



THE VETERAN'S GUIDE TO BECOMING
A MANUFACTURING AMBASSADOR

SERVE



Sponsored by: 
ARCONIC
FOUNDATION

The development and content of this guide would not have been possible without the support and guidance of several manufacturers and outside organizations—each of which is committed to helping veterans transition into and advance from within the manufacturing industry.

The Manufacturing Institute would like to thank the Arconic Foundation for sponsoring this toolkit.

In addition, we thank Christine G. Adamo (Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps, E-5/Sgt.), on behalf of “A-Ha!” Creative, for her active participation, leadership and creative input, as we developed this guide.

MANUFACTURING MATTERS



ARTHUR “PATT” PATTERSON

Tooling Lead at Ajax Metal Forming Solutions

U.S. Army (Staff Sgt./E-6, 1991-2003)

-&- U.S. Army Nat'l. Guard

(Sgt. 1st Class/E-7, 2005-present)

FROM ARMY TO AJAX: ONE AMBASSADOR'S STORY

After serving in the airborne division of the U.S. Army, Arthur “Patt” Patterson held little vision for his future. He worked a \$12-per-hour retail sales job, bounced bars, and built decks to earn extra cash. That all changed when he met Erick Ajax, Co-Owner of Ajax Metal Forming Solutions, at a military career fair.

“I started at E.J. Ajax two days later,” Patt explains, “and doubled my wage in four years.”

The opportunities he’s received, through a career in manufacturing, are innumerable. They include rapid advancement, renewed job satisfaction, and ongoing education and training.

“I wouldn’t even have known what to do with my G.I. Bill. It would’ve just sat on the table (and) I wouldn’t have understood what I could do with my (military) skills sets.”

Patt says veterans’ biggest handicap is believing civilian employers don’t want to buy what it is they have to sell. As a result, they often downplay their skills derived from military service.

“The level of focus and attention to detail veterans possess is a self-motivated thing,” he says.

“It keeps us striving to perform better. It continually enhances our leadership skills, decision-making capabilities, take-initiative mindset, and core competencies. Those things are inherent and result from a mission-first attitude that’s forever etched in our military DNA.”

“There’s no other way to get that than to be in the service—no matter the branch or how long you served.”

“WHEN YOU STEP INTO MANUFACTURING CAREERS—DUE TO YOUR OWN COMMITMENT, YOUR TENACITY AND THE SKILLS YOU BRING WITH YOU FROM THE MILITARY—YOU’RE GOING TO ADVANCE MORE QUICKLY. THE SKILLS, ASSETS AND RESOURCES YOU CARRY AROUND WITH YOU ARE GOING TO BE VERY USEFUL.”

Veterans show up to work on time. We take fewer sick days. We’re committed to our mission. We respond well to structured environments, especially ones that are merit-based. That’s where we find success. Manufacturing responds well on all counts.

“When you step into manufacturing careers—due to your own commitment, your tenacity and the skills you bring with you from the military—you’re going to advance more quickly. The skills, assets and resources you carry around with you are going to be very useful.”

The military cross-trains its personnel. That, in part, fuels veterans’ drive to learn more and to excel in various ways. Manufacturing careers present similar opportunities. Patt says the benefits don’t stop there: You can walk into a job knowing you’ve got security, unlimited opportunity for upward mobility and a benefits package that’s on par with the nation’s best.

“There’s always a path for you to grow and become more successful in manufacturing.”

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS

HONOR. INTEGRITY. SERVICE.

When we joined forces, as members of the U.S. military, each of us took an oath to uphold the values and ideals of our respective branches. Despite any differences in tactical approach or the uniforms we wore, those values and ideals can be summed up in a shared Mission Statement: To honor our families and our nation, by demonstrating integrity and putting service first.

As veterans, we continue to embody the traits associated with honor, integrity, and service as we become valued members of the civilian workforce.

The Manufacturing Institute, the National Association of Manufacturers, and U.S. manufacturers recognize this. As a result, they've joined forces to honor our commitment to our families and our nation—demonstrating a sincere interest in wanting to help us prepare for success in our next careers and in wanting to serve us, just as we have served our country.

They do that through SERVE: The Veteran's Guide to Becoming a Manufacturing Ambassador.

SERVE is a toolkit for veterans who have benefited from a career in manufacturing. In honor of those who have served our nation, its goal is to help you and those like you share with your fellow veterans the opportunities which exist in our growing field. Its mission is indeed to serve, by giving back to those who have given of themselves.

You are uniquely positioned to serve your brothers and sisters in arms, by becoming an ambassador who engages other veterans and leads them to lucrative careers in manufacturing.

You were born ready to SERVE, so let's get started!

VETERANS' UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS

Today's employers face a tremendous challenge. Namely? Attracting quality candidates with the existing or transferable skills necessary to remain competitive in the global marketplace. One obvious but, at times, overlooked solution to the problem is attracting and unleashing the power of a growing and underutilized workforce demographic.

One that possesses highly desirable, in-demand skill sets: U.S. military veterans.

As veterans in manufacturing, we share a unique set of values and experiences. Those values and experiences motivate manufacturers to commit time and resources to hiring and advancing veterans in the workplace. While helping America's military veterans transition into manufacturing is easier said than done, you have an advantage: You've been there, done that!

You know what your military brothers and sisters are capable of. You know, from firsthand experience, how valuable their insights are. By working together to develop a strong network of veteran ambassadors who can lead the charge, we can make a compelling case that attracts the best and brightest veteran talent to a wide range of manufacturing jobs.

That's what's being asked of you, but you won't go it alone. The SERVE Ambassador Toolkit will help you get started in engaging fellow veterans. Veterans in search of desirable careers who've got skills to spare. Veterans who benefit greatly from long-term employment in the manufacturing industry.

