self-motivated. If that doesn't describe you, you should not consider a career in sales.

Disappointment

As mentioned above, a lot of people will say 'No!' and will not be interested in the products or services that you are offering them. If you are the sort of person who will take these disappointments to heart, then do not consider a career in sales. You must be able to handle rejection and disappointment.

On Call

In many cases, as the Sales Person, you will be the smiling face of the company you represent. In fact, apart from the driver who delivers the products you have sold, you may be the only person from your company that your customer knows in person. So when things go wrong, as they sometimes do, it will be you that the customer calls, demanding satisfaction, even if it is after hours.

But remember, no matter what job you hold in business, you spend a lot of your time selling: selling ideas to your bosses, your colleagues, your juniors, your suppliers and your customers. Spending time in sales prepares you to communicate effectively, and to 'win friends and influence people' (Dale Carnegie).

Getting Started on Your Career Search

Getting your career search started can be an extremely stressful time in your life. The Orion International Team is here to help and we have built this document to serve as a guide. Now that you have an overview of our services and the types of positions that we recruit for, we will dive into developing your resume and interview skills.

Section 2

Resume Preparation

Section 2 – Resume Preparation

Resume Preparation

A good resume summarizes your accomplishments, your education, your work experience, and should reflect your strengths in a concise, coherent manner. In today's competitive job market, a well-written resume is an important tool to get your foot in the door and on your way to landing the perfect position. The key to any resume is listing significant achievements that are specific and quantifiable whenever possible. Here are some key points to keep in mind as you develop your resume:

- Do not use military jargon. Position titles like Company Commander, Division Officer, Flight Commander are acceptable, but be prepared to explain those terms. You must be able to quantify the number of people who worked for you, the dollar value of the equipment, program or budget you were responsible for.
- There should not be any date gaps on your resume. You need to adequately cover all time periods specified on your resume.
- Spelling and grammar on your resume must be correct and consistent.
- Never speak in the first person.
- Font should be standardized with Times New Roman being the preferred font format. Black is the only acceptable font color.
- Pictures or icons are not acceptable on a professional resume.
- Resume paper should be a neutral color, preferably off-white.
- Do not use text boxes when formatting your resume. Use a standard MS Word document.
- Your resume length should be a maximum of two pages. The length of your resume is entirely dependent on your professional experience.

When in doubt, consult with the Orion Recruiting Team. We will work with you to develop the strongest resume for you based on your background and experience. That being said, we know that it is challenging as a transitioning military leader to create a resume in an easy to read format that best highlights your skill set. As a transitioning junior officer, the best format will be the standard chronological style detailed below. A more seasoned veteran can still use a chronological format, but may also consider the skills based / combination style below.

Chronological Resumes

You should typically use a chronological resume if you have less than 15 years total professional experience and your professional timeline is relatively easy to follow. This format lists your professional experience in reverse chronological order, so a potential interviewer, military or non-military, can easily follow your professional timeline and get a good overall understanding of what you are qualified to do in a very short period of time. The sample chronological resume format in this section should serve as an excellent starting point when developing your own chronological resume.

Key points for a Chronological Resume

- You must effectively differentiate between your duties and responsibilities and your achievements. Keep in mind there are and have been thousands of people who have held a job similar to yours in terms of responsibility (e.g. Platoon Leader, Division Officer, Flight Commander), but your achievements are what will set you apart. Be specific and quantify wherever possible.
- Emphasize those skills and achievements that you feel are most relevant to the types of positions you will be interviewing for. You have limited space, so be sure to focus on those most important strengths in place of those that may only be applicable to the military environment (i.e. your PFT score or Rifle Range score)
- Your duties and responsibilities should be listed directly under your job title and concisely describe your overall responsibilities in two to three lines.
- Below your responsibilities paragraph, you should list 2-4 achievements for each job held.
- GPA should only be listed if it is above 3.0.

Sample Resumes

On the next few pages, we have prepared some sample resumes for you.



John Smith

2 Main Street

Jacksonville, FL 55555

Home: 555-555-5555 Cell: 555-555-5554

John.Smith@email.com

EDUCATION:

BS - Occupational Education
Florida Gulf Coast | 2001 | GPA: 3.5

MAS - Aviation Aerospace Management
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University | 2011 | GPA: 3.0

Multiple classes in life cycle logistics, ISO 9001, acquisition, and Lean principles
Defense Acquisition University, 2013

EXPERIENCE: Major, Aviation Maintenance/Logistics Officer, United States Air Force

Adjunct Faculty Instructor, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Jacksonville, FL May 2012 – Present
Expert communicator/educator, selected as part-time instructor for undergraduate Safety & Aircraft Maintenance Technology classes. Mentored and taught 12 adult students about theory of aircraft propulsion systems and post-accident investigation techniques and report writing.

- Certified in teaching traditional face-to-face as well as online courses--outstanding verbal and written skills.
- Developed presentation and syllabus for nine week undergraduate Safety 375, "propulsion system investigation".

Maintenance Operations Officer Jacksonville, FL Nov 2011 – Present
Leads 422 personnel and manages the sustainment and readiness of 46 A-10 aircraft valued at \$584 million. Deployed to Afghanistan, 2012-2013, responsible for maintenance support of 50+ aircraft and 250 technicians.

- Leaned process during 35 highly intrusive five-day aircraft inspections, kept schedule on track with available technicians, parts and equipment, created two-day's worth of available flying hours reserved for surge operations.
- Provided oversight of transient alert contract at Department of Defense's busiest airfield, ensured turn-around of 12.8 thousand transiting cargo missions in/out of Afghanistan.
- Excellent steward of valuable tax dollars, met intent of President's withdrawal from Afghanistan by end of 2014, led turn-in/shipping process of 61 equipment items valued at \$4.4 Million.
- Selected as interim squadron commander, provided sage decision making, led 15 personnel disciplinary actions; evaluated as "flexible logistician and expert communicator...our best of the best"

Maintenance Operations Officer Geilenkirchen, Germany Nov 2008 – Nov 2011
Provided leadership for 274 military/civilian maintenance professionals from 14 NATO nations sustaining operations on 17 Boeing E-3A Airborne Warning and Control aircraft valued at \$5.2 Billion.

- Established first-ever logistics complex inside Afghanistan, coordinated with German hosts, sourced all essential ground equipment; first-ever historic NATO Airborne and Control mission launched within 4 hours.
- Guided Lean Rapid Improvement Event, identified 12 "must fix" items—implemented maintenance shared resources program that enhanced visibility and de-confliction of available facilities and critical equipment.
- Led modification process for retrofit of Iridium satellite communication system on 17 aircraft, forecasted parts, equipment and labor requirements; project completed two months ahead of schedule and within budget.
- Two time headquarters' annual award winner, General Lew Allen/Leo Marquez awards, 2009, rated #1 of 17 Logistics Officers and top 5% of 87 officers.

Operations Officer/Officer in Charge/Commander Misawa, Japan Nov 2005 – Nov 2008
Led 211 technicians in during maintenance on 20 F-16 aircraft valued at \$500 million. Managed the Pacific regional repair depot for 151 GE F-110 jet engines valued at \$560 million supporting three locations (2 in Korea/1 in Japan).

- Led 148 personnel during Iraqi Freedom deployment while producing over 1,300 combat missions with only 12 F-16 aircraft, enforced adherence to technical and safety directives—zero safety mishaps.
- Provided guidance to Quality Assurance office; identified frequent engine mount damage during removal—devised engine maintenance training plan and highlighted critical steps—reduced damage 52% in three months.
- Chosen as squadron commander for four months, led 104 personnel, authored maintenance capability study assessing the capabilities of labor, facilities and aircraft availability; 11,100 flying hours executed perfectly.
- Earned installation level Lance P. Sijan Leadership award, 2007, organizational Junior Officer of the year, 2006

Assistant Officer in Charge**Mildenhall, England****Nov 2002 – Nov 2005**

Directly led 180 maintenance personnel in six diverse career fields during the maintenance on 15 assigned KC-135 tanker aircraft valued at \$930 million. Evaluated the quality of maintenance during spot checks and ensured adherence to technical data and prescribed safety regulations.

- Managed transformation of support section layout, analyzed demand data for tools; reduced issue time 15%.
- Integrated with Norwegian AF partners, guaranteed refueling aircraft were ready with 100% mission success.
- Set up maintenance organization for complex avionics upgrade, oversaw training, rated #1 of 6 Junior Officers.

Aircraft Maintenance Instructor**Glendale, AZ****Dec 1998 – Aug 2002**

Polished communicator; taught, certified and provided leadership for over 350 new F-16 Aircraft Maintenance Technicians during 20 day course consisting of launch, recovery, inspections and servicing of essential fluids. Reinforced maintenance discipline among technicians, documentation and use of technical manuals.

- Expertly scheduled and de-conflicted 80 classes taught by 26 instructors; zero instructor days lost.
- Troubleshoot faulty fuel boost pump light connection, aircraft returned to service, earned master instructor rating.

Aircraft Maintenance Technician**Incirklik, Turkey****Nov 1995 – Nov 1998**

Responsible for performing inspections, maintenance, troubleshooting and servicing of transient F-16 aircraft valued at \$32 million. Managed 64 maintenance facilities and associated programs valued at \$14 million.

- Ensured seamless integration and bed-down of 13 flying organizations from four countries supporting real-world humanitarian relief operations, hand-picked one of eight selectees for base fellowship mentoring program.
- Key to base-wide nuclear surety inspection, coordinated use of facility; inspection declared a success.
- Evaluated as “a top-notch performer”, earned academic achievement award during 5 week leadership school.

Aircraft Maintenance Technician**Sunter, SC****Nov 1992 – Oct 1995**

Responsible for completing inspections, maintenance, and servicing of assigned F-16 aircraft valued at \$32 million.

Completed maintenance actions required to correct discrepancies reported in aircraft forms.

- Readied aircraft for operational readiness inspection, attention to detail earned 100% quality assurance pass rate.
- Led three person team for critical flight control airworthiness inspection/repair; 24 F-16s completed in 15 days.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Graduate, Officer Training School—commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Air Force
- FAA Airframe/Powerplant Certificate—active and in good standing
- Expert knowledge of Microsoft Office software to include: Word, PowerPoint, Excel and SharePoint
- Attended Squadron Officer School, Maintenance Officer Intermediate Course and NATO’s Evaluator Course
- Current Secret Security Clearance—valid until July 2016
- Current/Valid International Passport



Jane Doe

3 Main Street

Richmond, VA 55555

Home: 555-555-5555 Cell: 555-555-5554

jane.doe@gmail.com

EDUCATION:

BS - Systems Engineering | United States Military Academy | 2009
West Point, New York

- Competed on the intercollegiate soccer team
- Completed an internship working with the Military Entrance and Processing Station to redesign a more efficient system for all new recruits

EXPERIENCE: Captain, Transportation Corps, United States Army

Company Commander **Ft. Benning, GA** **Nov 2012-Nov 2013**

Commanded a logistical company, consisting of over 100 Soldiers, supporting the Brigade. Managed major logistical assets such as transportation, fuel, water, ammunition, and supplies. Directed the employment of assets within the battalion.

Collaborated and coordinated with superiors to determine the best distribution concept of support for the brigade.

- Implemented a delivery system for the supply warehouse to distribute over \$3 million worth of components to every unit within the Brigade; reduced the customer wait time by 13 days
- Provided ammunition support that enabled the Brigade to train by fulfilling ammunition requirements; oversaw and properly accounted for ammunition assets valued at over \$427 million
- Accountable for over \$30 million worth of equipment; implemented a system to track property on-hand, in-service, and signed-out; ensured all equipment lateral transfer directives were completed before their deadlines

Executive Officer **Ft. Benning, GA** **Dec 2011-Nov 2012**

Responsible for command and control of the company headquarters including the supply program, maintenance program, special tasking assignments, and daily operations supporting over 200 Soldiers. Managed all reports that are sent to higher units and adjacent units. Managed requests for transportation, fuel, water, ammunition, and supply support.

- Successfully deployed the entire company to two field training exercises; including the supply warehouse which included over 4000 different types of repair parts to establish a mobile supply support node
- Managed the maintenance schedule of over 150 pieces of rolling stock and ensured all pieces of equipment were properly accounted for; streamlined maintenance tracking systems by reducing 75% of outdated equipment information
- Coordinated with Engineer assets to set-up the largest fuel retail point within the Division for a field training exercise; allowed for 120,000 gallons of fuel to be stored in a field environment
- Coordinated with the Air Force for Low Cost, Low Altitude equipment drops on Fort Stewart; assisted in the configuring, packing, recovery, and delivery of each load for the joint service air delivery method of distribution

Support Operations Transportation Officer **Ft. Benning, GA** **Jun 2011-Dec 2011**

Recommended priorities, coordinated tasks, documented cargo to be transported, allocated resources, and determined modes of transportation necessary for optimal utilization of assets in a timely manner for a Brigade Heavy Combat Team. Managed all transportation assets within the brigade and supported units for movement support.

- Ensured all movement requests were complete within 72 hours of receiving the mission request; cut down on customer wait time by over 48 hours
- Created a Standard Operating Procedure for transportation requests for all units within the Division
- Created a standardized transportation movement request form for all internal transportation assets which streamlined all requests into a clear and concise order

Platoon Leader **Ft. Benning, GA** **Jan 2010-Jun 2011**

Coordinated and executed tactical movements throughout Iraq to facilitate command visits for the commander. Worked with numerous agencies throughout the theater of operations for support, including air support, intelligence reports, radio and communication support, and electronic warfare protection support. Oversaw the proper training of 30 Soldiers.

