

America's Heroes at Work:

# The Veteran Hiring Report

*What U.S. Employers Need to Know*



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 2015, there were 3.6 million men and women who had served in the military during the Gulf War Era II, or what is more commonly known as the post-9/11 veteran population. This study was conducted to gain a better understanding of post-9/11 veteran's experience and expectations while job hunting and at work following their military experience. The report explores what factors veterans believe are holding them back from landing a job, what they look for in an employer, and what benefits employers can gain from hiring veterans.

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## Section 1:

# Post-9/11 Veterans Struggle to Build Civilian Careers

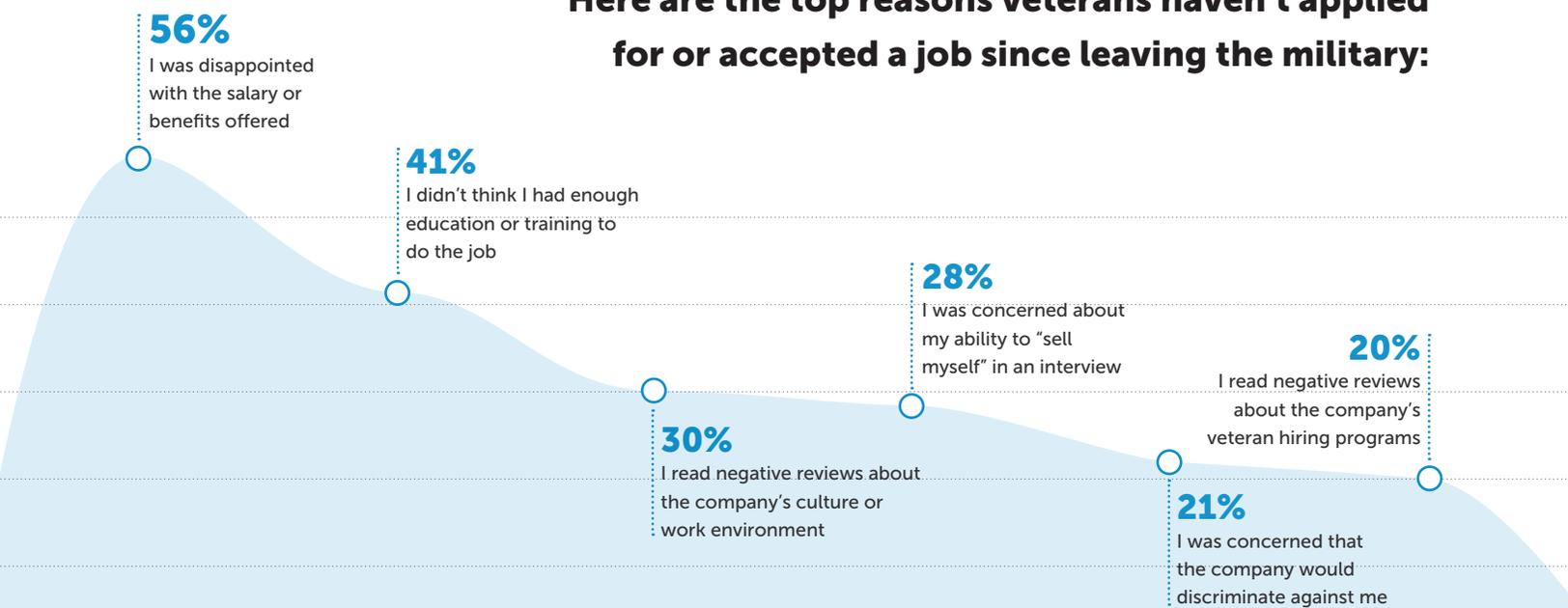
As reported by the BLS, as recently as March 2016, the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans declined 1.4 percentage points from 2014 to 2015 to 5.8%. While the unemployment rate for post-9/11 veterans is on the decline, our survey reveals just how tough it continues to be for veterans to build a career in the civilian workplace – and why some employers fail to attract talented candidates with military service experience.

## Job Hunt Challenges

When looking for a job, post-9/11 veterans might not be finding the right opportunities. ***In fact, 86% of post-9/11 veterans decided not to apply for or accept a job after leaving the military.***

Disappointment with the salary or benefits offered (56%) was the top reason, followed by believing they didn't have enough education or training to do the job (41%), and reading negative reviews about the company's culture or work environment (30%).