This guide includes:

- **Launch Support:** Plan, launch, and succeed with an ambassador program—as a personal mission or as a company priority.
- **Manufacturing Best Practices:** Take advantage of detailed, proven, and actionable best practices used by manufacturers of all sizes to attract, retain, and advance veterans.
- **Marketing Materials:** Use action-oriented posters and social media content to speak to veterans of all military branches and backgrounds, and use the sample tools to build and maintain community partnerships in support of your efforts.

WHY MANUFACTURING?

Americans recognize the impact our nation's manufacturing industry has on the U.S. economy. They also recognize the important role it plays in job creation. In short, the manufacturing industry truly matters to Americans.

Yet, there's even more good reason for male and female veterans to pursue careers in manufacturing. The U.S. has established itself as a leader in manufacturing worldwide. Several strategic advantages have helped make America's best-known manufacturers and its manufacturing industry, as a whole, the envy of other nations for over 100 years:

- Manufacturing is considered a key component of a strong national economy.
- Americans consistently rank manufacturing as our most important job creation strategy.
- For every \$1 spent in manufacturing, another \$1.81 is added to the U.S. economy.
- 77% of Americans consider a strong manufacturing base a matter of national priority.

Despite this, those of us working in or working to promote long-term careers in U.S. manufacturing know that we face a skills gap. The numbers are simply undeniable:

- 84% of manufacturers agree: The U.S. suffers from a talent shortage.
- Between 2015 and 2025, 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will need to be filled.
- Those already in manufacturing are more likely to encourage others to join the industry.

THE SERVE TOOLKIT IS A SERIOUS CALL TO ACTION.

Partnering with other veterans—whom Inc. magazine cites as possessing uncommon levels of resilience, fearlessness, and dedication—is one sure way to close that gap. As a veteran ambassador, you're uniquely positioned to help close that skills gap while introducing your comrades in arms to the benefits of working within the manufacturing industry.

Make no mistake about it! The SERVE toolkit is a serious call to action.

Join with us and lead the charge, helping to attract a diverse group of veterans into the manufacturing sector. Veterans whose work histories—like your own—are rich in leadership, strategic planning, and technical experience. Accept our invitation and join forces with a network of veterans, like yourself, who are recognized for their ongoing contributions to our industry.

As veteran ambassadors, we each play a critical role that positively impacts the lives of other veterans. We all benefit from recruiting high-level talent and from launching technology-driven manufacturing careers.

Those who accept the challenge pledge to advance veterans in manufacturing, by actively promoting the development of a workforce that is both diverse and representative of the larger veteran population.

Our nation's veterans have filled a wide range of technical and tactical roles in the various branches of the U.S. military, including the: U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, and U.S. National Guard.



In 2014, the U.S. was home to more than **19 MILLION** veterans



1.6 MILLION of those, or roughly 8%, were women veterans



17.5% of all U.S. veterans identify as black or Hispanic



9.9 MILLION U.S. veterans are younger than age 65



Of those, **1.7 MILLION** are younger than age 35

BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT

SERVE was created as a way to recognize the contributions our nation's veterans make to the manufacturing industry. It does that by sharing stories of real veterans who make a difference every single day. It also sheds light on the untapped career opportunities that exist for veterans in the rewarding field of manufacturing.

The goal of SERVE, specifically, is to develop and provide support for a network of veteran ambassadors—veterans like you—who are dedicated to attracting new talent to the workforce. Put another way, veterans willing to serve as role models for others who are interested in or just launching careers in manufacturing.

Erick Ajax, vice president and co-owner of Ajax Metal Forming Solutions, has this to say about how veterans contribute to his company: "Veterans do very well in the manufacturing sector. So, hiring veterans is a high priority for E.J. Ajax. It continues to pay huge dividends for our team, in many ways. Three Ajax employees, who are U.S. veterans and who have more than 75 years of combined service to our country, recruited 4 more awesome veterans at a recent career fair."

As a veteran ambassador, you'll encourage other veterans to pursue careers in manufacturing. You can also help them succeed, by:

- Mentoring veterans in manufacturing
- Educating veterans about opportunities in manufacturing
- Developing your own personal and professional development, as well as that of your veteran peers

- Advocating from personal experience
- Generating ideas and sharing best practices via Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

The personal and professional benefits associated with becoming a veteran ambassador include, but are not limited to:

- Gaining valuable experience as a presenter
- Earning recognition as a public speaker and advocate
- Learning to approach and represent all areas of manufacturing
- Joining a network endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers
- Having a positive impacting on other veterans
- Further enhancing your interpersonal, leadership, team building, and other capabilities

Benefits for manufacturers who support the Ambassador Program include:

- Recognition as leaders in the marketplace
- Increased awareness of in-house career opportunities
- Enhanced visibility, as ambassadors spread the word far and wide
- Improved retention rates thanks to more engaged, high-performing veterans in the workforce
- Low-cost, high-impact community engagement via strategies (created by manufacturers for manufacturers) which are proven to increase the talent supply

QUICK START GUIDE

We've explained why it's important to become involved in the Ambassador Program. Now? Let's get on with it! This Quick Start Guide outlines steps you can take to engage veterans in your region who have the skills, capabilities, and desire to succeed in the manufacturing industry. With your help and encouragement, they surely will.

BY THE NUMBERS

While the skills gap mentioned earlier is something U.S. manufacturers are keenly aware of, it's not something the general public is familiar with. This makes communicating its impact slightly challenging. Yet? We have faith in your ability to overcome that obstacle. You've faced bigger challenges—ones which no doubt began with boot camp and persist beyond military separation.