- Developed standard operating procedures for tactical movements for non-combat arms Soldiers
- Managed over six million dollars' worth of equipment with zero loss, including numerous sensitive items
- Traveled over 25,000 miles without any accidents or incidents throughout Baghdad and Northern Iraq

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Active Top Secret Clearance, Awarded Bronze Star Medal

Bob Smith

6 Main Street
Birmingham, AL 55555
Home: 555-555-5555 Cell: 555-555-5554
bob.smith@email.com

EDUCATION:

BA – Communications | University of North Carolina at Charlotte | 2001
Charlotte, North Carolina

- All American baseball and team captain

EXPERIENCE: Infantry Officer, Captain, United States Marine Corps

Assistant Operations Officer **Camp Lejeune, NC** **Jan 2013 to Present**

Synchronize regimental staff functions in order to achieve training objectives. Oversee and implement classes and training for four battalions preparing for deployment.

- Rewrote Marine Expeditionary Force operating procedures for Marine Expeditionary Units, affecting 60,000 personnel in their preparation for deployments.
- Coordinated with Booze Allen Hamilton to develop new budget accounting for future Marine training for all facets, personnel, and equipment required in preparation for deployment.

Weapons Company Commander **Camp Lejeune, NC** **May 2011 to Jan 2013**

Oversaw general welfare, training, and direction of 272 Marines. Synch six independent platoons with the battalion commander's intent for training. Serve as the battalion operations officer when he is not present. Developed and implemented two-year goal oriented training plan to synchronize all indirect fire assets within the battalion.

Responsible for \$220,171,533 of gear and equipment.

- Loaded 272 Marines, 42 vehicles, and all gear onto two ships and constantly tracked upkeep and maintenance for one year.
- Developed quick reaction force standard operating procedures (SOP) for 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit for all surface and aerial operations.
- Developed Fire Support SOP that 23 of 26 Marine Corps Battalions adopted.
- As the senior company commander, developed and led peers in multiple planning exercises.
- Developed a maintenance program for 30 HMMWVs, 8 LAVs, and 4 tanks, which ensured company's operational readiness never fell below 95%.
- Oversaw and coordinated fire support planning for 10 battalion fire support exercises, working with Kuwaiti, Jordanian, French, British, Italian, Saudi, and Lebanese personnel.
- Developed an education program to train junior officers in planning processes. The design and format for the training program was adopted by higher headquarters and implemented throughout a 3,000-person organization.
- Operational readiness for fire support was raised from 25% to 98%.
- Oversaw and implemented a 3,000-man event. This was a plan that took a month to develop and utilized personnel from Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Italy, Jordan, the United States, and Kuwait. Letter of accommodation from Col MacArthur who was the higher headquarters for this operation.

Student, Expeditionary Warfare School **Quantico, VA** **July 2010 to May 2011**

Attended Expeditionary Warfare School, a career-level school that provides Marine Captains professional military education and oversees their professional military training in Warfighting, Marine Air Ground Task Force Operations Ashore, Naval Expeditionary Operations, Professional Development, and Specialized Military Occupational Specialty Training. This is a cross functional school focusing on developing individuals' understanding of Maneuver, Command and Control, Force Protection, Logistics, Intelligence, Information Operations. While at EWS, also attended Marine Corp Tactics Operations Instructor Course (MCTOG), a school dedicated to developing individuals in their understanding of conceptual and functional planning processes.

- Developed conceptual fire support plan that would be implemented upon return to the fleet.
- Instructed peers on the Marine Corps orders process, with a special emphasis on problem framing.
- Distinguished graduate from EWS and MCTOG.

Instructor, The Basic School (TBS) Quantico, VA Apr 2007 to Jul 2010

Developed a platoon training package that instructed 1,600 junior officers per year. This package developed junior officers' ability to lead and mentor a 40-man organization. Was a staff platoon commander for two platoons of 50 junior officers. Responsible for training, mentoring, and developing the junior officers for their future command over a 6 month time period. Also served as an executive officer for combat instructor company. Responsible for 356-man company.

- Developed and executed monthly training plans resulting in equipment and skill proficiency of all Marines within the company.
- Responsible for upkeep and maintenance of 56 HMMWVs, maintained 97% operational readiness throughout tenure.
- Awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for meritorious service.
- Instructor of the year runner up.
- Top 25% of all Captains in the Marine Corps selected to attend EWS.

Platoon Commander Twentynine Palms, CA Jan 2004 to Apr 2007

Managed health, welfare, and development of 175 Marines and their families. Responsible for the training and development of two rifle platoons and one combined-anti armor platoon in support of three Operation Iraqi Freedom deployments.

- Responsible for security and development of three cities totaling 125,000 people. Worked daily with key city leaders on projects to restart the economy within my area of operations, resulting in a 15% drop in jobless rate and \$15,000,000 worth of economic growth within the cities.
- As a rifle platoon commander, was designated as the Main Effort for all company operations.
- As a rifle platoon commander, Marines of higher grade were placed under my command.
- Awarded two Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, one for valor and one for meritorious service.
- First Infantry Officer ever to be selected for Joint Tactical Air Control School.
- Top 10% of all company grade officers in the Marine Corps and selected to instruct at The Basic School.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Fluent in Spanish, Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint



Peter Smith
5 Main Street
Virginia Beach, VA 55555
Home: 555-555-5555 Cell: 555-555-5554
peter.smith@email.com

EDUCATION:

BS - Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics | University of Tennessee | 2006 | GPA: 3.2
Knoxville, Tennessee

- University of Tennessee NROTC, Company Commander, Color Guard

EXPERIENCE: Lieutenant, United States Navy

Operations and Plans Officer

Joint Expeditionary Base **Little Creek-Fort Story, VA** **Nov. 2010 – Present**

Directly supervised 11 personnel. Operations Officer in charge of planning movement of 24 Amphibious Landing Craft. Accountable for all cryptologic equipment and weapons used for landing craft deployment. Scheduled training events for a command of over 290 Sailors.

- Successfully coordinated dynamic training cycles for 9 amphibious landing craft on four overseas deployments, with zero safety mishaps.
- Developed and implemented a weekly work schedule to include training, inspections, and meetings for over 290 Sailors, improving key performance indicators by 25%.
- Planned and conducted over 90 public affairs tours for more than 4500 visitors. Supporting community involvement and recruiting initiative.
- Personally trained and qualified over 20 Naval Officers and Chief Petty Officers in the position of Command Duty Officer responsible for safety and security, increasing operation effectiveness.
- Recognized for superior performance by Commanding Officer, receiving Navy Commendation Medal.

Damage Control Assistant

USS CARR **Norfolk, VA** **Feb. 2003 – Oct. 2010**

Principal Assistant to the ship's Damage Control Officer. Charged with leading and directing shipboard firefighting and damage control teams. Qualified as a Gas Free Engineer, capable of assessing and verifying safe atmospheres for personnel. Responsible for ensuring proper ship loading and stability. Manager of the Damage Control Training Team.

- Administered essential damage control training for a crew of over 150 Sailors, increasing qualification rate by 20%.
- Collaborated with shipyard engineers to plan a drydock overhaul, leading led to the safe removal of the USS CARR from the water.
- Trained and supervised 6 senior leaders in the direction of damage control efforts while in port.
- Trained 4 damage control teams in engine room firefighting procedures which ensured the successful completion of the USS CARR Engineering Operations Certification in 2010.
- Performed routine inspections of all shipboard spaces to ensure compliance with fire safety and emergency response regulations, receiving recognition from outside inspection for superior performance.
- Considered top 10% DCA by Commanding Officer.

Interior Communications/Force Protection Officer

USS ROSS **Norfolk, VA** **Sep. 2006 – Jan. 2009**

Directly supervised ten Sailors. Division Officer responsible for maintenance of shipboard communications, alarm, and navigational radar systems. Leader of Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection Training Team.

- Developed new maintenance scheduling procedure, improving readiness from 88% to 96%.
- Routinely inventoried and accounted for all electronic testing equipment.
- Awarded staffing Navy Achievement Medal by Commanding Officer for exemplary performance.
- Developed watch schedules for a force protection exercise that successfully demonstrated the USS ROSS' self-defense capability in port.
- Ranked #2 of ten junior officers aboard the USS Ross

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Member of Military Officers Association of America

Skills Based/Combination Resume

You should typically use a skill based / combination resume if you have more than 15 years of professional experience. You may also want to consider this style if you have a very diverse professional background and are trying to tailor your resume for a specific industry or position. This format starts with a professional summary and highlights of key professional attributes that you want to emphasize. The skill based / combination format allows a potential interviewer to view your background in an easy to read format that emphasizes the skill sets that you are trying to convey. The sample format below should serve as an excellent starting point when developing your own skill based / combination style resume.

Key points for a skill based / combination resume

- Ensure your summary paragraph accurately outlines your professional experience.
- Carefully select the **three to four** skills that you will list and detail the achievements that support each skill. Highlight those skills that are most relevant to the employers that you will be targeting. The first skill set listed should be your strongest and the one that you want to emphasize the most.
- Your achievements supporting each skill set should be specific, concise and quantifiable where possible.
- Your Employment Chronology section should not contain any gaps in your timeline.

Sample Skills Based/Combination Resume

John Doe
jdoe@aol.com

1111 West Anyview Road
Small Town, NV 11111

Cell Phone: (111) 111-1111
Phone: (111) 111-1111

SUMMARY: Highly qualified results-oriented individual with over 18 years progressive responsibility and leadership experience in program management, recruiting, training and military aviation. Self-motivated, articulate and technically savvy individual with a can-do attitude. Assertive team player who performs well in fast-paced environments. Proven team builder and skilled problem solver.

Program Integration
Problem Solver

Organizational Skills
Team Builder

Communication Skills
Secret Clearance

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Responsible for \$250M Global Air Traffic Management avionics upgrade program for 15 Boeing Aircraft
- Led 12 acquisition managers and engineers developing strategic plan for Boeing 707 avionics upgrade program
- Restructured \$250M baseline delivering capability 2.5 years early, averting negative operational impacts
- Spearheaded \$5M cockpit avionics upgrade program evaluation to reduce ownership costs between common airframes for total AF fleet of 48 Boeing aircraft; saving AF \$20M
- Directed 5 member Test & Evaluation Team for AF Distributed Common Ground System that provided intelligence data to users worldwide; developed overall test strategy and plans; reduced testing cost by \$635K

LEADERSHIP

- Supervised 250 member flight training organization that was rated "Overall Excellent" during HQ inspection
- Directed 5 member team that managed ground, weapon and flight safety programs for 9,576 individuals, 4 flying units and 27 organizations; reduced mishaps by 12%; won Best Ground Safety Program out of 8 installations.
- Led Executive Programs/Projects as Special Assistant to military CEO of 4,900 plus member organization; prepared/presented briefings to Congressional, DoD, and foreign Distinguished Visitors
- Turned around Officer Recruitment Program in two months, from 59% to 110% of goal; supervised, trained, and motivated force of 12 Air Force recruiters

ASSET MANAGEMENT

- Managed \$1.1 billion flying training program of 11,250 training allocations for 286 different student courses ensuring maximum utilization of all training allocations; produced 1200 AF pilots and 1000 crewmembers
- Solved severe AF pilot shortage by standing up reserve programs in active duty units; saving AF \$66M
- Led team which evaluated/purchased two Boeing 737 aircraft; saving AF \$4.4M
- Resolved long standing proprietary rights issues with major defense contractor; saving AF \$2.5M
- Developed/negotiated a fair and equitable three year employee downsizing plan; saving AF \$3.1M

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

- Convinced leadership that ‘Big Safari’ RC-135 (707) avionics upgrade solution not optimal; prevented major waste of funds and ensured customer received avionics upgrade package that met worldwide requirements
- Briefed technical requirements for Global Air Traffic Management and impacts of aircraft that are non-compliant; persuaded leadership to accept short-term solutions to continue flight operations until compliant
- Directed 16 member risk mitigation working group that identified 46 avionics upgrade risks and mitigation efforts; developed decision brief and received overwhelming approval of plan from senior leadership

TEAM BUILDING

- Interacted effectively on all organizational levels to achieve consensus, motivated and fostered team spirit
- Led 10 member Operational Risk Management team--developed strategy, plan, and metric for 27 organizations
- Coordinated 15 member team supporting 10 senior general officers for annual conference; to include accommodations, cuisine, transportation, and conference center logistical support
- Trained 60 member aircraft mishap response team ready to respond anywhere in New England
- Spearheaded team of 25 Combined Federal Campaign fundraisers, achieving 122% of goal and 43% contribution increase from prior year. Raised over \$82,000 with 81% participation rate from 800+ employees

EMPLOYMENT CHRONOLOGY

US Air Force, US and worldwide assignments 1993 – 2013

Test and Evaluation Manager	Hanscom AFB, MA	Feb 10 - Jun 13
Director of Flight/Ground Safety Programs	Hanscom AFB, MA	Dec 05 - Feb 07
Acquisition Program Manager	Hanscom AFB, MA	Dec 06 - Nov 08
Resource Program Manager	Randolph AFB, TX	Sep 04 - Nov 06
General Aide to CEO	Randolph AFB, TX	Jan 03 - Sep 04
District Sales Manager and Recruiter	Portsmouth, NH	Jan 99 - Dec 02
Aviator, KC-135 Tanker Navigator	Mather AFB, CA; Pease AFB, NH	Aug 93 - Dec 99

EDUCATION

MBA, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, GPA 4.0
 BS, Business Administration, Western New England College, Springfield, MA, GPA 3.5
 Mid-Level Manager/Supervisor Program, 12 weeks in-residence, Maxwell AFB, MI
 Senior-Level Manager/Supervisor Program, 40 weeks non-residence, Hanscom AFB, MA

TRAINING

Intermediate System Acquisition Management, 3 weeks in-residence, Hanscom AFB, MA
 Developmental and Operational Testing & Evaluation, Hanscom AFB, MA
 Fundamental of System Acquisition Management, Naval Center of Acquisition Training
 Aircraft Mishap Investigation Training, Kirtland AFB, NM

CERTIFICATIONS

Project Management Professional by Project Management Institute
 Instructional System Development Certification, perfected lesson plan development to formal presentation

OTHER INFORMATION

Taught Sales, Marketing, and Management Courses at Hesser College, Portsmouth, NH
 Computer literate: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, and Microsoft Project
 FAA instrument pilot

Chronological Resume Worksheet

Many transitioning officers struggle with where to begin developing their resume. It really can be as simple as the worksheet below. Start by filling in the basic items. With the help of the Orion Recruiting Team, we can take this basic information and develop a solid resume.

