

# Military Officer Career Preparation: Leadership Development Programs



## Why a Leadership Development Program?

A Leadership Development Program (LDP) is a great way to parlay your leadership skills in your next career. LDPs are specifically designed for Junior Military Officers who have a strong track record of performance and geographic flexibility, and that are looking to progress to the upper echelons of management.

As you progress through the LDP, you will gain valuable experience needed to lead and succeed at the highest levels within the organization, as well as gain exposure to various business units within the company in order to increase your knowledge base. LDPs offer rotational opportunities, hands-on mentoring, classroom development, and varied assignments. Due to the overall level of training and vast resource commitment provided by a company, LDP opportunities are not as common as traditional management, engineering or sales opportunities. Presently, only a small percentage of companies offer these resource intensive programs.

## Typical Positions

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

**Operations Leadership Development Program:** Typical operations LDPs will require new team members to complete initial training, rotate through various operational facilities for both on the job training and curriculum based training, and work with LDP mentors on a periodic basis. Some Operations LDPs will require you to rotate through various business units as well, to gain exposure to marketing, finance, sales, and other roles. This provides the understanding of the business you will need to function as a future leader in the organization, but may also result in helping you find your niche within the organization. After completing this type of LDP, you will be assigned a permanent role in operations.

**Sales & Marketing Development Program:** A Sales and Marketing Development Program can start an exciting career within a company. This structured program combines various business and technical learning workshops, networking opportunities with various levels of the organization, and separate job rotation assignments. Rotations typically include a field sales assignment, a marketing assignment, and other various business unit assignments. Participants receive hands-on mentoring, travel opportunities, classroom development, and networking opportunities.

**Engineering Development Program:** Engineering Development Program (EDP) participants are typically placed at a manufacturing plant or oil and gas refinery for training. During this time, the participant will be mentored by seasoned technical professionals and motivated by the vast technical challenges found in these environments. Examples of formal training include: safety leadership, manufacturing processes and product, applied statistics, and leadership development.

## 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.

## Keys to a Successful Interview

Generally, the key to a successful Leadership Development Program interview is to focus on track record of performance and your most significant achievements throughout your career. Focus on relevant examples from your past that are translatable in your new work environment. Specific examples (with places and names) add depth and meaning to your answers.

Here are some additional points of focus during a Leadership Development Program interview:

- Have a game plan. Anticipate the questions you will be asked, and prepare your answers in advance.
- Focus on your track record of performance. Give good examples to show that you have the ability to succeed in whatever you do.
- Focus on the skills needed for the LDP. Stress your leadership, sales aptitude, or technical experience.
- Focus on your growth/promotion potential. Your leadership skills are important, but so is your ability to learn and grow.
- Let them know you are flexible and open to relocate. Geographic flexibility is essential to most Leadership Development Programs.