To make it easier, we've identified resources and strategies you can use to take a by-the-numbers approach to educating

others. Here are a few places to go for related information:

- Browse through "[The Skills Gap in U.S. Manufacturing: 2015 and Beyond.](#)" This resource breaks down and analyzes key results and findings uncovered by researchers who study the impact of a manufacturing skills gap.
- Read "[From Military Front Lines to Manufacturing Front Lines: Veterans and Your Workforce.](#)" This employer playbook is filled with veteran statistics, case studies and best practices used by leading manufacturers to recruit talented veterans.
- Chart your company's progress. Work with company management to create a goal for the number of veterans recruited.
- Talk to veterans and veteran service agency representatives: Do they understand what it means to work in manufacturing? Do their perceptions match up with today's industry standards? How can you educate them?



**THEY CAN MAKE YOUR ROLE, AS A
VETERAN AMBASSADOR, EASIER. SO,
PARTNER UP WHENEVER POSSIBLE!**

AIM FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

The U.S. State Dept. identifies a good ambassador as being, among other things:

- Consistently honorable and responsible
- Willing and able to lead others to success
- Knowledgeable about his constituents' interests
- Effective at communicating and negotiating with others
- Committed to pursuing goals of benefit to his or her organization

As a U.S. veteran, you've already proven your ability to fill those requirements. What the SERVE Ambassador Toolkit is designed to do, then, is to help you leverage those qualifications in ways which noticeably shrink your company's skills gap. It does that by enabling you to more quickly identify and engage with tomorrow's workforce, achieving remarkable results in the process.

In the beginning? It helps to stop, assess, and review the resources available to you. Then decide which ones you'll put to use. What follows are a handful of ways you and your organization can begin to lead the way, as educators in your community and subject-matter experts who are well-versed in the veteran-friendly opportunities available in manufacturing.

One last tip? Strive to Share, Do, Build, and Create your way to success as a veteran ambassador:

- **Share:** Share your story for the benefit of other veterans. Offer to serve as a guest speaker for members of your local chamber of commerce, VFW, employment office, etc.
- **Do:** Pursue activities outlined in the "Attracting Veteran Talent" chapter of the SERVE toolkit which closely match the time and resources you've allocated for engagement.
- **Build:** Develop and strengthen relationships that get you out into the community. Use existing contacts as springboards that give your organization greater visibility among veteran populations.
- **Create:** Customize brochures and posters included in the "The Brand and Resources" section, highlighting opportunities that exist for veterans within your organization.

ENGAGE AND INSPIRE

Let's say you've already begun sharing your story with others. You've selected a handful of activities worth putting into practice and have begun building relationships with key stakeholders—folks who will help make your program more successful. You've even made good use of marketing materials, customizing them so that they speak directly to other veterans.

The road to engagement and ways you can inspire other veterans don't stop there:

- Partner with a wide range of veteran service organizations.
- Develop on-site veteran apprenticeship or internship programs.
- Engage people along your supply chain in conversations about veterans.
- Encourage other manufacturers to adopt a veteran ambassador mindset.
- Book speaking engagements at colleges or universities serving area veterans.

Know, too, that veteran service organizations extend far beyond the American Legion and VFW. Veteran outreach centers, halfway houses and nonprofits (i.e., Helmets to Hardhats, Wounded Warrior Project) offer programs that are tailored to meet veterans' needs. They're eager to connect with leaders like you who are looking to help other veterans get back on their feet.

They can make your role, as a veteran ambassador, easier. So, partner up whenever possible!

**VETERAN
AMBASSADOR
PROGRAM
LAUNCH**

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Ambassador Program was created by The Manufacturing Institute, an affiliate of the National Association of Manufacturers. It was developed to:

- Assist veterans seeking to assess their skills and experience.
- Break down barriers of entry for veterans interested in manufacturing.
- Encourage veterans to pursue long-term employment in this growing sector.

As a veteran in manufacturing, you're already an ambassador in your company and community.

Yet, with the guidance of SERVE, you'll have an opportunity to extend your reach even further. You can make a lasting, positive impression on everyone from coworkers, colleagues, company executives and community leaders to area clergy, youth organizations, veterans' organizations and entire industries. You'll do that by sharing your experience and expertise.

In short, you'll use your story to serve a population that deserves widespread representation.

Delivering a strong message that meets the needs of your fellow veterans is your primary concern. Your goal is to engage them with information that directs them to resources which put a manufacturing career within reach. View the SERVE Ambassador Toolkit as an arsenal that's packed with resources designed to help you hit your target with expert-level accuracy.

You'll lead others to purpose-driven careers in (3) steps:

- Ambassador Program Launch
- Ambassador Team Formation & Development
- Ambassador Training (Expectations, Activities & Etiquette)

AS A VETERAN IN MANUFACTURING, YOU'RE ALREADY AN AMBASSADOR IN YOUR COMPANY AND COMMUNITY.

You'll do that with help from other, key stakeholders within your organization.

Manufacturers who work closely with their veteran ambassadors enjoy the highest rate of return, especially when it comes to recruiting and retaining the best available talent. So work alongside HR, making sense of veteran resumes. Participate in the interview process, helping hiring managers communicate company benefits in ways which matter to veterans.



AMBASSADOR PROGRAM LAUNCH

Your company's veteran ambassador program can be as simple—or as complex—as you'd like it to be. It helps to remember that your primary goal is to connect with veterans. Your purpose is to provide them with the necessary information and incentive to make a sound decision about pursuing careers in manufacturing. And, while that sounds simple enough, it does take effort.

Two steps that can fast track the launch of your veteran ambassador program are engaging other veterans and utilizing Employee Resource Groups. Ways you can do both are listed here:

ENGAGE OTHER VETERANS

- Volunteer within the veteran community, in organizations like the American Legion, USO, and Disabled American Veterans.
- Interview with local news media.
- Offer to be featured in your company newsletter.
- Publicly identify yourself as a veteran ambassador.
- Discuss the possibility of offering on-site facility tours.
- Ask to post flyers at employment offices in your region.
- Lead your company's community engagement efforts.
- Represent your company at career fairs and industry events, especially those for veterans or with a large population of vets.
- Offer to mentor area veterans who'll benefit from camaraderie.
- Develop and lead presentations hosted by veterans' organizations.
- Create posters and brochures which feature your ambassador team.