While completing this worksheet, pay special attention to the accomplishments. Most candidates reiterate responsibilities in this area. What will truly make you stand out as one of the top transitioning officers in the market will be a track record of performance supported by consistent accomplishments in every billet. Read through your evaluations for the following:

- Rankings, especially those against your peers or peer units. If you can consistently show you were rated at the top or in the top 25% or better, these are strong numbers to show.
- Quantifiable numbers, such as maintenance readiness rates, or unit evaluation scores. While the reader may not understand what deployment readiness means, they will definitely understand concrete numbers such as “98% readiness rate, highest in the unit.”
- Outstanding comments from evaluators can also be strong accomplishments to list, even if a number is not attached.
- Try to show where you have improved a process, saved time or money, or overcame obstacles to achieve success.

Once you have completed this worksheet, either scan or utilize our downloadable sample resume, type up a rough draft and send to a recruiter for review and further development.

Resume Changes

Resumes are living documents that change on a regular basis, especially with the highly opinionated nature of the topic. Make sure that you practice solid file management. If you make changes to your resume, send us an update and note that change so that we are clearly using the most current document.

Now that your resume is complete, you have the ability to secure an interview. In the next sections, we will start exploring what to expect in the interview process and how to prepare to win them when they come along.

EDUCATION

Degree	School	Year	GPA		

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Key Activities

EXPERIENCE

Rank, Occupational Specialty, Service

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

- Achievement:

Section 3

Introduction to Interviewing

Section 3 – Introduction to Interviewing

This section is designed to provide an overview of the types of interviews and how they are typically structured. While this section is oriented towards an Orion Hiring Conference format, the tips included can be applied to any interview. Most transitioning military officers have never had to interview for a position. In the military, natural career progression and a demonstrated record of performance dictate the particular jobs you have secured. Corporate America is different. In order to secure the position you are targeting, you must be able to convince an interviewer that your military experience and your demonstrated track record of performance are a strong fit for their organization. The candidate who can best relate his or her background and strengths to an interviewer will be the one who gets the job.

Take time to read this and other literature on interviewing. This section breaks down different aspects of the typical interview, and the following sections will introduce you to interviewing techniques, common questions, and tools to help you prepare. As you review the information, identify the areas you feel you need to concentrate on the most. Begin developing examples and working through your answers and let us know if you need any assistance. Self-study is a critical component of your transition. Remember that the time you spend preparing is a tremendous investment in your future.

The career transition is not easy. As former Junior Military Officers, we understand the personal and professional stressors that you are dealing with. The Orion staff is here to assist and guide you through the transition process. Please consult us on any issue – the only bad question is the one that you do not ask.

Getting Started

There are 4 basic steps you should take when preparing for an interview: research yourself, practice, research the company, and prepare logistically.

Research Yourself

It is guaranteed that you will be asked a question that you did not prepare for during an interview, so it is crucial that you know and understand your performance history to be able to answer any question. You must analyze your strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures, in order to:

- Emphasize specific strengths during an interview
- Talk about specific examples using names, dates and places that you can relate to support your answers
- Sell yourself

We recommend that you lay out your evaluations, awards, and your resume and utilize Section 4 of this transition guide to begin organizing your experiences and associating them to common interview topics. As you learn about the STAR format, you will be able to expand these examples into a well-rounded

interview response. We have also provided detailed lists of sample interview questions for further review and consideration. Once you have thought about the key situations that you want to use in your interviews, then you develop them further by practicing them.

Practice

Once you have organized your examples (as mentioned above), we suggest writing out your answers. This will help you formulate well thought out answers and will ensure you do not miss key details. While writing out your answers is a start, you must also take the time to practice your responses out loud, whether it is with the Orion Recruiting Team, a friend or spouse, tape recorder or by videotaping yourself to check idiosyncrasies. Know your resume and be prepared to explain the responsibilities, roles and achievements of each position. Thinking through your answers is not enough for most people. It is important to verbalize them. It is much easier in an interview setting to answer questions you have already practiced out loud.

Company Research

The first interview requires basic research to ensure that you have general knowledge of the company. The information you uncover in your research will allow you to ask thoughtful questions that illustrate a strong interest and potential fit with the company. The second interview will require much more in-depth research. For any interview, take time to understand the following information:

- Company Mission, Vision, and Values
- Current status, products, customers, competition
- History
- Corporate structure (HQ location, size, divisions, international or domestic, public or private)

If possible, talk to people who work at the company. Act like a prospective employee and you will be viewed as such. Below is a web site that allows you to research companies. It is a subscriber site but well worth the expense.

- Hoovers Online: The Business Network (<http://www.hoovers.com>).

There are also a number of free sources of information that can be helpful:

- Forbes Magazine online
- Wall Street Journal
- CNNmoney.com
- LinkedIn
- Company Website

Logistics

In order for an interview to go as smoothly as possible, you must make sure you are logistically prepared. Arrive early, look sharp, and present a professional image. Make sure your attire is ready and you know where the interview is. If you can answer the following questions, you should be set for your interview:

- What time is your interview?
- Who are you interviewing with?
- Do you have a phone number to call in case an issue arises and you may be late?
- Where is your interview?
- How long are you going to be there?
- How long does it take to get there?
- What is the attire for your interview?
- Is your attire ready?
- Did you remember to bring extra resumes in a professional folder (portfolio) with paper and pen?
- Do you have a brag book? If interviewing for sales, you must have a Brag Book (a 3 ring binder, with plastic sleeves containing resumes, evaluations, transcripts, awards). Learn more about Brag Books in Section 5.

Any logistical misstep can cause you to be nervous or rushed. If it happens, stay calm. Remember to check yourself in the mirror before each interview. Always have a phone number to call in the event that you will be late to the interview.

Types of Interviews

There are two primary types of interviews used by companies: a screening interview and selection interview. It is important to understand that every company's hiring process is different. Some companies may require only two interviews while others may require three or more. It is also not uncommon to see a company conduct testing (personality, skills based) as an intermediate step in the hiring process. Here is an overview of the major types of interviews and tips on how to handle them.

Screening Interview

Your first interview with a company will often be a screening interview. The purpose of a screening interview is to ensure that prospective candidates meet the basic qualifications for a given position. It may take place in person or on the telephone. If you meet the basic qualifications for the position, express interest in the position, and make a positive impression on the interviewer, you will likely be selected for a selection interview.

Keys to Success

- Research the company. Read the job summary carefully. Understand the position and know the key attributes that the company is looking for.
- Using your research and the job summary as a guide, tailor your answers to emphasize the key attributes that you have identified.
- Know your audience. You need to know the background of your interviewer. Is the interviewer from Human Resources, or are they from Operations? Are they former military? The Orion Account Executive responsible for that company can give you all of that information.
- Be personable. All things being equal, companies hire individuals that they like.

Selection Interviews / Second Interviews

Selection interviews are typically conducted on-site at a company. The purpose of a selection interview is to determine whether a candidate will be selected for the position he or she is interviewing for. A selection interview is typically more rigorous than a screening interview. At this point, a company is trying to decide whether or not you should either be moved to the next step in the hiring process or an offer is going to be extended, so there will be more scrutiny on you. The company wants to know if you are you qualified for the job. Are you a good cultural fit? Can you make an immediate impact or will you need extensive training? Questions will be more specific and your answers typically need to be more detailed. Selection interviews can come in several forms.

Round-Robin Interview

A round-robin interview is the interview technique most commonly used by our client companies. On-site, you will interview with multiple interviewers one after another. The key to a round-robin interview is giving good consistent answers and keeping your energy level up throughout the entire day. Interviewers will typically meet to discuss your answers and will scrutinize any inconsistencies. It is also very important to ask each interviewer questions, even if previous interviewers have answered them, so that each interviewer feels you are interested and engaged in the conversation.

Panel Interview

A panel interview is an interview that consists of two or more interviewers. Typically, each of the interviewers will ask questions. For a company, the purpose of a panel interview is to gain multiple perspectives on a prospective candidate in a time efficient setting. The key to a panel interview is to keep all interviewers involved, even if one person is directing most of the questions. They may or may not be the key decision maker. Make eye contact with all interviewers even when answering a question for a specific individual.

One-on-one Interview

A one-on-one interview is an interview with a single interviewer. The key to a one-on-one interview is to build rapport with the interviewer. Smile. Be friendly. Try to match your interviewer's energy level. Typically, you will have a short period of time to make an impact. Know the position and the key attributes the company is looking for and emphasize those things.

Stress Interview

A stress interview is designed to test your responses in a stressful environment. An interviewer is going to try to intimidate you. The purpose is to weed out candidates who do not deal well with adversity. The interviewer will make deliberate attempts to see how you handle yourself using methods such as sarcasm, argumentative style questions, or long awkward silences. The key to a stress interview is recognizing that you are in a stress interview. Do not take it personally. Stay calm, focused, and don't allow yourself to be rushed. Ask for clarification if you need it. Know how to push back. Tactfully ask an interviewer for a couple of problems they are facing and propose solutions. Be positive.

Irregular Interviews

Many companies prefer to evaluate a candidate in a non-traditional setting in addition to the standard formal interview. Common irregular interviews may be a lunch interview, dinner interview, field ride / job shadow, and a plant tour. There are a few keys to preparing for these interviews. First, remember that you are always being interviewed, so the same interview fundamentals apply here as they do in a more standard interview format. Next, always be yourself. One of the main purposes of these types of interviews is to get to know the 'real you', so be yourself, but always stay professional. Finally, engage in conversation and ask questions. Since an irregular interview often involves give and take conversation, make sure you are showing your interest in the opportunity by asking intelligent questions. Remember, your Orion Recruiter will be available to help you prepare for these types of interviews.

The Interview

Regardless of the type of interview being conducted, you should go into a prospective interview with a plan. Your plan should be built around the key attributes uncovered during your research that you must communicate to effectively convince the interviewer you are a fit for their position. Each of these attributes should be supported by real examples from your career. It is helpful if you think of the interview as a term paper comprised of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion with your key attributes forming your thesis.

The First 5 Minutes (The Introduction):

Like the introduction to a paper, an introductory portion of an interview is critical. During the first five minutes, you will set the tone for your interview. Make a good first impression. Look sharp and present a professional image. Relax, smile, and remember your plan. Your resume got your foot in the door, now you must effectively show the interviewer why you are a fit for the position. Keep the following tips in mind during the introduction portion of your interview:

- **Be on time** – Show up early and make a good impression. Being late can derail your interview before it starts.
- **Eye contact, firm handshake, and smile** – Company representatives often tell us that they determine people who are not 'fits' for their company within the first 5 minutes of an interview.

Make the best first impression you can - it counts! Make sure your attire is sharp and professional, and make sure your body language reflects the type of image you are trying to project. Be confident and personable. Smile. It will help you relax.

- **Build rapport** – Most professional interviewers will immediately attempt to put you at ease in order to find out who you really are. This should assist you in relaxing, but do not forget your setting. Do not get too comfortable or lose your professional bearing, but keep in mind most interviewers select individuals that, above meeting the basic qualifications for a position, they like personally.
- **Start off strong** – Typically, the first question you are asked is some variation of either “tell me about yourself” or “please walk me through your resume.” Both of these questions allow you to introduce yourself to the interviewer. An ideal answer will tell your story, make an impact, last 2-3 minutes, and be tailored (using your thesis) for that interview. This question will be your first chance to talk about your background and will set a positive tone for the rest of your interview.

The Next 30 Minutes (The Body)

During the body of your interview, the interviewer will ask you a series of questions for approximately 20-30 minutes, depending on the position, that will focus on your qualifications. Some questions are behavioral (looking for specific examples when you demonstrated a particular behavior) others can be company oriented to get a feel of how much you know about the position and industry. Your answers should highlight your qualifications, personality, and interest in the position they are seeking to fill.

You should keep the following question in the back of your mind during the body of your interview: “Why are they asking me this question?” Any question asked is an attempt to see if you are a good match for the position they are interviewing for. Your responses need to be genuine, practiced and tailored to the job. It is important to make an impact here. Keep the following in mind during the body of your interview:

Have a plan.

You must have a plan before you walk in the door and stay on course! Know what a company is looking for and have three points (strengths/attributes) that you need to emphasize that align with what the company is looking for. Rehearse your answers to maintain concise responses and to avoid rambling. Stick to your plan.

Be sincere.

Be confident and genuine. Avoid clichés. Do not attempt to pass generic textbook answers as your own. Back up your answers with specific, detailed examples from your career. The more substance you can lend to a trait or accomplishment, the more believable and interesting you will be to an interviewer.

Show interest and enthusiasm.

