

Veterans An 'Adaptable, Hidden Talent Pool': Toronto Sun, November 11, 2020

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Companies transform business

LINDA WHITE

Most businesses are finding the silver lining in the pandemic cloud, new research from global staffing firm Robert Half suggests.

According to a survey of 600 senior managers in Canada, 85 per cent of respondents say their organization has improved operations or pursued new opportunities, including one or more of the following: redesigning job roles, moving forward with digital transformation, enhancing an existing service, implementing or improving e-commerce functionality, increasing focus on data analytics, adopting a new business model and launching a new product line or service.

The research also suggests organizations are realizing benefits of change, with one quarter or more of senior managers saying their team has experienced one or more of the following: more frequent communication from leadership, improved collaboration within and across teams, better rapport between managers and staff, greater transparency and visibility into business priorities, more efficient processes resulting in faster turnaround times and more innovation.

LinkedIn launches new tools

An interactive career explorer tool and insights designed to help job seekers understand how the skills they have translate into alternate jobs and career paths is among new tools recently launched by LinkedIn.

In response to data that finds sharing your unemployed status can be key to finding your next job, LinkedIn invites jobseekers to add its #OpenToWork frame to their profile photo.

In a bid to help small and medium-sized business continue their recovery and compete for qualified talent, it's rolling out a #Hiring profile photo frame so jobseekers can see who's hiring in their LinkedIn feed. LinkedIn members can also post jobs for free.

Finally, LinkedIn has identified the top trending skills globally since COVID-19 hit, which include digital skills like programming and digital marketing. It has made courses free to help job seekers prepare for the future and introduced new interview preparation for in-demand jobs like project manager and software engineer.

VETERANS AN 'ADAPTABLE, HIDDEN TALENT POOL'

Hiring guide helps companies build teams that include veterans

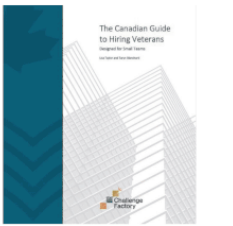
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This past spring, members of the Canadian Armed Forces were deployed to long-term care facilities that were overrun by COVID-19 outbreaks to help prevent the spread of infection. Their intervention also brought to light disturbing observations detailed in a much-publicized military report.

Like many Canadians, Lisa Taylor applauded the work of those military members but the sought-after expert on today's changing world of work also saw something she hopes business owners will also recognize: veterans are an "adaptable, versatile and hidden talent pool" for COVID-19 recovery.



Lisa Taylor, founder and president of the Toronto-based research and consultancy firm Challenge Factory, says veteran crisis skills can be used by businesses during the pandemic.



The Canadian Guide to Hiring Veterans launched Nov. 9.

"Veterans are innovative, highly disciplined and adaptable, and trained for crisis management," says Taylor, founder and president of Challenge Factory, a Toronto-based research and consultancy firm. She regularly speaks on the future of work, the intergenerational workforce and the changing nature of careers in today's economy.

"These are skills that employers need now more than ever, yet employer bias means many will overlook the opportunity to put veteran crisis skills to work in their businesses during the pandemic. Not only are veterans prepared to step up in times of emergency and disruption but they are also uniquely equipped to strategically assess situations on small or large scales, identify problems and obstacles, and develop concrete plans and solutions to them."

The military offers a wide variety of occupations, many of which – such as supply chain management and purchasing – easily align to civilian jobs. But in her work helping veterans transition to civilian life, Taylor noticed many were experiencing "all

kinds of barriers or misunderstandings" from prospective employers.

She came to realize employers and hiring managers might not understand the workplace skills and behaviours of candidates with military backgrounds. Take, for example, a common myth that veterans are take-charge people who want to be in control and give orders. "Military training emphasizes learning how to solve problems, work with discipline and integrate into a team. This means veterans make good leaders and team players," Taylor says.

The Canadian Guide to Hiring Veterans draws on Challenge Factory's national research on employer hiring biases and the unique working style of veterans as it explores common myths about veterans in the civilian workforce. For example:

- There isn't a typical veteran. Each has unique skills, disposition and interests.
- Physical and mental health considerations aren't military-specific. They're present in every Canadian workforce.
- Military roles evolve constantly requiring a focus on lifelong learning, keen strategic thinking and communication skills.
- Many veterans don't have work history outside of the military and may not be familiar with employment conditions, benefits or civilian workplace norms.
- There are important similarities between military and business environments, especially the focus on goals, need for teamwork, and presence of competition and office settings.

The guide, launched November 9, is available for free download from the Challenge Factory website (www.challengefactory.ca). Ebook and paperback versions are also available.

including a hiring checklist and onboarding framework. An interview guide is designed to help interviewers prepare questions for veterans, understand how veterans may experience the interview differently than civilians, and ensure that an environment is created in which veterans' skills and qualifications can be explored usefully.

"One important tip is to not shy away from prompting veterans to talk about their military careers and occupations," Taylor says.

The book specially looks at the myths that may be introducing bias into recruitment related to veterans. "More broadly, it starts to pose the question, 'Where else might bias be inhibiting the ability to find great talent?' It's not a big leap to say if we have misperceptions about veterans, what other groups might we also be overlooking?"

Drawing attention to misperceptions can help to dismantle them, Taylor maintains.

"Fostering work environments in which they are not tolerated or perpetuated is also key to ensuring the success of the veteran employee, their team and the organization as a whole."