UTILIZE VETERANS' NETWORK OR EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS (ERGS)

- Join an existing Employee Resource Group.
- If none exists, create your own in-house ERG, or ask whether your company will help create an ERG.
- Invite individuals who work in-house and elsewhere to join your ERG.
- Use your ERG to generate new ideas, share best practices and network.
- If you work for a small- to mid-sized manufacturer and are the only veteran on staff, reach out to veterans working with other manufacturers and start a local ERG chapter.
- Explore ERGs further: Read Arconic's story under the header "Prioritizing Veteran ERGs."

By making yourself known as a veteran ambassador, you open yourself up to opportunities you didn't even know existed. It's common for veteran ambassadors to receive invitations to a wide range of events, as speakers or attendees. View every opportunity that comes your way as a means for honing your skills, as a company representative, and for meeting other veterans.

At times, it can feel as if you've stepped into the role of an interpreter. This is especially true at career fairs and networking events, where it's helpful to serve as a liaison between employers and prospective employees. This is no time to be shy. Go ahead and make sense of military jargon. Put that veteran's service record into perspective. Do what it takes to make a difference.

AMBASSADOR TEAM FORMATION & DEVELOPMENT

Forming and developing your company's veteran ambassador team is another area of concern—one that extends beyond outside engagement and ERGs. Those activities can certainly benefit you, by putting you in contact with other potential team members. In the next section (on "Ambassador Training"), you'll learn how to fine tune your team's mission, goals and message.

Before you do, let's discuss ways to effectively Recruit Other Ambassadors and Tell Your Story:

TELL YOUR STORY

Everyone has a story to tell. Military personnel, in particular, often find themselves in strange situations. It's the nature of military service. Great stories simply come with the territory! Maybe you're a war veteran who served one term and got out. Or a retired veteran who launched a career in manufacturing after 20 years of service.

Either way, you have a story to tell—in this case, how you made the journey from military into manufacturing. And people want to hear it! Use the following prompts as a starting point—and don't be shy. Be sure to brag a little!

START WITH THE BASICS:

- Your Name and Military MOS
- Your Age (now and at time of enlistment)
- Your Branch of Service and Rank (at separation)
- Your Manufacturing Experience (company, division and title)
- Your Background, Training and Education (certification, degrees, etc.)

NOW TALK ABOUT WHAT MAKES YOU ... WELL, YOU:

- What are your primary duties?
- What attracted you to this company?
- What made you pursue a career in manufacturing?
- What technologies do you utilize on a regular basis?
- What's the most rewarding aspect of a manufacturing career?
- What military schooling or training helped prepare you for this career?
- What additional schooling or training helped prepare you to get ahead?

- What advice would you give veterans considering manufacturing careers?
- Why did you become a veteran ambassador?

As you begin documenting your journey from military life to manufacturing, keep your audience in mind. That includes veterans, their family members, your coworkers, the manufacturer you represent and any number of community partners. Once your ambassador story is written up, review it to be sure it follows (5) simple rules for a professional and engaging presentation:

1. Be yourself. There's no need to impress anyone or to be nervous. This is your story, so just be yourself. Unlike leading a squadron of subordinates, you're guiding a group of peers to a new career path. Motivate them with your success and show interest in them.
2. Avoid jargon. You never know who'll be in your audience, so speak in terms most people will easily understand. Use a relaxed tone, avoiding military or manufacturing jargon and acronyms. For example, steer clear of phrases like "5-Axis machine," "kaizen," and "PPE."
3. Have fun. What do you love about your job? Is it working with machinery? Project development? Interfacing with new technology? Whatever you're passionate about, share it with others. Enthusiasm is infectious! Have fun and your audience will have fun, too.
4. Keep it simple. Depending on where you present your story, your speech may be longer or shorter—from a few minutes to a half hour or more. Use the time you do have to deliver key points, focus on what matters to your audience and keep things moving.
5. Avoid negativity. Negativity is a waste of time and a poor use of your talents. Don't use profanity, speak ill of coworkers (civilian or veteran) or complain about workplace issues which are better addressed elsewhere. Similarly, avoid making predictions or promises.

Remember, too, to be gracious and to thank your hosts for the chance to address fellow veterans.

RECRUIT OTHER AMBASSADORS



Set a goal to recruit other veteran ambassadors.



Identify in-house veterans who can fill those roles.



Identify veterans outside the company who can fill those roles.



Identify members of your ERG who'd make good veteran ambassadors.

Once you've compiled a list of potential veteran ambassador candidates:

- Invite the best and brightest to join your ambassador team.
- Tell them what you want to achieve in your industry/community.
- Offer training for those who sign on and share the following with them:
 - A copy of the SERVE Ambassador Toolkit
 - A copy of any written goals or objectives you've set
 - A copy of any posters, flyers, or brochures you've created
 - A copy of your own ambassador story (see "Tell Your Story")

- A copy of your research into veteran statistics, demographics, etc.
- Anything you believe will enhance the veteran ambassador experience

- Once you've assembled a veteran ambassador team:
 - Help them to develop an ambassador story of their own.
 - Urge them to describe their experiences in their own words.
 - Use a program like PowerPoint to create a group presentation.
 - Ask each member for 3 to 5 slides that map out their career paths.
 - Practice your group presentation, giving everyone a chance to lead it.
 - Share feedback with one another, as you each develop memorable stories.
- As a group, make a list of ways to engage veterans within the community.
- Invite team members to share your contact information with other veterans.
- Set a goal for making presentations (i.e., once per quarter, per month, per week).