This of course isn’t the time to pull out the football game cheers. However, make sure your interest and excitement in the job are apparent. Qualified but disinterested will not get you a second interview. Energy and enthusiasm go a long way. If you are a very even keeled person,

verbalize your interest. Tell them you are excited about the job. Would you prefer to hire someone who came across as disinterested or enthusiastic?

Be specific.

Examples will add depth to your answers and make you stand out. Be as specific as possible. Try to include names, places, and time periods in your answers. Remember, everyone says that they are a leader, a communicator, and a problem-solver. Prove it with examples that illustrate your strengths. Vague answers will not suffice while six-minute monologues will lose your audience's interest. Your best bet is to stick with professional examples in your responses unless they request a personal one.

Stay focused.

In a hiring conference setting, after the fourth interview of the day, it is easy to become a victim to question overload. Maintain your concentration; the interviewer will provide indications of the qualities he/she is seeking. A perceptive candidate often picks up clues from the interviewer and tailors answers accordingly. Also, keep track of what is being said. You don't want to be caught asking a question on material that was already covered.

Pay attention to non-verbal signals.

Facial expressions and body language can significantly aid you in determining how the interview is progressing. If an interviewer appears interested (leaning forward, smiling, etc.) expound and give further detail; if you feel like you are losing them (glassy eyes, yawns, crossed arms), wrap it up and put the ball back in their court.

Listen to the questions being asked.

You want to make sure you are answering the question that was asked, not the question you want to answer. Make sure you listen to the question completely. Pause. Then answer the question. Don't feel like you have to answer as quickly as possible. It is much better to take a second to collect your thoughts and give a good answer than it is to recover from a poor answer that you did not give much thought to.

Focus on the opportunity at hand.

In an attempt to calibrate your focus and motivation, interviewers may present you with different potential opportunities within their company. That opportunity may really exist; however, you do not want to talk yourself out of the original position. Inform the interviewer that the other opportunity sounds interesting, but you really would like to pursue the original position. The same ploy is sometimes used when the subject of compensation or location is brought up. The interviewer is normally testing for hidden motivators or requirements that might eliminate your candidacy for the position.

Interview like it's your top choice.

Always put your best foot forward even if the opportunity is not appealing at first glance. Make the company become interested enough in you to bring you out for a secondary interview. It is very hard to determine a company's culture based off one individual and without a site visit. A job description is not enough information to determine if the company is a fit for you (especially

if you are not familiar with Corporate America as of yet). There may also be hidden opportunities within a company that better suit your qualifications and desires. Keep an open mind about career options.

Focus on your body language.

Ensure you look the interviewer in the eyes, but not to the point of making the interviewer uncomfortable. Think conversation, not inquisition. Be cognizant of your own body language. Sit straight, lean forward, and avoid distracting gestures.

Never interrupt the interviewer.

This isn't your show, so go with the flow. Let the interviewer conduct the session at his pace. Concentrate on getting in sync with them. However, the best interview is a dialogue. Establish rapport with the interviewer, and work on the smooth exchange of information. Continually self-evaluate. How do you sound? Do you think the interviewer is getting a fair evaluation of your talents based on your responses? Are you cocky or meek? Are you still upbeat and smiling?

Keep it positive.

An interview is not a confession. Everything you say should reflect positively upon you and what you will bring to your employer. You must come across as someone the interviewer will want on his team, not someone who needs redemption.

Relax, relax, relax.

Being a little nervous is natural. However, it should not be noticeable to the interviewer. Be confident in your preparation and your attributes. Practice will make you more confident in your answers.

Wrapping It Up (The Conclusion)

You have just completed answering a series of questions focused on your qualifications, now it is time to wrap up the interview. At this point, an interviewer is going to give you the opportunity to ask some questions of your own. You must have questions. Since questions equal interest in the mind of an interviewer, they are a critical component of your interview. Formulate 3-5 well thought out questions that show that you are:

- Well prepared.
- Show genuine interest in the position.
- Set you up for your close.

Keys to Success

- Do not ask questions that should have been answered in your research (company philosophy, products, general competitors). Check with your Orion Account Executive on job related questions (number of people you would supervise, growth potential, career path).
- You have a limited amount of time to ask questions in an interview; focus on those that fit the 3 criteria above.
- Focus on questions that will assist you in your career decision.

- Avoid questions that will raise red flags, or “what’s in it for me” questions (potential benefits, vacation days, salary, etc.). You do not want to create the impression that you are more interested in benefits than in what you can do for the team.
- Ask sincere questions in which you are genuinely interested in the answer.

Closing the Interview

“The Close” is a term used to describe the process of gaining some form of commitment from the prospective customer. In this case, the interviewer is the customer. By paying attention and asking the appropriate questions, you should uncover the employer’s needs. The needs that you are able to satisfy (through the use of your talents) become potential benefits to the employer. Focus on those needs during your close.

The importance of the close is more critical during a sales interview than in any other type of interview. In a sales interview, the interviewer will determine how well you can sell his product based on how well you sell yourself. However, it is important that every potential candidate, regardless of the type of job you are seeking, understands the mechanics of the close. You must be able to convey your desire to work for the interviewer’s company. We recommend that you always close an interview, no matter what type of position you are interviewing for.

By practicing closing techniques, you will feel more natural and comfortable when you “close.” Do not attempt anything in an interview that feels canned or forced. Experiment with different closes and find the one that works best for you. Regardless of your closing technique, a close should consist of three points:

Thank the interviewer for their time.

Be genuine. “Thanks for taking the time to interview me today.”

Sell yourself.

How hard you sell the interviewer is up to you, but at a minimum, you should tell the interviewer that you believe you are a strong fit for the position and list a couple of qualities that you think are particularly strong: “I think I am a very strong fit for this position. You are looking for a strong leader and communicator, and those are two of my strengths.”

Ask for what you want.

After a first interview, you should ask to go on-site and meet the rest of their team. After a final interview, you should ask for an offer. “I am really looking forward to going on-site and meeting the rest of your team. When can we set that up?” or “I am looking forward to receiving an offer.”

A great interview is not complete without a good close. Make sure the company knows you are interested as you are leaving the interview. Do not leave the company wondering if you are interested.

Most Common Mistakes

Over the years, we have noted some common mistakes that others have made that can hurt you in the interview process. Remember it is not always the most qualified person who gets the offer; rather, it is often the person who has the best interview. Make sure to avoid the following mistakes.

Lack of enthusiasm.

You must show energy and enthusiasm if you want to be seriously considered for any opportunity. If a company does not see your desire or enthusiasm for a position during an interview, you will not likely be considered further for the position.

Vague answers.

A strong answer is supported by a detailed example. If you do not provide an example or the examples you provide in support of your answers are weak or vague, your answers will not make the impact you need to land the position. An experienced interviewer will typically interpret your lack of solid examples as inadequate professional experience and disqualify you for the position.

Inadequate personality.

Would you hire someone who demonstrated a poor attitude, lack of poise, lack of self-confidence, acted timid, or couldn't complete his or her thoughts? You must come across as a confident, personable individual to make a positive impact on an interviewer.

Lack of goals and objectives.

Companies hire former military officers because they are focused and goal oriented. Know what you want going into an interview. A company will not hire a poorly motivated individual or someone who does not know what he or she wants, acts indecisive, or someone who is not goal oriented.

Lack of interest.

A company simply will not hire someone who shows a lack of interest in the company or someone who is not interested in the type of work offered. Focus on getting your foot in the door. Learn the business and get promoted. Focus on the long-term career opportunities the company offers. Companies typically do not offer executive level positions to individuals without operational experience in their company or industry.

Poor communication skills.

You have to do some self-analysis. Research yourself. Practice interview questions. If you don't practice, you won't be able to communicate as effectively as you will need to in an interview setting. Poor communication or presentation skills typically result from a lack of preparation.

Unrealistic salary demands.

Be realistic. Get your foot in the door and work your way up. The most successful candidates are the candidates that focus on the opportunity and long term growth potential a company offers versus compensation.

Poor personal appearance.

Appearance in an interview is critically important. Dress like a professional. Treat this interview as if you are going to meet your commanding officer for the first time. A poor appearance can doom an interview from the start.

Failure to research the company.

If you cannot tell an interviewer why you are interested in the company or provide some basic information that shows you have done some research, most interviewers will interpret your lack of preparation as a lack of interest. Be a professional and take your job search seriously. Research the company in advance of your interview.

Geographically fixed.

The reality of the job market is that the more flexible you are geographically, the more opportunities you will be able to see. Think hard about what you are open to. Everybody has drivers that influence their search, but don't restrict yourself to the point that you have to settle for a position you are not happy with.

Not asking questions.

Not asking questions is perceived as not being interested. Even with the 5th interviewer of the day, ask them something. Find out what they see as the biggest challenges in the role or ask about what they like about the company. Ask something. Don't say that everyone else answered all your questions.

Failure to close the interview.

Don't let the interviewer wonder if you are interested. Thank them for their time and reiterate your interest again at a minimum. In a sales interview be sure to ask for the next step or for the offer.

Developing Your Plan

Now that you have an overview of the types of interviews and their typical structure, you can start developing your interview plan. The first place to begin is researching yourself and your career experiences and organizing them. The next step is to take those experiences and expand them using the STAR format. Once you understand the simple structure of the STAR format, you must begin expanding your examples / stories by writing them down. The final step is to prepare by verbalizing these answers. Once you have taken those steps, you should be prepared to interview effectively. The work pages in this next section will help you start to get organized.

Section 4

Researching Your Background

Section 4 – Researching Your Background

As mentioned in Section 3, to begin your interview preparation you must research yourself. In this section, we will help you prepare for some common interview questions, will cover the STAR format, and will provide space to begin writing down your best examples from your military career. We will only be jotting down the key words to remind you of these stories and will associate them to common interview topics. We strongly recommend that you write out your interview answers in order to think through them fully. This should be done outside of this workbook format.

The purpose behind having specific examples prepared is that it allows you to be able to effectively communicate your best selling points and career achievements, regardless of the question that is asked. Having a repertoire of solid stories is one of the greatest resources that you can have as you prepare for interviews, because instead of just giving your theory behind a topic, you can show how you have put those thoughts into practice in real world experiences. Good examples will also help differentiate you and your potential competition.

Identifying Your Examples

Many candidates prepare for interviews by focusing on a list of interview questions and working to develop an answer for each of them. This can be helpful, and we will provide dozens of sample questions to work on, but we strongly suggest that you focus on your background first. What are your best stories? If you know your background well and focus on what interview topics your best experiences associate to, you can put yourself in a position to answer any question.

We have provided the table below to assist in jotting down key words that represent examples from your career, linking them to common interview topics. These topics are not all encompassing, but cover enough of the interview spectrum to start the self-research process. Note that you can use the same example more than once, but be careful not to over use the example in an interview. A potential employer may see that as a lack of professional experience. If it is a great story that highlights your key attributes and skills, you want to ensure that it is presented in the interview wherever possible. This allows you to control your message.

An example of a completed worksheet is below:

Leadership 1. <u>OIF Deployment</u> 2. <u>FSMAO Inspection</u>	Strengths 1. <u>Attention to Detail – 271 FEX</u> 2. <u>Problem Solving – ATLASS II</u>	Significant Achievements 1. <u>FSMAO Inspection</u> 2. <u>Navy Commendation Medal</u>
Goals 1. <u>Transition</u> 2. <u>Growth - Education</u>	Improving Performance 1. <u>Limited Duty %</u> 2. <u>LCpl Paylor</u>	Process Improvement 1. <u>ATLASS II</u> 2. <u>PPC Import</u>

The Orion Team suggests that you use your resume, evaluations, awards, certifications and any other background documentation to assist you in identifying your key experiences and selling points. Fill out the background worksheet on the next page, and then we will dive into the STAR format and developing your examples.

<p>Leadership</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>	<p>Significant Achievements</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>
<p>Goals</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>	<p>Improving Performance</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>	<p>Problem Solving</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>
<p>Process Improvement</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>	<p>Weakness</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p>	<p>Failure</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p>
<p>Conflict - Senior</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p>	<p>Conflict – Peer / Junior</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p>	<p>Sold an Idea / Influenced Others</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p>

Tell Me About Yourself

One of the more predictable yet important questions you can prepare for is “Tell me about yourself.” It is important because it will set the tone for your interview and predictable because most employers will ask this question, or a similarly phrased question, in an effort to assess your ability to effectively communicate your background and experience. Because this is one of the first questions asked in an interview, you should develop an impactful answer. An effective answer will highlight your skills and strengths and give an employer an insight into your decision making processes. The best answer to this question will also be tailored for that employer and touch upon specific strengths and experiences which are particularly relevant to the position you are seeking. You will want to have a transitional statement to close your answer, letting them know why you are transitioning from the service or your current role (always be positive) and what you are looking for in your next career. You must be enthusiastic and confident in your answer.

The best answers for this question are well rehearsed. Spend some time to build a good outline of the key points and practice your answer. Saying an answer out loud is particularly effective. Done well, this question can really get an interview off to a great start! The manager should be excited that what you just told them really demonstrates you could be a great fit for the job.

The STAR Format

When developing examples from your career that will highlight the skills, traits and experiences that are commonly explored in interviews, you must utilize the STAR format to help you frame your answer effectively. The STAR Format is:

Situation

The situation is the background story to the example that you are about to provide. Where were you? Who were you with? At what point in your career did this example occur? Paint a solid picture for the interviewer so they can relate to the rest of your story.

Task.

The task can be referred to in several ways. The mission you were assigned. The problem that you had to solve. The challenge that you were facing. You need to make it clear to the interviewer what task you were working to complete.

