

HOW **2** guide: Military to Civilian Career Transition

Effectively marketing yourself in the civilian job market requires understanding what most employers are looking for in candidates, which we will call the “Four C’s” – *Competence, Character, Credibility, and Compatibility*.

Your degree of **COMPETENCE** is your ability to perform the job. Do you have the skills and abilities they are looking for? Here are some examples of desired skill sets – *Communication, Interpersonal, Technical, Organization, Leadership/Management, Analytical/critical thinking, Creativity, Teamwork, and Judgment*.

Also, do you have the knowledge, education, and training in a specific area, or related work experience?

Your **CHARACTER** traits are your personal qualities. Are you the *kind* of person they are looking for?

Here are some examples: *Hard-working, conscientious, enthusiastic, cooperative, collaborative, compassionate, caring, ethical, resourceful, resilient, and persistent*.

Your **CREDIBILITY** is a little harder to define, but it is a reflection of the level of professionalism you exhibit through your attire and interactions, your resume, cover letter, and interview, and what your references say about you.

Finally, and perhaps most important, is **COMPATABILITY**. Do you have the right combination of competencies and qualities to fit with position, department, and company culture?

Also, are you enthusiastically communicating your desire to work for that company? Companies want to hear why you are interested in them, so learn as much as you can about them and the industry in which they operate. Tell them why you think they are special and why you want to work there.

Your military service may serve as a “**DIFFERENTIATOR**” in that other candidates may not have had the same experiences as you. Leverage this to your benefit. Perhaps you have traveled internationally, learned a second language, or received a special recognition?

Here are some tips to remember when writing your resume:

- Sometimes veterans write their resume as a collection of everything they did while in the service, and consequently it ends up being too long. You should treat the resume as a *selection* of key responsibilities and accomplishments. A one page resume is ideal, although two pages is acceptable as long as all the content is relevant to the position sought.
- Most recruiters may not understand military terminology and acronyms, or highly technical job descriptions. Translate all the content into “lay terms.” Show your resume to civilian friends and ask them to point out terms they don’t know.
- Also, do not assume recruiters will be knowledgeable of ranks and the level of responsibility associated with each rank. Be explicit in describing your responsibilities, accomplishments, achievement, and promotions.

If you have any questions about how to the job search process, schedule an appointment to meet with a Career Advisor by using the contact information at the top of the page. (To access other helpful job search guides used by FGCU Career Services, go to: <http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/Careers/handouts.asp>)