AMBASSADOR TRAINING

(EXPECTATIONS, ACTIVITIES & ETIQUETTE)

As for all public-facing employees, it's important to address a few points before you—or a member of your ambassador team or ERG—begin interacting with veterans, veteran service agencies and community partners. Three primary areas of concern, as you begin to develop an ambassador training program, are: Expectations, Activities and Etiquette.

Each one is outlined below. Those outlines contain checklists designed to help you and those teamed with you: get clear about why it is you're launching an ambassador program, set or fine tune your program goals and clarify the message you hope to send to your target audience. (In this case, U.S. military veterans.) The questions posed will help you do just that.

**THERE ARE NO
RIGHT OR WRONG
ANSWERS. YOUR
PERSPECTIVES, LIKE
YOUR COMPANY
CULTURE, ARE
UNIQUE.**

There are no right or wrong answers. Your perspectives, like your company culture, are unique.

TRAINING TOPICS

Veteran Ambassador Expectations

- How will our ambassador program's success be measured?
- Who will measure its success—our team or our organization?
- Which staff members will provide support for our ambassadors?
- Where does our target population live? And work? How old are they?
- Are ambassadors responsible for event and activity scheduling and set up?
- Is there a limit to the number of events/activities ambassadors can participate in?
- How many veteran ambassadors are needed to adequately represent our company?
- Will the role of veteran ambassador be a paid role in the company? If so, how will we choose ambassadors and what will the expected service term be?

Veteran Ambassador Activities

- Whom should veteran ambassadors partner with?
- EXAMPLES include:
 - Veteran service agency officers
 - City, county, state or federal officials
 - Other veteran-friendly manufacturers
 - Veterans' organizations (i.e., VFW, DVA, VA)
 - Area employment and workforce development agencies
- With what frequency should we participate in events and activities?
- Should our organization be identified as an event or activity sponsor?
- Is it feasible to host events/activities on-site? If so, when and what kind?
- What part of the ambassador's personal story do we want to share publicly?
- How can our ambassadors and organization participate in Manufacturing Day?

Veteran Ambassador Etiquette

- What role do our veteran ambassadors fill?
- What's considered proper veteran ambassador attire?
- Is it OK to wear military uniforms, medals, or badges to events?
- What portion of the work day can be allocated to ambassador tasks? If company time can be used, how will that be authorized?
- Which topics are appropriate to discuss with individuals outside the company?
- Which topics are inappropriate to discuss with individuals outside the company?
- Topics generally deemed appropriate:
 - Your personal pathway, background, and education
 - Your primary job duties or responsibilities
 - The benefits of working at this company
- Topics generally deemed inappropriate:
 - Changes occurring within the organization
 - Negative feedback related to the organization
 - Matters of intellectual property which are not public
- What contact information can safely be shared with those outside the organization?

WHAT MAKES A VETERAN AMBASSADOR GREAT?

What makes a veteran ambassador great? For starters, there's the willingness to represent your organization and your industry. Other characteristics shared by great veteran ambassadors include an adventuresome spirit, a willingness to navigate new surroundings and a desire to meet new people—be they civilian or military. A great ambassador is also a positive and productive employee.

In manufacturing, those with a full range of skills get the best results. It takes more than hard skills, or technical know-how, to forge a great career. It takes soft skills, too, which are associated with our values and dictate how we behave.

How you present yourself also impacts your veteran ambassador experience. It affects how you feel and how others feel about you. As the face of your organization, it's important to look presentable and be personable. That means dressing for the occasion and modulating your speech so that what you say and how you say it makes sense, given your audience.

Lastly, remember honor, integrity, and service. You possess them, in spades, so apply them to your role as a veteran ambassador: Be honorable, act with integrity and serve others well.

LASTLY, REMEMBER HONOR, INTEGRITY, AND SERVICE. YOU POSSESS THEM, IN SPADES, SO APPLY THEM TO YOUR ROLE AS A VETERAN AMBASSADOR: BE HONORABLE, ACT WITH INTEGRITY AND SERVE OTHERS WELL.



ATTRACTING

VETERAN

TALENT

As veteran ambassadors, we help ensure that our employers hire the best available talent. Veteran talent, in particular, but why should we care? And what should we know about attracting high-quality candidates that we don't already know? Being an informed insider is crucial to successfully serving your company, your industry and your peers.

Several U.S. manufacturers have established reputations for employing veterans in record numbers. The lessons we can learn from their experiences are invaluable, as we work hard in our own departments and work hard to develop strong

ambassador teams. Those teams should serve our employers, while recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of our fellow veterans.

What follows are a series of insightful, insider perspectives which will help you understand:

- Which challenges manufacturers face
- Why leading manufacturers put veterans first
- What it means to partner with educational institutions
- How career fairs benefit both veterans and manufacturers

CHALLENGES MANUFACTURERS FACE

Major network television programs, like 60 Minutes, have run detailed reports about the millions of job openings in the U.S.—hundreds of thousands of which remain unfilled in the manufacturing sector. The National Association of Manufacturers cites several reasons. Two include the skills gap mentioned earlier and misconceptions about manufacturing.

The skills gap refers to critical competencies, which even those who've achieved high levels of education sometimes lack. Veterans are generally eager to learn and can apply their hard-earned education benefits in pursuit of higher knowledge. They can also choose to enroll in specialized training programs.

Even with the success of targeted, community-college and manufacturer-based training programs, public misconceptions persist in casting manufacturing jobs as though they're carried out in dreary, day-to-day conditions.

This may make potential hires prone to search elsewhere. As a veteran ambassador, you can combat this faulty thought process.

Having worked in manufacturing, you know that jobs like yours pay well. They may even offer you the freedom to manage your own workload. The satisfaction you gain from a job well done

is second to none. That's why sharing your personal story is so important. Use it to lead other veterans to success in the workplace and to help fill vacancies as well as new jobs in the industry.