Actions

The Actions are the steps that you took to accomplish the task, or solve the problem that you described above. Be specific! Make it clear to the interviewer what YOU did. You cannot speak in generalities here, because the interviewer will not understand the depth of your experience and thus will not be able to evaluate you effectively.

Results

You seal a solid STAR format interview response with quantifiable results. Were your actions successful in accomplishing the Task? How successful? Can you provide numbers that prove the level of your success? These are key steps to consider.

The STAR format is an extremely useful tool intended to ensure that you can communicate your background clearly for the interviewer. We are not looking to provide the content of your interview answer, but rather to ensure that the experiences that you have are articulated clearly, allowing the interviewer to effectively evaluate your experience and skill sets against the position.

Keys to Success

When considering what examples that you want to use as you start laying out your experiences, consider the following pointers:

- Focus on developing your best STAR format examples, regardless of interview question / topic. Your best examples will be impactful, and typically will relate to several common interview topics. Find your best examples first, and see what interview topics they match up with.
- Avoid examples that do not translate well to civilian careers, such as targeting or eliminating insurgents. While you can be proud of your military accomplishments and there is no doubt that the planning and leadership that you used to achieve these tasks is relevant, the shock value of such statements may concern the interviewer. Soften the terminology and translate the experience to fit for the general population.
- Focus on what you specifically did in your career. As military officers, we often push recognition down to our team. That is a quality that translates into the private sector, but the employer in the interview is looking to hire you, not your platoon or section. They want to know what you specifically did to accomplish your tasks and achieve results.

Interview Preparation Webinars

The Orion web page contains numerous resources to help you go into more depth on these topics, but it is often best learned through discussion. Therefore, we recommend that you sign up for one of our interview prep webinars via the following web address:

<http://www.orioninternational.com/military-officer-transition-program/webinar-interview-prep.aspx>

Developing Your Examples

The worksheets on the following pages will help you expand your experiences, annotated earlier in this section, utilizing the STAR format. Pay special attention to the Actions that you took to accomplish your Results. These are key areas to an effective interview. Note that we have only included one form for each topic. Utilize your own worksheets for additional examples.

Once you have sketched out your STAR format for these key examples, write out these stories in a narrative format, and then practice out loud. Verbalizing your answers will ensure a well-rounded, detailed story that can be adjusted to fit the question asked.

Our next section will expand on specific questions that are often asked in the interview process. Once you have a solid understanding of what makes a good interview response, write out your answers in detail and then practice them out loud!

Tell Me About Yourself Examples

- 2 – 3 minute overview of your skills
- Key Selling Points
- Solid Transitions
- Why are you here today?

Starting Point:

Highlight 1:

Highlight 2:

Highlight 3:

Highlight 4:

Current Situation:

Why are you looking?

Leadership Examples

Provide 3-4 examples of a time that:

- You were in charge of a task or group.
- Required you to overcome an obstacle.
- Demonstrates your leadership style or philosophy.
- Details a significant leadership accomplishment.

Example:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Strengths

Prepare 3-4 Examples

- What are your strengths and how have you used them in your career?
- Demonstrate how your strengths were effective with an example.
- Relate to the position.

Strength:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Significant Achievement

Prepare 3-4 Examples

- Occurred over an extended period of time.
- Demonstrates your ability to learn new skills and use resources effectively.
- Is NOT something that numerous other applicants have done (graduating, getting married, etc.)

Achievement:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Weakness

Prepare 2 Examples

- An ongoing challenge you have worked to overcome (through training, planning, controls, etc.)
- The Actions are the steps you took to improve upon your weakness.

Weakness:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Failure

Prepare 2 Examples of a time you have failed.

- Not mission critical or with severe consequences
- Own up to it
- What did you learn from the situation? How have you used the lessons learned to be successful since?

Failure:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Problem Solving

Prepare 2-3 Examples

- Set the stage and clearly define the problem
- Focus on what *you* did, even if part of a team – explain your thought process within the problem
- What was the result of solving the problem?

Problem:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Process Improvement

Prepare 2-3 Examples

- Examples where you recognized an inefficiency
- Systems that you created or actions that you took to improve this inefficiency
- Is the new process still being used? Do you have a measure of effectiveness?

Process:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Dealing with Conflict with a Supervisor

Prepare 2 Examples

- Do not speak negatively. Focus on people skills.
- What did you learn from the situation? Did you still accomplish the mission?

Conflict:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Dealing with Conflict with a Peer or between Subordinates

Prepare 2 Examples

- Do not speak negatively. Focus on people skills.
- When / How did you deal with it?
- What did you learn from the situation?

Conflict:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Improving a Team/Person's Performance

Prepare 2 Examples

- Do not criticize or talk down. Focus on your people skills.
- Quantify if possible to show performance before and after your actions.

Poor Performer:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Sold an Idea / Influenced Others

Prepare at least 2 Examples

- Helps sales focused candidates bridge the gap from the military to a sales role.
- Try to show your understanding of the sales process in your answer. Show that you first sought to understand the problem and what the decision maker wanted or needed and then developed a solution to meet those needs. Explain the benefits your solution delivered.

Sold Idea:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Section 5

Detailed Interview Preparation

Section 5 – Detailed Interview Preparation

Expanding Your Examples

Now that you have gained an introduction to interviewing and have started sketching out your best career examples, you must now go into further depth to ensure that your experiences are answering the question asked by an interviewer. This section will help you focus on the most common questions and provide key considerations when answering these questions.

It is essential that you remember the STAR format when developing your examples. We also encourage you to review the Interview Preparation Library on our website as you start to work on these answers. Contact your recruiter for information on how to access this portion of the website. Each of the questions below has a pre-recorded webinar that will walk you through the keys to remember and the common mistakes to avoid.

Remember, write out your answers and then practice out loud!

Management Interview Preparation

The purpose of a management interview is to assess your overall fitness for a management position within a given organization. A management interview will focus primarily on your leadership skills and experience, but an interviewer will also typically ask questions about your background, qualifications, and communication skills. An interviewer will also want to explore how you have dealt with conflict in the past.

The key to a successful management interview is to focus on the examples in your past that will support your answers. Specific examples (with names and places) add depth and meaning to your answers. Giving an answer on philosophy alone will not work in a management interview.

Keys to Success

Focus On Leadership

You are interviewing for a management position, so you must emphasize your leadership skills and provide examples throughout your interview that show you are a strong leader. Focus on jobs where you held the most responsibility. Also, remember to talk about your soft skills.

Understand What The Company Needs

Every company is looking for something different. Research the company, talk to the Orion Account Executive and your Orion Recruiter, and analyze the job summary to identify the three key attributes a company needs from a candidate in this position.

Learn Manufacturing Concepts

Most industries use process improvement methodologies, but manufacturing relies on them. Familiarize yourself with terms such as 5S, Lean Six Sigma, the Theory of Constraints, Kaizen, and others. You do not have to have experience with these systems, but you must be able to articulate a basic understanding and a willingness to learn. Lean Manufacturing refers to finding efficiencies and improving quality. Look closely at your own military experiences and try, where possible, to relate any of your own process improvement examples to the interviewer.

Tailor Your Strengths

Tailor your strengths to the company's needs. As a successful military leader, you have a number of strengths. Emphasize the strengths that match up with that company's needs throughout your interview.

Examples, Examples, Examples

You must support your answers with specific examples. Those examples will add depth to your answers and make an impact on the interviewer.

Energy and Enthusiasm

Show the interviewer that you want the job. Would you hire someone who seemed disinterested? An interviewer won't either. You must convince an interviewer that you are excited about the company and the job in order to land the position.

Ask Good Questions

Questions equal interest to an interviewer. Ask well thought out questions about the culture, training, employees, and company that demonstrate a genuine interest in the company. Good questions can help build rapport with an interviewer.

Close the Interview

Don't overlook the close. Make sure the interviewer knows you want the job by closing the interview.

Sample Management Questions

The list of sample management questions below is by no means comprehensive, but it should serve as a good starting point when preparing for a management interview. Practice these questions until you can comfortably verbalize your answers. The more preparation you do prior to your interview, the better you will perform in your interview.

Some of the most common interview questions are listed below. We have included tips or sample answers to give you a good idea of what you should discuss. You should personalize your answers with specific examples from your past to avoid sounding over-coached and disingenuous. Your ability to personalize your answers and give specific examples in support of those answers will differentiate you

from other candidates who may be competing for the same position, so the key now is to develop these answers further. Write them out and practice them out loud.

Remember three things when you practice questions for a management interview and you will be successful:

- (1) Avoid clichéd answers.
- (2) Give solid, STAR format examples.
- (3) Focus on your leadership skills.

Tell me about yourself.

Keep it to 2-3 minutes, and focus on the highlights of your career. Use good transitions. Think of this question as an opportunity to tell your story. Be confident and make an impact.

Why are you leaving the military?

Be positive. A response to this question may sound like “I’ve achieved my goal of gaining some immediate leadership experience and I am looking for a new challenge” OR “I like the idea of taking my leadership experience to the corporate world to better my own quality of life.”

What are your strengths?

Tailor your answers to the job you are interviewing for: For management positions, focus primarily on leadership, mission focus, communication and planning skills. Always provide an example of how you have used this strength.

What are your weaknesses?

Keep this answer to one weakness and ideally something not critical to the job you are interviewing for. Your answer should be genuine, something that you have identified and are actively working to overcome. Be prepared to discuss how you plan to improve on this weakness.

Tell me about a time you have failed.

Everybody has failed. Do not say “I’ve never failed.” Focus on a specific event that shows how you have learned from that mistake and have grown professionally as a result. Use specific names and places.

What is your biggest professional achievement?

An ideal answer should be a professional achievement that is significant, makes an impact, and somehow relates to the job you are interviewing for (i.e. shows significant leadership under stressful conditions like combat).

Which job did you like best in the military and why?

Tailor your answer. If you are interviewing for a management position, focus on the job where you held the most responsibility and was the most leadership intensive. An interviewer wants to know that the

job you liked best is similar to the position you are interviewing for. Make sure you highlight the skills that you learned in the past and how they translate to a career in the civilian workforce.

What is your leadership style?

You must overcome the military stigma. Show them you are a strong leader, but have a flexible leadership style and great communication skills. Companies want a mature decision maker who is able to motivate a team of diverse individuals.

Give me an example of dealing with conflict.

Be specific. Focus on an actual event where you dealt with conflict in a workplace. An ideal example will show your ability to mediate a hostile situation and maintain a positive work environment. Your ability to provide a good example will show the interviewer how you will react at their company, so make sure are you sending the right message.

Are you open to shift work?

Many management positions occur in a shift work environment, such as a distribution center or a manufacturing facility. The flexible candidate, open to shift work, will typically take the lead in the interview process for these roles. Remember, off shift work is not expected to last forever, as often folks move to the day shift with career progression.

What are your long and short term goals?

Companies hire military officers because they are goal driven individuals. Define short and long term, and then state your goals. They should be professional and related to the company as best as possible. A good example of a short term goal would be to come on board, learn quickly and make an impact and demonstrate your ability to take on more responsibility. In the long term, you can look to continually learn, be challenged and keep building the value you bring to your organization so you can be selected for increasing roles of responsibility.

Additional Management Interview Questions

The following questions are examples of more complicated questions that may be asked in the interview. Utilizing your best examples developed previously, you should be able to adjust the presentation of your experiences to answer these just as effectively.

- What date are you ready to start your new career?
- Why are you interested in management?
- Why did you join the military?
- What are your location preferences?
- Have you interviewed with any companies in the past 6 months? If so, which ones and for what locations?
- Do you currently have any other offers? If so, which companies and for what salary?
- Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?

- Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?
- Name three of your strengths.
- Name three of your weaknesses.
- How do you deal with stress?
- Are you open to shift work?
- Are you open to working overtime?
- How many days in a month are you willing to travel?
- What is a long day to you?
- How many hours a week are you open to working?
- Tell me about a project you led from start to finish.
- Have you ever had a mentor? If so, what did he or she do for you?
- What was the last book that you read and why?
- What was the last movie you watched and why?
- Describe a time that you...
 - Took a risk
 - Led a team through a challenging situation
- How would you characterize your leadership style?
- Describe a time when you had to deal with a poor performer.
- How do you deal with conflict?
- Who is your favorite leader and why? How did they handle conflict?
- How do you motivate people?
- If you had to give me a 5K “window”, what would your annual salary expectations be?
- Why should I hire you?
- What do you know about our company?
- What makes you qualified for this position?

Reading

Operations Management is undoubtedly the largest career field of choice for transitioning military officers and will remain so for the foreseeable future. If your goal is to enter the private sector in a production/operations management position, the books on our reading list will be extremely helpful. Your leadership experience is a very valuable asset. Companies will be looking for sound leadership principals and the ability to learn quickly and adapt. Reading a couple of the books on the reading list will allow you to combine your practical leadership experience with supplemental information on the industry that can provide you the edge you need in an interview. We recommend selecting at least one book from each section in addition to a book or two on interviewing. You will notice the reading list also contains a section of sales books. Even if you are focused on operations, management or an engineering position, you should read at least one sales book. Until you get “the offer”, you are in the business of selling yourself, so learn how to do it.

Please refer to the end of this section for a comprehensive reading list.

Engineering Interview Preparation

The purpose of an engineering interview is to assess your overall fitness for an engineering position within a given organization. An engineering interview will focus primarily on your technical background and experience, but an interviewer will also ask questions about your leadership experiences, soft skills, and communication skills.

The key to a successful engineering interview is to focus on the examples in your past that will support your answers. Specific examples (with names and places) add depth and meaning to your answers.