### Here are the top reasons veterans haven't applied for or accepted a job since leaving the military:

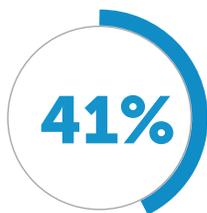


Corporate veteran hiring initiatives and programs make a difference, but here's some discouraging news from post-9/11 veterans: **74% believe it would take them longer to find a job than a non-veteran with the same level of work experience.**

Nearly 3 in 4 post-9/11 veterans believe it would take them longer to find a job than an equally qualified non-veteran.

Many veterans expressed the fears and challenges they face during the job search process including a perceived bias and skills gap. In fact, **41% of post-9/11 veterans believe hiring managers do not understand their military experience**, 37% believe hiring managers devalue their military experience, and 36% believe job postings require more specialized experience than they have.

### Veterans share which aspects of job searching they find the most challenging since leaving the military:



Hiring managers *do not understand my military experience*



Hiring managers *devalue my military experience*



Job postings *require more specialized experience* than I have



I have *difficulty translating my military skills* to the job hunt



Online *applications processes* are *confusing* or overwhelming

\*Survey respondents were asked to choose up to two aspects.

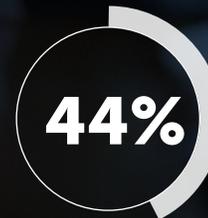
## Seeking Equity

In the face of a perceived anti-military bias, veterans in the civilian job market may downplay their military experience. In fact, **47% of post-9/11 veterans have understated or excluded their military service on their resume or online job application.** Among those who have understated or hidden their military experience, **44% were concerned their military service would negatively impact the hiring decision.**

## Employers Have a Lot of Room for Improvement: Veterans Express Their Frustrations

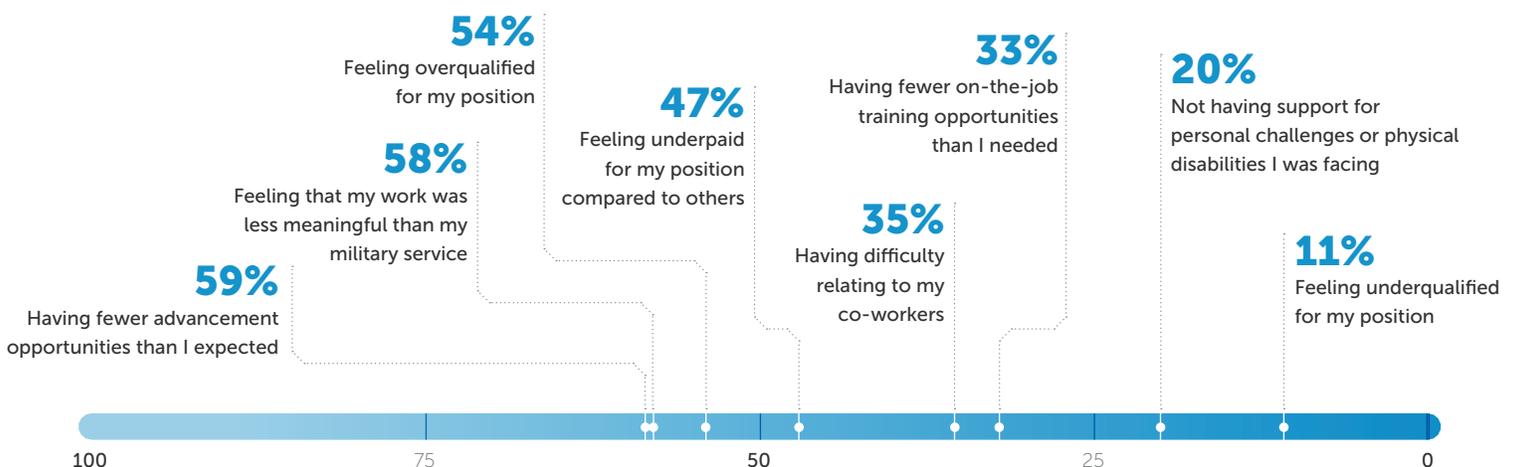
Even after being hired, veterans can still experience a career slump. Among those who have been employed post-discharge, **59% of post-9/11 veterans believe they have fewer advancement opportunities than expected** and 58% feel their work was less meaningful than their military service, and 54% feel overqualified for their position.

Nearly 3 in 5 veterans feel their civilian workplace advancement opportunities have suffered since being discharged from the military.



44% of veterans were concerned their military service would **negatively** impact the hiring decision.

### Many veterans cite issues in the workplace since leaving the military:



## Section 2:

# How Employers Can Recruit & Retain Talented Veterans

Military service is an honor and a sacrifice, but for some veterans it can also lead to struggles when joining the civilian work world. In fact, **85% of employed post-9/11 veterans are not completely satisfied with their current job. Additionally, 86% of post-9/11 veterans spend time each week looking for a new job.** On average, veterans spend 10 hours a week looking for a new job.