**RECALIBRATE PUBLIC OPINION BY
HIGHLIGHTING WHAT YOU'VE GAINED
FROM WORKING IN MANUFACTURING.**

Recalibrate public opinion by highlighting what you've gained from working in manufacturing



CURT JASPER

Human Resources/
Operations at Ajax Metal Forming Solutions
Veteran, U.S. Army (Ret. Cmd. Sgt.
Maj./E-9, 1982-2010)

COMBATTING MISCONCEPTIONS

Educators, guidance counselors, and others in the training professions recognize manufacturing as an industry with staying power. Public opinion polls laud its ability to keep the U.S. economy moving forward and to keep people employed. It's known for offering highly-rewarding positions with competitive wages that are responsive to differences in individual performance. And yet?

"A lot of people still mistakenly think of it as a dark, dirty and unsafe environment," says Curt Jasper, a U.S. Army retiree, heads up HR and Operations at E.J. Ajax. A veteran ambassador in his own right, he is one of the first to admit that to outsiders "manufacturing" sounds like a dirty word.

Today's manufacturers spend millions ensuring that the workplace is anything but. They spend nearly as much, if not more, attracting highly skilled workers who possess both soft skills and hard skills: strong core values, a good attitude, technical proficiency, and computer knowledge. Not to mention an ability to make decisions and self-motivate—which veterans excel at.

"The veterans out on the floor seem to be able to take more punches. Everything's changing, throughout the day. You have to be able to change with it, shift your focus and keep moving toward the end goal. Some people say, 'Yep, it'll be here tomorrow.' Others say, 'It's gotta get done, so let's get it done.'"

Hard-charging veterans prefer to get the job done.

"I can push veterans hard and they know where I'm coming from," said Jasper.

Hiring veterans is a high priority at Ajax Metal Forming Solutions. Jasper assists with workforce development in greater Minneapolis—where Ajax is located—by attending job fairs and by encouraging other HR representatives to establish a sense of community for veterans in manufacturing.

"Have a veteran in your office who can talk veteran. Have a problem? Get their peers involved."

That's because veterans of all ages, eras, and branches share a unique bond. Jasper knows this firsthand. After leaving the military, he ran a golf course. Two years in, he decided that working nights and weekends didn't excite him. He then spent 10 months looking for a new job and decided on manufacturing. His role, within HR, provides him with a unique vantage point.

Veterans new to manufacturing, he says, stick around when they know who their fellow veterans are.

"There are just some things about our environment which help veterans succeed."

As a culture, it fits. As a career choice, the level of opportunity is astounding.

Veteran ambassadors know this and encourage others to pursue these careers seriously. They help others civilianize their resumes and explain what employers are looking for. They tell them not to let a lack of formal training, certification or skills stand in their way. They encourage them to view their military experience, with its ever-increasing levels of responsibility, as an asset.

They explain that, in manufacturing, it's not uncommon to have control over every aspect of your job. It's par for the course to be challenged to manage multiple projects simultaneously. There's a need to reprioritize workloads and address issues of immediate concern. In short, there's a strong demand for adaptability, which is something veterans are well-versed in.

That trait holds real value for veterans—and for the manufacturers who employ them.



PUTTING VETERANS FIRST

Why would manufacturers work so hard to prioritize veterans? To recruit us into positions even we're not sure we're qualified to fill? Many veterans voice concerns about being underqualified, express uncertainty about their transferable skill sets and downplay their unique ability to problem solve on the fly.

In truth, veterans who've transitioned out of the military and launched second careers in manufacturing routinely bring with them a wealth of built-in skills and character traits—ones this sector is eager to reward. While communicating those things in writing (say, on a resume or a job application) can feel like a daunting task, it shouldn't stop us dead in our tracks.

In more cases than not, it's a lack of awareness that keeps us from entering the manufacturing sector. Alcoa and the new Arconic are working hard to shatter those illusions by putting veterans first on their list of priorities. The manufacturer has already established a company-wide network of veteran-specific Employee Resource Groups. It recently expanded that program's reach, rolling it out overseas.

ERGs, as we mentioned earlier, consist of individuals who fill similar roles within their own organization or within different

organizations. Those participating in ERGs benefit from peer support, as they: brainstorm new ideas, share best practices and network with others who can relate to the challenges they face and take pride in helping them celebrate their successes.

Whether you work for a small-, mid-sized or large manufacturer, an ERG can be beneficial in helping you identify worthwhile tools and strategies. It can also offer you the support you need.

PRIORITIZING ERGS FOR VETERANS



Before the launch of Arconic, Alcoa launched an international, veteran-specific ERG organization with a call to action that went out in 2015. The company employs 60,000 people worldwide and views veterans as an important talent pool. So much so that Alcoa and Arconic help small to mid-sized manufacturers

"WHEN VETERANS LEAVE THE ARMED FORCES, THEY TAKE WITH THEM (THE IMPRINT OF) A DIFFERENT CULTURE," SAYS SUZANNE VAN DE RAADT, DIRECTOR, GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT. "THAT REQUIRES MANUFACTURERS TO PUT DIFFERENT MECHANISMS IN PLACE AND TO DEVISE NEW REWARD SYSTEMS, BUT IT'S WELL WORTH THE INVESTMENT."

and several education partners bring veterans into the fold.

"When veterans leave the armed forces, they take with them (the imprint of) a different culture," says Suzanne Van de Raadt, Director, Global Communications and Program Development. "That requires manufacturers to put different mechanisms in place and to devise new reward systems, but it's well worth the investment."

Bringing veterans together, through ERGs, helps reinforce the message that manufacturing is a beneficial career choice—a far cry from expectations they will be toiling away in the dank conditions common to Charles Dickens novels. By sharing their stories and insights, veterans participating in ERGs find strength in numbers and come to rely on their peers for advice and encouragement.

They also gain clarity about their capabilities and discover opportunities to keep learning.