Keys to Success

Focus On Your Technical Expertise

You are interviewing for an engineering position, so you must emphasize your technical expertise and provide examples throughout your interview that show you have these essential skills. Focus on experiences where you held the most technical responsibility.

Understand What The Company Needs

Every company is looking for something different. Research the company, talk to the Orion Account Executive and your Orion Recruiter, and analyze the job summary to identify the three key attributes a company needs from a candidate in this position.

Tailor Your Strengths

Tailor your strengths to the company's needs. As a successful military leader, you have a number of strengths. Emphasize the strengths that match up with that company's needs throughout your interview and always support with an example.

Technical Examples

You must support your answers with specific examples. Have examples that highlight your technical skills. Those examples will add depth to your answers and make an impact on the interviewer.

Energy and Enthusiasm

Show the interviewer that you want the job. Would you hire someone who seemed disinterested? An interviewer won't either. You must convince an interviewer that you are excited about the company and the job in order to land the position.

Discuss your Adaptability

Express to the interviewer that you are able to learn quickly and be adaptable.

Brush up on your given technical field

Take some time to go back and review some of the basic concepts and theories from your technical discipline, especially if you are more than a year removed from using it on a daily basis

Ask Good Questions

Questions equal interest to an interviewer. Ask well thought out questions about the culture, training, employees, and company that demonstrate a genuine interest in the company. Good questions can help build rapport with an interviewer.

Close The Interview

Do not overlook the close. Make sure the interviewer knows you want the job by closing the interview.

Sample Engineering Questions

The list of sample engineering questions below is by no means comprehensive, but it should serve as a good starting point when preparing for an engineering interview. Practice these questions until you can comfortably verbalize your answers. The more preparation you do prior to your interview, the better you will perform in your interview.

Some of the most common interview questions are listed below. Also refer to the questions listed under “Sample Management Questions” as many of the same questions asked during an operations/management interview are relevant to an engineering interview. You need to personalize your answers with specific examples from your past to avoid sounding over-coached and disingenuous.

Why are you interested in an engineering role?

This question is often asked of candidates that may be light on their engineering experience, or that have a technical role in the military but lack an engineering degree. Make it clear to the interviewer where your technical interest comes from (hobbies, goals, etc) and utilize specific career examples that show your technical aptitude, such as discussing your favorite technical billet and how you succeeded.

What engineering experience do you have?

Many military MOS's have a technical background, from artillery to aviation, along with many others. This may not always be clear to the nonmilitary interviewer. Take the time to explain your career field and highlight examples that show strong engineering / technical methodologies. Sell the interviewer that you have the interest AND the aptitude based off of your past experiences.

How did you apply your engineering skillset in your last position?

The military moves you around, so you may not be in your career field when you transition. Bridge the gap for the interviewer to make it clear that you had to use the same analytical principles in each billet, and reinforce that through your results by using these processes.

What special technical qualifications do you possess?

We receive great training in the military, but not all of our schools are clear to the civilian employer. Highlight the training that you have received, focusing on the technical aspects and relating that to the position.

Reading

Engineering is the most in-demand career field for transitioning military officers with a technical degree and/or background. Companies will be looking for solid experience and the ability to learn quickly and adapt. We recommend selecting at least one book from each section of our ready list to ensure that you have a well-rounded skillset and perspective. You will notice the reading list also contains a section of sales books. Even if you are focused on an engineering position, you should read at least one sales book. Until you get “the offer,” you are in the business of selling yourself, so learn how to do it.

Please refer to the end of this section for a comprehensive reading list.

Sales Interview Preparation

In general, sales is a critical component of any corporation. Without an aggressive, self-motivated, professional sales force promoting a product, there would be no reason to have a manufacturing facility or logistics infrastructure. As a sales representative for a given company, you begin the actual business cycle between customer and vendor. While a sales career is significantly different than a management career, you will find both sales and management interviewers are looking for the best talent for their companies. However, a career in sales typically involves working in a more dynamic and less structured environment than a career in management. Therefore, candidates interested in sales must be able to deal with change and think well on their feet.

Your goal in sales is to gain access to potential clients and artfully influence them to commit to buying your products. Accomplishing that goal is the key to your professional success as a sales person and how you will ultimately be evaluated. Sales is a performance oriented career where your success is measured and evaluated as it relates to the corporate bottom line. Nowhere in business will you find more readily identifiable goals than in sales. Every action and effort in sales must have a purpose, and that purpose is measured in dollars.

Sales is a very autonomous career. You may work for a company as part of a sales team, but getting the job done on a daily basis is strictly up to you. Research, client calls, scheduling, presentations, follow-up, and closing a deal are ultimately driven by you alone. An individual’s success in sales is primarily defined by his or her personality, drive, ability to influence people, and time management skills.

As you move through the interview process for sales, remember that the companies are looking for the next generation of professionals to grow their business. They need superior talent and are willing to search long and hard to find the right “fit”. During an interview, you must convince the interviewer that you have a record of performance and success, outstanding drive and motivation, the ability to work autonomously, that you are goal focused, are a problem solver, are intelligent and creative, possess strong presentation skills, and are a very competitive individual. If you can prove that you possess these attributes, you will be successful.

How to Prepare

Before you enter a sales interview, you must do four things:

- (1) Research yourself
- (2) Research the company
- (3) Develop a plan for your interview
- (4) Create a brag book

Research Yourself

Self-analysis is a critical component of sales interview preparation, your resume and military evaluation reports are good resources for this portion of your preparation. You must know your resume and be able to talk about your entire career from college to present. It is critical that you have specific examples that add depth to your answers. Ensure you are prepared to talk about the following topics (all are key attributes companies are looking for in a successful salesperson) and have examples that support each:

- Selling and influencing a situation (This is the key question because you may not have previous sales experience. You need to have examples of times you did “sell”)
- Leadership
- Performance oriented mindset
- Demonstrated, quantifiable successes
- Drive and motivation
- Autonomous decision-making
- Goal focused problem solving
- Intelligence and the ability to learn
- Creativity and innovation
- Rapport building skills and the desire to work with people
- Aggressiveness and competitiveness
- The desire to win
- Integrity and ethics
- Persistence and dedication
- Time management

Self-analysis exercise

An easy way to perform a self-analysis is to start with your resume and a sheet like the one in Section 4. Divide it into the following four sections: (1) Accomplishments and Strengths, (2) Failures and Weaknesses, (3) Selling Change, and (4) Hobbies and Drivers.

- In section one, look at each job on your resume, and list as many successful accomplishments as you can for each position. For each accomplishment, list the personal attributes (strengths) that

made you successful. A single word or short sentence is sufficient. This will help you identify all of your accomplishments and strengths.

- In section two, look at your resume and identify where you have failed. It is probably not listed there in black and white, but we all have failed somewhere. A failure does not have to be catastrophic. It just needs to be something where you didn't achieve a 100% success. It must, however, be significant and something that you grew from professionally. List the failure and the personal attribute or shortcoming (weakness) that was the root cause. Also identify the professional lesson you learned as a result of that failure.
- In section three, look at your resume and identify any positions where you had to implement change and present (sell) your idea. Next to that, list any objections that were raised during your presentation and how you overcame those objections. Identifying specific examples where you presented something and then overcame objections/resistance is critical to success in a sales interview.
- In section four, list what you like to do in your spare time. What are your hobbies? Then list things you want to do in the future (trips, investments, family goals, etc.) and why you want to do them. This list will help you identify what you enjoy doing, the drivers in your career search, and personal goals.

Research the Company

Researching a company prior to your interview is critical. Most of the information you need for interview preparation can be found on the corporate website. Professional journals, Google, Fortune Magazine, and the Wall Street Journal can also be excellent resources. At a minimum, companies expect you to have visited the website and know some basic information about the company. When possible, meet with a local sales representative and ask them questions about the position and industry that can help you in an interview, or meet with businesses that buy the company's products to gain their insight. When researching a company prior to your interview, make sure you are familiar with the following information:

- Corporate Structure (headquarters location, size, divisions, international or domestic, public or private)
- Product lines and services
- Products under research & development
- Top competitors
- Trends pertinent to the company and industry

Develop a Plan

Once you have researched a company and done some self-analysis, you must develop a plan for your interview. Using your company research, identify three key attributes that you must convey to an interviewer to land the job. Think of these attributes as the theme for your interview. Using your personal research, match your strengths with those key attributes and identify specific examples to support your answers. Do not go into a sales interview without a good plan.

Develop a Brag Book

Most sales companies will require you to sell to your client using some sort of literature. A brag book shows an interviewer that you have initiative by developing the document and that you are able to sell to that literature. A brag book should be either bounded professionally or you should use a professional portfolio and it should contain the following:

- Cover Page
- Your resume
- Your evaluation reports
- College Transcripts (unofficial copy is acceptable)
- Awards
- Articles where your achievements were noted (newspaper or other publications)
- Any other documents showing your track record of performance, success, drive, etc.
- Sales figures (if you have previous sales experience)
- A printout from the DMV webpage (to show your clean driving record)
- A list of references, including email address and phone number

Each section should be neatly tabbed and one or two significant pieces of information on each page contained in your brag book should be highlighted for quick reference. You should normally provide a copy of your brag book to your interviewer as a courtesy while using your own during the interview for reference. For more information on how to use your brag book, please contact your Orion Recruiter.

The Sales Interview

Interviewing for sales is typically a multi-step process involving anywhere between two to six interviews. Some companies require a sales candidate to conduct a field ride as part of the interview process. A field ride is an interview that allows you to shadow a sales representative during a typical day.

Always arrive early to the interview location because being late to an interview simply says you will be late to sales calls. The setting is usually professional, but comfortable. The interviewer is interested in setting a scene where he can get to know you. This may take place in a formal setting such as on-site at the company or in an informal setting such as an airport business center or hotel lobby. Do not let the setting influence you. Remember, sales is a social as well as a professional career. Flexibility and adaptability are as important to sales as the close.

Relax prior to the interview and be prepared to answer the questions. Have a plan. Look sharp and make a good impression; sales is about your presentation skills and your appearance is a key component of that skill set. The tone of the interview is often conversational with the most successful candidates being the individuals who can professionally and smoothly engage the interviewer in a dialogue about themselves and the company. Building rapport is key. Keep in mind that you are being evaluated the entire time, from the time you knock at the door until you exit.

Sample Sales Questions

Success in professional sales interviews hinges on your ability to communicate effectively using specific examples. Questions typically focus on three areas: your personal attributes, your professional experience, and your knowledge of the company and sales. The list of questions below is by no means comprehensive, but should be a good starting point for you as you prepare for a sales interview. Practice these questions until you are comfortable verbalizing them. If you are asked something you weren't prepared for, be flexible and think on your feet!

Why are you interested in sales?

Focus on your competitive nature and intrinsic motivation under challenging conditions. Make clear that you want to contribute to the success of the business by impacting the bottom line. Express how you thrive in an environment where you can be directly rewarded for your performance.

What have you done to prepare for a sales position?

You want to express how you have taken the initiative to lay the groundwork for a sales career. Mention any of the sales books you have read, discuss what you learned on a ride-along (field ride), and explain what type of product research you have conducted. Companies want to see that you have taken the initiative to prepare for a new career and have a true interest in their company.

Describe a time you sold an idea to another individual.

Be prepared to make a connection between your military experience and a possible sales situation. Ideally, select an answer where you had to sell either your supervisor or your peers on a plan or course of action. Clearly articulate the steps you took to present the idea, follow up with the result, and how your idea was implemented.

How competitive are you?

Start out by stating you are very competitive and transition into your examples. Have several concrete examples to support your statement and use numbers and facts to compare yourself with others to express your competitive nature. Convey that you have a history of setting high goals for yourself and how you attain them with purpose.

When was the last time you faced resistance and what did you do to overcome it?

Ensure that you have a recent example (within the past 2 years) that demonstrates how you were able to overcome adversity. Make sure you show how you were able to persevere and accomplish your goal. Lay out the situation, walk through the task you were trying to accomplish, express the specific actions you took to overcome the resistance, and the final result.

Sell me this Pen.

This question can be asked with any product, but the pen is the most common. The key is to show the interviewer that you understand the basics of sales. Do not begin describing the pen's features and qualities. Ask the interviewer questions about what he or she is looking for in a pen. What type, size, quantity? Qualify the interviewer's needs, and then present the features of your pen that fit the "client's" need. Remember to close them and ask them for the sale!

Closing is Imperative.

In a sales interview, you must be prepared to "close" the interview. Anyone in sales knows that they have to ask for the order or try to gain some commitment from their client in order to move the process forward. You could have a great interview, but if you do not try to close it, the sales manager is going to notice and begin to question whether you will be able to close once you are hired. You can lead into your close naturally by asking questions. Ask or confirm what the next step is in the hiring process. You can also ask if the manager sees you as a good fit for the role or if there is anything about your background they have any questions about. If they think you are a good fit, then you can confirm your interest in the opportunity and ask if you can schedule the next interview now. If they have any objections, you still have a chance to overcome them.

Additional Sales Questions

Personal Attributes

- Describe a situation in life where your request / demand was rejected. How did it feel? What did you do?
- Describe an experience in which you felt you gained something because you persisted long enough and saw it through to success.
- To what or whom do you compare yourself?
- What is the one thing that really motivates you?
- I am... (Fill in the blank with traits)
- How do you feel when you lose?
- What are your three greatest weaknesses?
- What are your three greatest strengths?
- What has been your greatest disappointment?