## Hire a Veteran and Serve Those Who Have Served Our Country

In addition to benefiting from the skills and talents military veterans can bring to a company, employers who hire veterans may qualify for incentives and tax credits from the government. Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) may be earned by employers who hire veterans who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. The tax benefits range from \$1,200 to \$9,600 depending on the hire. On Nov. 21, 2011, President Obama signed the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, which enacted two new veteran tax credits: the Returning Heroes Tax Credit and the Wounded Warrior Tax Credit. These tax credit programs were recently extended through 2019.

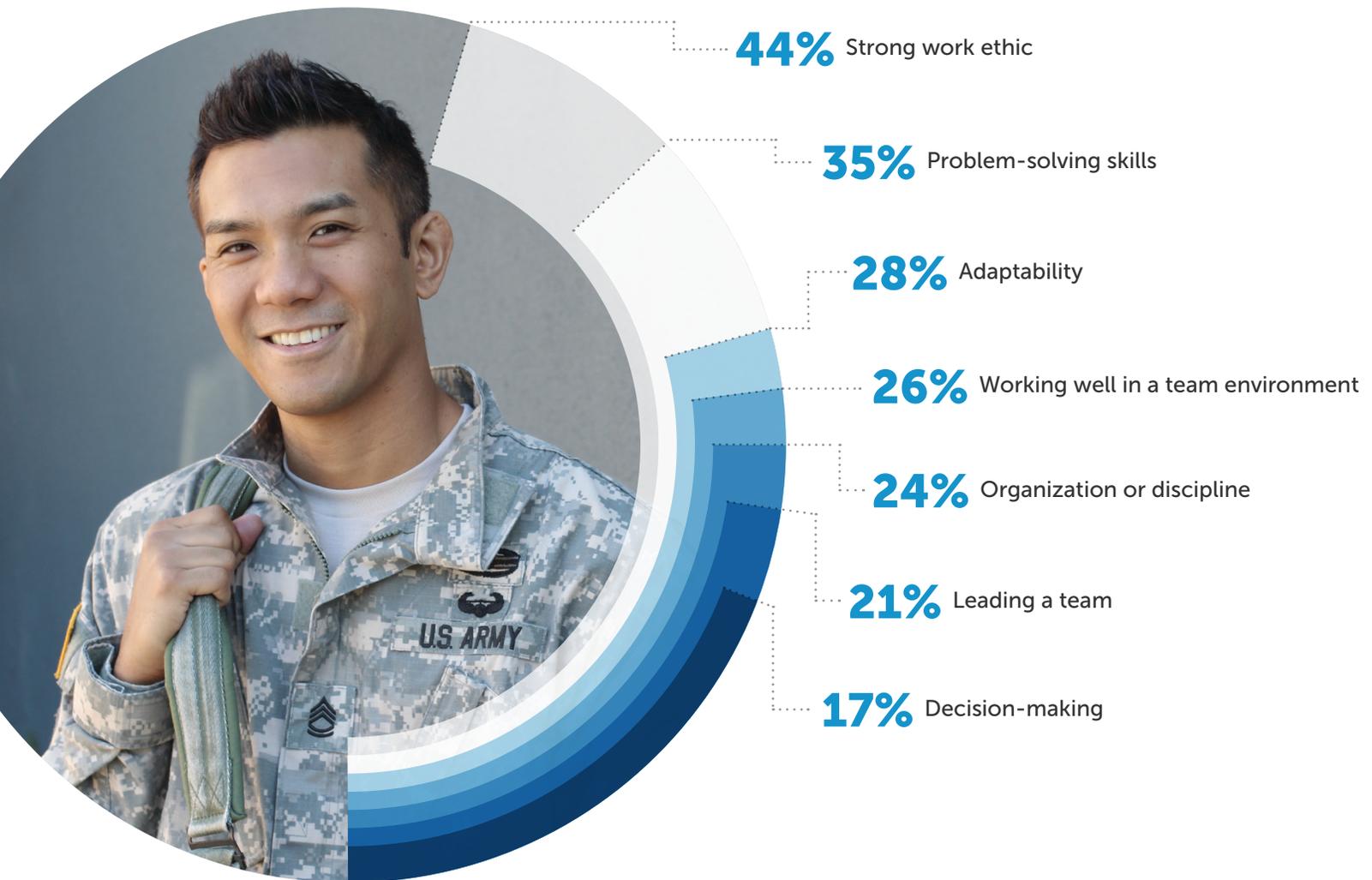
- The Wounded Warrior Tax Credit provides up to \$9,600 to employers for the first year for each unemployed veteran hired who has a disability related to their service in the armed forces.
- The Returning Heroes Tax Credit provides up to \$5,600 to employers for the first year for each veteran hired who either has received food stamps for three months in the past 15 months or has been unemployed for at least four weeks in the past year.