The skill level and dedication a career in manufacturing requires,

which veterans are a natural fit for, allow our employees to support their families with a single job. Apprenticeships, internships and education programs help, as well, ensuring that they get the on-the-job and classroom training they need to excel.

That alone is proof that a perceived lack of first-hand experience is an internal roadblock we veterans need to break through. The manufacturing industry wants to provide us with the tools to succeed. U.S. manufacturers—like Arconic—are ready, willing and able to do just that.

"The rigor and training soldiers have received," says Laurie Roy, Director of Corporate Human Resources at Alcoa, "really helps position them well to enter the workforce."

Roy knows what she's talking about, having served the U.S. Army (Sgt./E-5) from 1987 to 1992.

"Veterans have the skills manufacturing looks for. When you hire a veteran, you're hiring someone who's already proven to have technical and leadership skills and is highly adaptable."

ERGs help fast-track their careers, by matching veterans with peer mentors who can point them in the right direction. With manufacturing jobs on the table having someone guide the way for new hires simply makes sense. Veterans in transition who are looking for their next job opportunity can greatly benefit from the camaraderie of an ERG.

That's what makes these collaborative efforts so important. Veterans possess uncommon leadership and critical thinking skills. They're adept at utilizing teamwork and problem-solving capabilities to get the job done. They also come equipped with a change-orientation that's unmatched by civilians.

In Arconic's view, the sky's the limit and veterans are free to climb as high as they can possibly reach. ERG programs help



MAKING THE MOST OF MILITARY CAREER FAIRS

lead them up the career ladder.

When veterans begin seeking employment, it's critical that they know one fundamental truth: Interviewing is a two-way street. Yes, it's important to translate their military experience into terms that make sense to manufacturers represented at career fairs. But without an ability to explain those experiences and point to transferable skill, they may not get very far.

Veterans working in manufacturing know this. Many who help lead HR and recruitment efforts on behalf of their employers have begun offering resume-writing workshops, job-search clinics and mock-interview sessions for the benefit of their veteran peers. Yet, military career fairs not only benefit veterans seeking employment. They also benefit us and the companies we represent.

Here are a few ways military career fairs benefit veteran ambassadors and manufacturers alike.

For Veteran Ambassadors—5 Ways Career Fairs Benefit You:

- Connect with large numbers of veterans.
- Identify other potential community partners.
- Share your expertise with a population in need.



KRIS URBAUER

Program Manager, Military Recruiting & JOLP at General Electric
U.S. Veteran (O-4/U.S. Army, 1986-1995 and 2001-2002)

While General Electric has a history of hiring veterans, over the last 20 years, and especially since 2012, it has redoubled its emphasis on hiring veterans.

“We’ve got a strong veteran base, in the U.S.,” says Kris Urbauer, “with over 10,000 veterans and reservists working at locations across the nation.”

Urbauer served in the U.S. Army—on two different occasions. First on active-duty and then as a reservist, who was called back in response to 9/11 attacks. As a Program Manager at G.E., she heads up the company’s Military Recruiting & Junior Officer Leadership Program.

In 2012, G.E. set a goal of hiring 5,000 more veterans in 5 years. By April 2016, it had.

“We used various activities to enhance our visibility in the veteran space. The biggest thing we did, with regard to reaching out, was to start running veteran training workshops in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.”

What does G.E. gain from coaching veterans through the job search and hiring process?

A veteran who enters a career in manufacturing often has the ability to work on a wide range of equipment, regardless of Military Occupational Specialty (or MOS). They are quick to grasp new concepts, adjust to new processes and take civilian employers’ expectations seriously.

“They get folks moving toward completion of the mission,” says Urbauer. “Since manufacturing is a mission-driven environment, it’s a natural fit.”

Having a Veterans Network in place and growing the organization’s efforts to recruit veterans is a benefit to both

“IT’S AN OPPORTUNITY, FOR ME AND FOR MEMBERS OF OUR VETERANS NETWORK TEAM, TO COACH OTHER VETERANS. IT HELPS THEM LOOK UPON US AS LEADERS AND AS PEERS.”

employers and would-be employees. In G.E.’s case, Urbauer arranges and leads workshops in support of the U.S. Chamber’s “Hiring Our Heroes” Initiative—which spurred its 2012 redoubling of effort.

At career fairs, specifically, G.E. helps veterans prepare for the civilian sector. Taking a cue from the Dept. of Defense Transition Assistance Program, G.E. offers a TAP-style class that lasts roughly 1.5 hours. Veterans get help retrofitting their experience to suit a civilian marketplace, with topics that include resume writing, interviewing, job selection, and employer interaction.

“It’s an opportunity, for me and for members of our Veterans Network team, to coach other veterans. It helps them look upon us as leaders and as peers.”

It also helps G.E. identify talented veterans, via a Veterans Network comprised of employees whose common bond is military service. Through one-on-one coaching at job fairs and elsewhere, it assists veterans with their transition and rewards them with jobs well-suited to their skill sets.

“It’s nice to have folks in place who have been through the transition and can help others.”

For more information on the “Hiring Our Heroes” Initiative, visit USChamberFoundation.org.

THE BRAND AND RESOURCES

THE BRAND: POSTERS

YOUR
NEXT
MISSION:
MANUFACTURING



Between 2015 and 2025, **3.5 million** manufacturing jobs will need to be filled.

For every \$1 spent in manufacturing, **another \$1.37** is added to the U.S. economy

77% of Americans consider a strong manufacturing base a matter of national priority.