- Describe a time that you have...
 - Demonstrated creativity
 - Took initiative
 - Worked without a lot of direction
 - Sold an idea to another individual (discuss how you convinced that other individual)
 - Set a goal for yourself and the steps you took to achieve it
- In 60 seconds list as many descriptors of yourself as possible.
- What do you do in your spare time?
- Define stress. How do you relieve stress?
- Define pressure. How do you relieve pressure? Is pressure different from stress?
- How do you impact your family, your friends, your associates?
- Do you prefer to work alone or with others? Why? (Measures Ego & Drive)
- Would you prefer to follow the rules or make the rules? (Measures Ego & Drive)
- What has been the toughest decision you ever had to make?
- Have you ever been aggressive to the point where you pushed someone too far?

Professional Experience

- What is the most difficult aspect of your current position?
- Why have you been successful in the past?
- Under what conditions do you work best?
- What do you consider your most significant achievement?
- What is the most stressful situation you have encountered in your current position? How did you handle it?
- How are you measured where you work? How do you work with your peers?
- Explain how your boss would describe you.
- What are the two toughest decisions you have had to make? Which was the best decision? Which was the worst?
- What are some of the additional responsibilities you have taken on recently that are not in your job description?
- What is the most striking fact about your present company?
- Do you see yourself in your current job 6 months from now?
- What has been the biggest disappointment in your professional career(s) to date?
- What was the most important thing you learned from your last job?

Sales Knowledge

- Why Sales?
- Why should I hire you over an individual with sales experience?
- Do you like to control the conversation in selling?

- When was the last time you faced resistance and what did you do?
- What have you done to prepare yourself for pharmaceutical / medical equipment selling?
- What are the top two attributes you bring to the company?
- If your sales were published to the sales force, would you like them published: Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Annually?
- What are your goals for the month of _____?
- When do you decide what you will do each day? How do you do it? How do you track it? Show me tomorrow.
- Tell me the last self-improvement book you read or tape you listened to?
- Tell me the last Sales book you read or tape you listened to?
- Tell me about my company and pharmaceutical Sales. (You must cover: Company, Product Line, Typical Sales Day, R&D efforts)
- How do you continue to improve your skill level? In what continuing education or personal activities do you participate?
- How do you go about understanding and learning technical information quickly? What methods do you use?
- How long did it take you to become familiar with the technical information needed to sell your current product or services? What methods did you use? How might you improve your learning?
- What methods do you use to keep informed of what is going on in your area of responsibility? What are their benefits? Why do these methods work for you?
- What methods of learning (reading, audiovisual, computer/CBT, classroom, etc.) do you find most productive for you? What methods do you least prefer? How do you adapt to different learning situations?
- What ongoing systems or habits have you established to get information on a regular basis? Describe some results of these systems or habits.
- What sources of information do you use to keep up with what is going on in the organization? How do you use this information?

Reading

For a sales interview, it is particularly important that you read as much as possible prior to interviewing. Most transitioning officers have no prior sales experience, so you must make up for your lack of experience with knowledge of the industry. Interviewers can tell a well prepared candidate from a poorly prepared one. A well prepared candidate can demonstrate good overall understanding of the industry. Select two or more of the books on the comprehensive reading list as a good starting point for your career in sales. *Please refer to the end of this section for a comprehensive reading list.*

Additional Interview Preparation Information

The Salary Question

Candidates are often asked questions about their salary requirements. This question is used to screen a candidate out if the position pays less than their target. As a candidate, you do not want to price yourself out of the position, nor do you want to cut yourself short.

Keys to Success

- Know the salary range that Orion has provided. Tell the interviewer you are comfortable in that range.
- If asked again, focus on the overall opportunity. While money is important, you are more interested in the ability to grow and learn with their company.
- If pressed again, we recommend providing the employer a range. Start with the midpoint of the range provided by Orion. End with a salary number just above their stated high end. This bracket of the range will neither price you out nor sell you short.

Sample Questions to Ask an Employer

As mentioned previously, a sign that an interview is starting to wrap up is when the employer asks if you have any questions. This is a critical part of the interview for you to both convey your interest in the company and the position through asking intelligent, research based questions, but also for you to start learning more about the company in order to evaluate them.

We recommend that you have a core group of questions that you are prepared to ask any company, but we also recommend doing the research to have questions that are of a specific and current nature. You can utilize resources such as Google News to find current events information on a company.

Remember, a Lack of Questions = Lack of Interest.

General Questions

- What are you looking for in an employee for this position?
- What traits or skill sets are most important in this role?
- Is this position newly created or is it a back-fill position?
- How did the person do that was in this position before me?
- What mistakes are common to someone new to this position?
- What is unique about the product that we make in comparison to the competition?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge that I would face as a new employee?
- How is an employee evaluated and how often is this done?
- Has your company hired military before? What have been the results?
- Is there anything about my background or qualifications that you have questions or concerns about in terms of being a good fit for this position?
- What is the next step in the interview process?

Management Position Questions

- As you look at the plant's workforce, what area(s) require the most attention right now (quality, quantity, people, maintenance, scheduling, safety)?
- Has anyone tried any leadership techniques or tactics that have not worked well?
- How does this workforce like to be motivated in general? What has worked in the past in your plant?
- How would you characterize the management-employee relationship in the plant?
- How did you (the interviewer) get started with the company? What has been your experience?

Sales Position Questions

- What is the current ranking of the territory? What is the growth potential of this territory? What is your market share in this territory / industry?
- I understand that the product's main competitors are _____. Who will be my main competition in this territory? Which products are the market leaders in this territory?
- Where do you expect me to take the territory in my first year?
- What can I do to better prepare myself before I come to work?
- Have you ever been aggressive to the point where you pushed someone too far?
- Are there any particular books or magazines that you recommend that I read to further prepare myself?
- How do our sales representatives differentiate our products from the competition?
- What traits or skill sets are most important?
- How did you (the interviewer) get started with the company? What has been your experience?
- I have read that (product) is pursuing an indication in _____. How do you expect that will impact market share?
- I have read that the company has been investing in research and development. Can you tell me if the company has any new products in the pipeline?

The Close

As discussed previously, the close is asking for some form of commitment from your customer, in this case, the employer. This is absolutely essential in a sales interview. Remember to focus on the key points below when writing out and practicing your close.

- **Thanking the interviewer for their time**
- **Selling yourself and recapping how you fit the role**
- **Asking for what you want**

Thank You Notes

After every interview, successful or not, you should send a thank you note. This simple step can keep you in the running, reinvigorate your interview process, or simply develop a good line of communication with a professional you may work with in the future. Most experts agree that it is a great idea to send a Thank You of some kind to the interviewer for any interview that you have. Only about 10% of all people who are interviewing take the time to thank the interviewer, which makes sending the Thank You a great way to stand out to potential employers.

We suggest that you send an email version of a thank you note shortly after your interview, possibly even the same day. But, nothing replaces the hand written note that really shows your interest in the role. Send that paper thank you note as well, so that it serves as a reminder a couple of days later. It will also stand out to the interviewer. Either way, ensure that you are sending your Thank You no later than the day following the interview. We also recommend that you send a separate and unique message to each interviewer if you interviewed with more than one person at a time.

Keys to Success

- Treat your thank you note much like your close. Thank them for their time, recap your fit, and ask for what you want.
- Go the extra mile. Get nice thank you cards from a place like Hallmark. They can make a difference.
- Send an email and a hard copy.

Example of a handwritten Thank You note

Dear Tom,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview for the production supervisor position. I enjoyed the time spent learning about your company.

As I stated in the interview, my experience in the management of people, inventory, and schedules make me a great fit for the position. Thank you again, and I look forward to hearing from you about a date when I could schedule my second interview!

Sincerely,

Jerry Smith

Example of a Thank You email

Dear Tom,

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to interview for the production supervisor position with your company. I enjoyed meeting you and finding out more about your company and this opportunity.

When we were discussing my experience in the management of people to accomplish my unit's goals during our training exercise in Nevada, it struck me again that I would enjoy the opportunity to bring my skills and experience to a position such as the one your company is offering. I did not have a chance to mention experience in the inventory and management of vehicle parts, which I feel would be applicable to the production supervisor role as well. I am confident that my education, experience, and interests make me a perfect fit for the opportunity.

I am convinced that I want to become a member of your team. I realize your time is valuable and I want to thank you again for meeting with me. I look forward to hearing from you about a date when I could schedule my second interview!

Sincerely,

Jerry Smith

(555) 555-5555

Jerry.smith@us.army.mil

Recommended Reading List

Transition Prep Books

- Interviewing Handbook for Military Leaders (Paul Kreider)
- Military-to-Civilian Transition Guide (Carl S. Savino)
- What Color is Your Parachute? 2012 (Richard N. Bolles)

Business Books

- Built to Last (Jim Collins)
- Good to Great (Jim Collins)

Leadership Books

- Bringing out the Best in People (Aubrey C. Daniels)
- Management Strategies for the 21st Century (Peter F. Drucker)
- Take Command (Kelly Perdeu)

Interview Preparation Books

- Interviewing Handbook for Military Leaders (Paul Kreider)
- Knock Em' Dead 2012 (Martin Yate)
- Now, Discover your Strengths (Marcus Buckingham)

Sales Books

- Ziglar on Selling (Zig Ziglar)
- Conceptual Selling (Heiman)

Manufacturing/Engineering Books

- World Class Manufacturing (Schonberger)

Monthly Periodicals

- *Fortune*
- *Wall Street Journal*

Section 6

The Final Stages of the Hiring Process

Section 6 – The Final Stages of the Hiring Process

Overview

This section is designed to give you a thorough understanding of follow-up interviews, receiving and negotiating job offers, and the final stages of the hiring process. At this point, you have completed an initial interview and the company has decided that you are a candidate of interest. Understanding how a follow up interview will be conducted will help you prepare more effectively. The information on offers and offer negotiations is included to help you make an informed decision when you get to that stage of the interview process. Your Orion Candidate Recruiter will also be there throughout the entire process to assist you.

Second Interviews

Congratulations! You have successfully completed your initial interview and are moving to a second interview! This time around, expect to spend more time at the company, talk to more people, individually and collectively, and have your skills and personality scrutinized more closely.

From an employer's perspective, the second interview is a chance to closely evaluate a candidate's abilities and interpersonal skills. Your prospective employer wants to see that you can do the job and work well with colleagues. Be aware that many employers bring in several candidates on the same day to streamline the second interview process. Your challenge is to distinguish yourself from the other candidates. Remember your interview fundamentals: have a plan, prepare good examples, and close the interview.

What to Expect

On your first interview, you probably met with one or two people. It is even possible that the only interview you have conducted was a phone interview. This time, be prepared to meet several more interviewers over the course of the day, including potential managers, coworkers and other staff members. If you meet with a panel or group, be sure to make eye contact with both the individual asking the question and the group as a whole.

You may meet individually with several people, who will most likely ask you similar questions. Keep your answers consistent but mix up your delivery so that your answers do not sound stale or staged. If possible, before the interview, acquire a list of the people you will be meeting with and do a little research on each one. Then ask questions that show your knowledge of each person.

Be sure to talk to your Orion Candidate Recruiter and the Account Executive assigned to that particular company prior to your interview to make sure you know what to expect. In most cases, we have had individuals interview at the company in the past and will be able to share some key insights.

Keys to Success

Prior to your second interview, make sure you review this guide and your interview notes. The interviewing fundamentals covered earlier are just as applicable for second interviews. You must have a plan, practice questions, identify specific examples to use, and close an interview. In addition to the fundamentals covered previously, keep the following tips in mind as you prepare for your interview.

Be early

Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to get to your interview. You will more than likely be traveling in a strange city. Err on the side of caution and leave earlier than you normally would. Do not rely on online maps. If possible, travel to the site the day before to make sure you are 100% sure where you are going.

Be prepared

Make sure you know the appropriate attire to wear and look as sharp as possible. Ensure you have a professional portfolio with additional copies of your resume and professional references. If you are preparing for a sales interview, make sure you have a brag book prepared. You do not want to be caught rushing around the morning of the interview because you did not properly prepare.

Develop a plan

Do additional research on the company. Talk to the Orion team and look online to ensure you can make your case. Know what the company wants and be prepared to talk to those points. Identify strengths and examples to support your case.

Do not assume anything

You do not have the job yet. You must impress everybody you speak with. Be friendly to everyone. Janitors, secretaries, assistants and other support staff sometimes have the ear of key decision makers. Be courteous.

Close the interview

You must close the interview and ask for the job. Show them you want the job in no uncertain terms and close the deal.

Offers

It is important that you consider everything when making a decision because an offer does not consist exclusively of a base salary. Most companies have a variety of benefits, stock options, bonuses, relocation assistance and other intangibles (company culture, etc.) that can add significantly to the overall value of a compensation package.

Pay attention to the company's medical and dental plan, vacation package, retirement benefits, and other perks. If the company cannot meet your salary requirements, it may be able to make it up to you in other ways, such as stock options, or bonus opportunities. Job satisfaction and advancement potential are two things you should also weigh heavily when considering an offer.

Remember, we are here to help. Consult with your Orion Recruiter during the offer process. We will help answer questions and work with you to ensure you get the best possible overall package. It is a critical time in the hiring process, so please make sure you talk with us regularly.

Keys to Success

Companies typically give a candidate anywhere between two to ten days to consider a potential offer. Some companies will specify the decision deadline in an offer letter. The current business standard is five business days. You should be deliberating on your decision throughout the hiring process and be prepared to make a decision as soon as possible. Waiting until the last moment possible to accept an offer can make an unintended poor first impression. The Orion team will guide you throughout the offer process. Use our experience to your advantage.

Salary: What Can I Expect To Receive?