In many states in the U.S., there are additional state-level tax incentives for hiring and employing veterans.

## Veterans Have the Top Skills Employers Are Looking for in New Hires

According to a recent survey of employers by the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) (NACE), leadership, strong work ethic, problem-solving skills, and ability to work in a team were among the top six skills employers seek on a candidate's resume.

**These results match up with the skills post-9/11 veterans believe they have, which can best be applied to the civilian workforce:**



*\*Survey respondents were asked to choose up to two traits.*

## Mentoring: A Way Veterans Can Continue to Serve

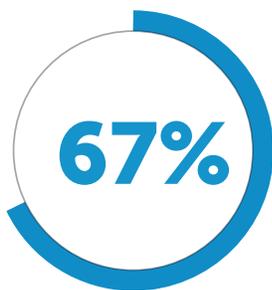
Leadership is something that comes naturally for many veterans – and companies can tap into this if they have a strong mentorship program. *In fact, 93% of post-9/11 veterans would be willing to serve as a mentor to a civilian employee*, for example, teaching skills they learned in the military and how they can be applied to the workplace.

## Tips for Employers on How to Improve Veteran Hiring Initiatives

Eighty-six percent of veterans, *including 82% of those employed*, are currently job hunting—here's how to attract the best vets to your company.

If you're looking for the best and the brightest veterans to join your team, keep in mind the job qualities post-9/11 veterans say would most attract them to a company: salary or employee benefits (67%), advancement or promotion opportunities (58%) and on-the-job training opportunities (32%).

### Job qualities post-9/11 veterans say would most attract them to a company:



Salary or employee benefits



Advancement or promotion opportunities



On-the-job training opportunities

## Where to Find Job-Seeking Veterans

General job boards such as Indeed or CareerBuilder are the most popular among job-seeking post-9/11 veterans with 61% looking for jobs on them, followed by government websites (45%) and career websites of specific companies (42%). While our research has shown that [many jobs seekers now use social media](#) to search for and apply to jobs, surprisingly only 2% of veterans said they use these sites to look for open jobs.

### Veterans share the top sources they use when searching for a job:



\*Respondents were asked to check all that apply.

## Untapped Talent

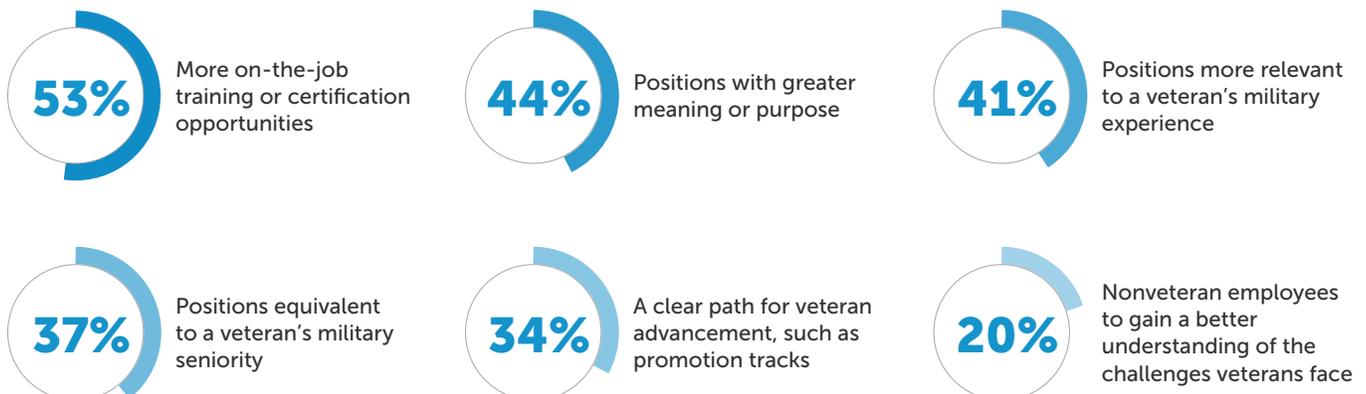
Even when companies recruit and hire veterans, they may be failing to make the most of their talents and experience. *Disappointingly, 63% of employed post-9/11 veterans believe they use 50% or less of the job skills they learned in the military.* This could be causing frustration and even boredom for veterans transitioning to civilian jobs. By gaining an understanding of the top skills veterans hold, employers can tap into this talent and ensure they are providing a challenging and rewarding career path.