The average manufacturing worker earns **65K ANNUALLY**

 www.themanufacturinginstitute.org

OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN THE MILITARY

OUTSTANDING SERVICE IN MANUFACTURING

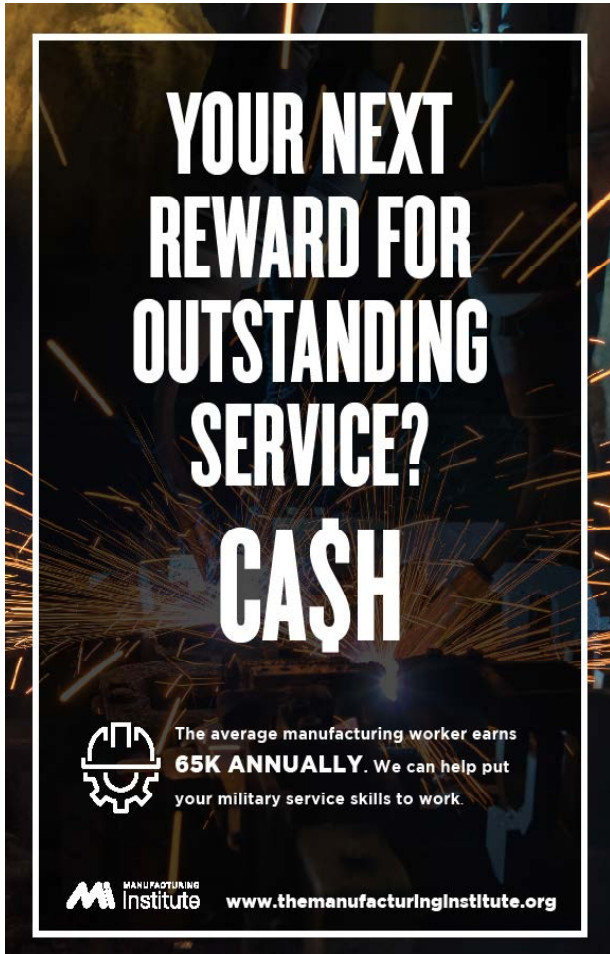
 www.themanufacturinginstitute.org

THE BRAND: SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

YOUR
NEXT
MISSION:
MANUFACTURING

The average manufacturing worker earns **65K ANNUALLY**. We can help put your military service skills to work.

THE BRAND: POSTERS



PRINTING

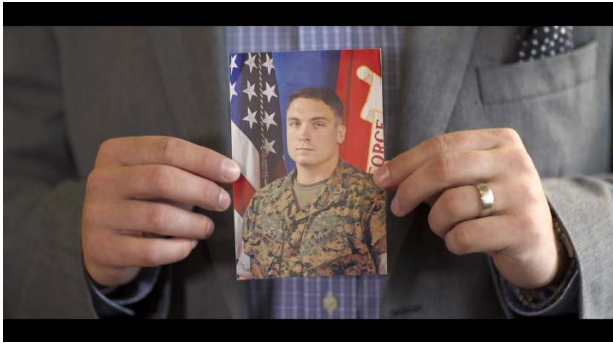
The Institute will provide a full pdf and a print pdf version of the marketing materials.

The full pdf is to be used for in-house printing. Most materials can be printed on any standard size paper.

The print pdf is to be used for professional printing, and will include marks and bleeds.

If you need any specific printing marks, please contact The Manufacturing Institute.

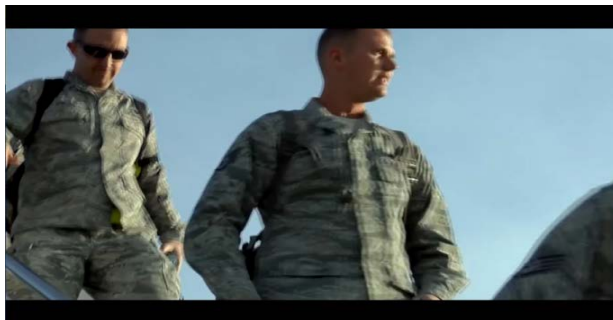
THE BRAND: VIDEOS



Video for Manufacturer Engagement: Veterans, the Economic Answer to Your Skills Gap
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN7ZbhJMIbk>)



Video for Female Veteran Recruitment: Women Veterans Discuss Transition to Manufacturing
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNBmBQdkIRY>)



Video for Veteran Recruitment: A Future for Veterans in Manufacturing
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zEACd9IA1k>)

RESOURCE: EMPLOYER PLAYBOOK

In partnership with Arconic Foundation, the Institute released an employer playbook on hiring and retaining veterans. The guide, "[From Military Front Lines to Manufacturing Front Lines: Veterans and Your Workforce](#)," contains tips and best practices for manufacturers on resourcing, hiring and retaining veterans.



INDUSTRY TALKING POINTS

When engaging with other veterans, or any individual, it is helpful to have firm knowledge about the national landscape of the U.S. manufacturing industry. Below are talking points that provide evidence of the importance of manufacturing to our economy and the challenges of our nation's skills gap. For additional facts and stats on the manufacturing industry, please visit [http:// www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Research/Facts-About-Manufacturing/Facts.aspx](http://www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/Research/Facts-About-Manufacturing/Facts.aspx). State specific data is available at <http://www.nam.org/Data-And-Reports/State-Manufacturing-Data/>.

- Manufacturers contribute \$2.08 trillion to the economy and for every dollar invested in manufacturing another \$1.81 in additional value is created in supporting sectors of the economy. Manufacturing has the highest multiplier effect of any economic sector.
- Manufacturing supports an estimated 17.4 million jobs in the United States and about one in six private-sector jobs.
- Manufacturers in the United States perform two-thirds of private sector research and development in the nation, driving more innovation than any other sector.
- Taken alone, manufacturing in the United States would be the 8th largest economy in the world.
- If asked how best to provide 1,000 jobs in their community, Americans overwhelmingly choose manufacturing; yet only 1 out of 3 parents would encourage their children to pursue a career in manufacturing.
- There are hundreds of thousands open jobs in the United States.
- By 2025:
 - 2.7 Million babyboomers will retire
 - 700,000 jobs will open up due to economic expansion
 - Over the next decade nearly 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will be needed
 - Two million U.S. manufacturing jobs are expected to go unfilled