The short answer is it varies depending on your qualifications, background, the job location, and the pay range for the specific position. Rest assured the entire Orion team is here to help you secure the best possible overall package for you.

In some cases there is not much flexibility when it comes to salary. The pay structure for entire companies is often based on internal equity: what other individuals with similar qualifications who are currently at the company make. So, major fluctuations in that number can upset the whole system. But even notoriously competitive industries will bend a little. Most companies have a small pay band, typically a few thousand dollars, that they can flex based on an individual's performance during the interview process. The best interviewers are typically on the top end of a company's pay band. Keep that in mind when you are preparing for second or subsequent interviews.

Other companies tend to be less flexible about basic pay. When some companies extend an offer, they base it on what they perceive as your market value. These companies feel that they have a pretty good idea about what they have to pay to be competitive and attract the best candidates.

Keep in mind that the company's benefits package can add several thousand dollars to an offer and salary alone should not be the only consideration when evaluating an offer. Think about the entire package and decide what best meets the needs of you and your family. Talk through your offer with your Orion Recruiter. Your recruiter can answer any questions you may have to ensure you have all the information to make the best possible decision.

Negotiating

Many people think that once they have landed and aced an interview, all of their work is done. But, sometimes deciding whether or not to accept a job offer can be just as stressful and time-consuming as getting to that point in the first place. One point of contention is salary negotiation. This process can be overwhelming, particularly for job seekers without a great deal of experience.

Negotiating a fair and practical salary is a critical step in the job search process, and one that can be navigated smoothly if you know what to do -- and what not to do. Do not try this on your own. Use the Orion Team and our extensive experience to gain the best possible offer for you. Offer negotiation is one of our most important roles in the hiring process. We have an established relationship with the company that we can leverage to ensure you are getting the best overall offer. Consult with us throughout the offer process and use our expertise to your advantage.

It is also important to remember that good companies recognize great talent and they will pay fair market value for it. Do not overvalue yourself initially. You are entering a new industry; it will not take good companies long to recognize that you are a valuable contributor and promote you.

In the end, negotiating is not necessarily about winning at all costs. It is about agreeing on terms of a job offer that will satisfy you. Do not get greedy. If you receive a fair offer for a position you want, quit while you are ahead. If you continue to negotiate for the sake of negotiating -- even after you have received a fair job offer -- you may end up hurting yourself. A company could simply end negotiations and present you with an ultimatum. You also risk alienating your future boss. And you certainly do not want your boss to resent you before you have even started work. The bottom line is that salary negotiations, like anything else, need to be done respectfully and kept in perspective. Always be courteous, direct and honest. Consult with us and we will work to secure the best possible overall package for you.

Making Your Decision

Keep in mind that while your base salary and benefits package are important to your overall decision on whether a company is a good long term match for you, there are other factors that should impact your decision. Career advancement, stability, company culture, and job satisfaction should all be important factors in your final decision. Weigh all of those factors when considering a prospective offer.

Over the years, we have seen many candidates who have spurned the highest initial salary offer for one that paid less, but offered them a foot in the door in a great company, in a growing industry, that afforded them the opportunity for rapid growth in position and responsibility. We have seen candidates get promoted multiple times and double their initial salary in just a few years because they got their foot in the door of the right company, at the right time and performed well. This can be a big decision. Look down the road at where you want to be and consider whether the opportunity can really help you get there. In the end, you must make a decision that is best for you and the Orion International Team is here to help you every step along the way.

Civilian Benefits

Most transitioning military professionals do not know what to expect when entering the civilian workforce in terms of the benefits package they can expect to receive. This section is meant to provide an overview on typical benefits packages in the types of companies in which we usually place our candidates.

In addition to salary, a company's benefit package is a key component to an overall job package, and the more information you have when considering an offer, the better decision you can make. This section is not all-inclusive, but it is intended to highlight the most common benefit options provided by employers today.

Bonuses

Bonuses can significantly increase the value of your overall compensation package. Listed below are a variety of bonuses companies can offer. You may receive one or more of these bonuses depending on how your individual compensation package is structured. Bonuses are typically taxed at a higher rate than your normal wages. Consult your Orion Candidate Recruiter if you have any questions concerning a bonus or bonuses you may be in line to receive.

Signing Bonus

Some companies may offer a signing bonus as an incentive to accept a company's offer. Signing bonuses are usually paid within 30 days of a candidate accepting a position. Signing bonuses are not standard components of every company's compensation package. Several years ago, a signing bonus was more common. Today, they are given out much less frequently. Typically, a signing bonus must be paid back in full if a candidate does not complete a predetermined period of time with the company.

Performance Bonus

A large number of companies include a performance bonus as part of an overall compensation package. This discretionary bonus is typically based on both company and individual performance criteria and is normally paid on a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis. The amount of this bonus can vary widely depending on the individual company and position you are hired for, but is typically computed as a percentage of your base salary.

Health Insurance Plans

Health Insurance is a very important component of a company's benefit package. There are a number of different types of health insurance plans available in Corporate America and it can be somewhat confusing for transitioning military officers accustomed to the military's TRICARE system. When you are evaluating a company's health insurance plan, there are three critical components that you should understand: the type of plan, premiums, and co-pays. The overall cost of different healthcare plans can vary widely, but understanding the following terms can be useful when wading through a company's healthcare insurance plan.

Types of Health Plans

There are two basic health insurance plans that exist today, Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs). Both offer positives and negatives. The plan that is best for you will depend on your individual situation and a careful cost benefit analysis.

- HMOs have a limited list of doctors to choose from in your network of approved physicians. HMOs allow you to visit an "Out of Network" provider, but at a higher cost. They may require that you to get a referral from your Primary Care Physician prior to seeing a specialist such as an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist. Because your options are more limited, a HMO is normally cheaper than a PPO.
- PPOs normally offer more flexibility by offering a large selection of approved doctors. They

typically do not require you to get a referral from a Primary Care Physician before seeing a specialist. Because of your expanded options, a PPO is typically more expensive than a HMO.

Premiums

A premium is a payment you incur monthly in order to participate in that particular health insurance plan. The amount of your monthly premium varies based on the type of plan (HMO or PPO) you select or use, the health insurance company that is selected, and your employers' contribution. Typically, larger companies contribute more towards your premium reducing your monthly costs. There are very few companies remaining who pay 100% of an employee's medical premiums.

Co-Pays

Co-Pays are the out of pocket expenses you incur for using your health insurance (prescriptions, doctor's visit, physical, emergency room visit). The amount of the co-pay depends on the health insurance plan that your company offers. For example, you may have a \$25 co-pay on a \$100 prescription. You incur an out of pocket expense of \$25 and your insurance company pays the remaining \$75.

Disability Insurance

Most companies offer two types of relatively inexpensive disability insurance: Short Term Disability Insurance and Long Term Disability Insurance.

- Short Term Disability Insurance: Short Term Disability Insurance supplements your income in case you are disabled and cannot work for an extended period of time, but typically less than one year.
- Long Term Disability Insurance: Long Term Disability Insurance supplements your income in case you are disabled and cannot work for an extended period of time. This insurance will typically start after your short term insurance is exhausted or after you have been disabled for more than 180 days.

Vacation Time, Holidays, Time Off

On average, you can expect to accrue vacation and sick days on a per month basis with most companies offering 7-14 days of vacation a year. In addition to vacation days, most companies also observe certain standard national holidays throughout the year to include the following:

- New Years Day
- Memorial Day
- 4th of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Other Benefits

401(k) Plans

A 401(k) is the most common type of retirement savings program offered by companies and has all but replaced the traditional pension plan. A 401(k) is a type of employer-sponsored retirement plan that allows a worker to save for retirement while deferring income tax on the saved money and earnings until withdrawal. The employee elects to have a portion of his or her wages paid directly, or "deferred", into his or her 401(k) account. In participant-directed plans (the most common option), the employee can select from a number of investment options, usually an assortment of mutual funds that emphasize stocks, bonds, money market investments, or some mix of the above.

Some companies will match a percentage of your contributions to your 401(k) program. A common employer matching formula is 50% of 401(k) employee deferral contributions up to a certain contribution limit (typically a maximum of 6%). This can be a powerful wealth builder and a valuable piece of an overall compensation package.

Relocation Assistance

Companies typically offer relocation assistance on a case-by-case basis. If a company offers a relocation package, it will come in the form of either a relocation bonus or they will take care of moving your household goods, similar to a military PCS move. If you receive a relocation bonus, the amount will vary depending on company, the position you are hired for, and the physical distance involved in the move. Relocation assistance can significantly add to the overall value of an offer.

Tuition Reimbursement

Some companies may offer tuition reimbursement for graduate school classes. Typically, there is a limited amount of assistance available. Additionally, most companies require that classes taken apply directly to your position or the industry in general.

Company Car or Car Allowance

Most sales positions that involve a significant amount of driving (pharmaceutical and medical device companies for example) provide either a company car or a monthly car allowance as part of your overall compensation package. A company car or allowance can add seven to ten thousand dollars to the overall value of your offer.

If a company car is provided, the company typically leases the car and pays the monthly payment, insurance, gas, and the maintenance for the vehicle. The company owns the car. Some companies allow you to use the vehicle for personal use.

If you are given a car allowance, the company covers your transportation costs in the form of a bonus. Unlike a company car, you would personally own or lease the car, and you would use the allowance to pay for the car payment, the maintenance and the insurance. In addition to the stipend, the company may also reimburse you for your work-related mileage.

Employee Stock Plans

There are three primary stock option plans that companies may offer as part of an overall compensation package: Employee Stock Option Plans, Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), and Employee Stock Purchase Plans (ESPPs). Each is different and offers unique advantages. All three can add significantly to the overall value of an offer.

- **Employee Stock Option Plans** Some companies use Employee Stock Option Plans as an additional way to compensate their employees. These plans allow an employee to purchase a specific number of company shares during a specified period of time at a fixed price. For example, if an employee gets an option on 100 shares at \$10 and the stock price goes up to \$20, the employee can "exercise" the option and buy those 100 shares at \$10 each, sell them on the market for \$20 each, and pocket the difference. But if the stock price never rises above the option price, the employee will simply not exercise the option.
- **Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs)** An ESOP is a type of tax-qualified employee benefit plan in which most or all of the assets are invested in stock of the employer. Like profit sharing and 401(k) plans, an ESOP generally must include at least all full-time employees meeting certain age and service requirements. Employees do not actually buy shares in an ESOP. Instead, the company contributes its own shares to the plan, contributes cash to buy its own stock (often from an existing owner), or, most commonly, has the plan borrow money to buy stock, with the company repaying the loan. All of these uses have significant tax benefits for the company, the employees, and the sellers. Employees gradually vest in their accounts and receive their benefits when they leave the company (although there may be distributions prior to that).
- **Employee Stock Purchase Plans (ESPP)** An ESPP is similar to a stock option plan. It gives employees the chance to buy stock, usually through payroll deductions over a 3- to 27-month "offering period." The price is usually discounted up to 15% from the market price. Frequently, employees can choose to buy stock at a discount from the lower of the price either at the beginning or the end of the ESPP offering period, which can increase the discount still further. As with a stock option, after acquiring the stock the employee can sell it for a quick profit or hold onto it for a while. Unlike stock options, the discounted price built into most ESPPs means that employees can profit even if the stock price has gone down since the grant date.

Keep in mind that a comprehensive benefits package can add several thousands of dollars to any job offer you receive, and should be just as much a consideration in your decision as the salary itself. The transition from a military to civilian benefits program may seem overwhelming but by ensuring that you do the research to understand the terms and what each benefit entails, you can be confident that you are informed and able to make the best decision regarding benefits to meet you and your family's needs. And of course, please ask your Orion Recruiter if there is anything we can do to help!

Paving the Way for Others

Keep in mind during the interview process and particularly after you have accepted an offer, that you represent all military candidates in the eyes of your company. Your performance will influence their opinion of future military candidates. So, put your best foot forward.

The first six months, no matter if it is your dream job, can be extremely challenging. Typically, we find that there is a transition period that most people go through when making a career change of this magnitude. There are new people and a new culture that is quite different from the military environment that you are accustomed to. After this adjustment period, most people find things settle down and things work out well.

Also keep in mind that you are representing other military candidates and Orion International at your new company. Orion has a great record of success in Corporate America due in large part to the success of the thousands of candidates that came before you. Their outstanding performance over the years paved the way for you now. Please keep in mind moving forward that our ability to place others with your company is directly related to your performance. Now it is your turn to advance that torch – not for Orion – but for your fellow officers and non-commissioned officers that will follow behind you.

Post-Military Careers

Most candidates transitioning to Corporate America are not offered executive level positions. Most companies expect you to come in and learn the business and prove yourself before moving up in the organization. You have advantages over your peers. Companies value the discipline, drive, motivation, and experience of military candidates. Your experience puts you on a completely separate career path than a recent college graduate.

However, companies want to ensure you have the grounding in their business, so most companies will want you to prove your worth in sales, operations, engineering or management. You should view the opportunities presented to you by the Orion International team as your foot in the door. Like in the military, you have to serve as a junior officer before moving into the field grade ranks. The same principle applies in Corporate America. Seize the opportunity to get your foot in the door of an outstanding company and move up.

In Conclusion

We hope you found this Military Transition Guide to be helpful as you prepare for a new endeavor. The final piece of advice we want to leave you with is to maintain open communication with your Orion International recruiter. We are here to help you during every step of the process, so don't hesitate to contact us for any assistance regarding your transition and preparation. When in doubt, check out our website, www.orioninternational.com or email careers@orioninternational.com with any questions. We wish you the best of luck!