On average, employed veterans feel they regularly use just 45% of the job skills they learned in the military at their current job.

## Looking Forward – What Employers Can Do to Improve

Employers are still missing the mark when it comes to building out great veteran hiring programs and continuing to improve them. In fact, *89% of post-9/11 veterans who have been employed post-discharge have never been asked by an employer or prospective employer for their feedback regarding its veteran hiring program.* In order to recruit and retain veteran top talent, employers need to be asking for feedback about the application, interview, and employee onboarding processes to make sure they are not missing the mark.

If you are having trouble attracting and retaining the veterans, here is a look at what post-9/11 veterans want from their employer:



## The Employers Who Are Doing It Right

According to [MilitaryTimes](#), the top five employers for veterans in 2016 were Verizon, Union Pacific Railroad, USAA, PwC, and BAE Systems.

Rank	Company	Industry	Total Employees	Total Military Employees	% of Recruiting Budget for Veterans
1	 Verizon	Telecommunications	162,162	11,643	7%
2	 Union Pacific Railroad	Transportation	47,200	9,813	15%
3	 USAA	Insurance	28,681	4,758	30%
4	 PwC	Consulting	1,039	128	10%
5	 BAE Systems	Defense/ Aerospace	29,320	4,523	25%

## 3 Tips on How to Put These Insights into Action with Technology

### 1. Monitor and Adjust Sourcing Strategies



In order to make an organization more visible, employers should regularly use multiple channels to discover which sources are most effective. Employers can make open positions easy to discover by advertising where candidates are looking, such as government websites or veteran job boards. Dedicated talent acquisition technology helps companies more effectively build candidate pipelines with automation and ease. Companies of all sizes can explore and test candidate outreach channels to attract more candidates and reduce their time to fill. Employers should partner with a technology provider that allows for a seamless flow of information from multiple vendors into a single talent acquisition system of record.

### 2. Encourage Employee Referrals



Leverage your existing veteran employees' networks and encourage them to refer others to your open positions. Part of the reason employee referrals are considered so successful by employers is because they are effective at attracting talent that easily fits into a company's existing culture. By capitalizing on employee networks, companies can enhance their ability to compete for veteran talent.

### 3. Promote Your Employment Brand



In order to market your organization as an employer of choice for veterans, companies need to build their employment brand in the military community. Allow candidates to sign up for email communications and automate the process with a recruitment marketing tool. Produce veteran facing recruitment marketing email campaigns that highlight the veterans who work in your organization and what they have accomplished while working for you. Address why your company is interested in recruiting veterans and clearly outline how a military background is a good fit for your open positions.

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## About Us

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### Methodology:

This iCIMS Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research among 708 U.S. post-9/11 veterans, between August 22 and August 29, 2016, using an email invitation and an online survey distributed by RecruitMilitary.

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### About iCIMS:

iCIMS is the leading provider of talent acquisition solutions that help businesses win the war for top talent. iCIMS empowers companies to manage their entire hiring process within the industry's most robust Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS). Built on the foundation of a best-to-market talent acquisition software suite, iCIMS' PaaS framework, UNIFI, allows employers to expand the capabilities of their core talent acquisition technology by integrating with the largest partner ecosystem in talent acquisition to help them attract, find, screen, and manage candidates. Offering scalable, easy-to-use solutions that are backed by award-winning customer service, iCIMS supports more than 3,500 contracted customers and is one of the largest and fastest-growing talent acquisition solution providers.

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### About iCIMS Hiring Insights:

iCIMS Hiring Insights is an online resource for labor market insights and hiring trends. Our team of researchers and writers uses iCIMS' exclusive data, as well as proprietary and secondary research, to create reports and articles that cover the most recent developments in the workforce. Featuring iCIMS' Chief Economist, Josh Wright, iCIMS Hiring Insights helps its readers stay well-informed about the latest in recruiting, technology, and the labor market. To learn more visit: [www.icims.com/hiring-insights](http://www.icims.com/hiring-insights).



### About RecruitMilitary:

RecruitMilitary is the nation's leading veteran hiring company, offering a diverse array of branding, employment, and retention services to help employers connect with America's best talent—its veterans. We host the nation's largest single-source veteran database, publish one of the nation's largest veteran hiring magazines, and host hundreds of regional job fairs to connect private and public sector employers with veterans. As a veteran-owned company, we offer our services free of charge to veterans and their spouses to support them during their job search.