CAREER ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK
FOR VETERANS TRANSITIONING INTO CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

FARMER VETERAN COALITION
THE MISSION OF THE FARMER VETERAN COALITION IS TO MOBILIZE VETERANS TO FEED AMERICA.

FVC designed this workbook to assist you with identifying your individual personality and your specific interests and skills as they relate to selecting a career in agriculture.

Those who complete the workbook will be able to analyze and formulate possible career and vocational matches and make better decisions regarding a selected career choice or further education/training.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

Wounded Warrior Project®

RESEARCHED & COMPiled BY:

Karin L. Mack, FVC Career Development Coordinator, 2014
April 2014

On behalf of the staff at Farmer Veteran Coalition, I'd like to congratulate you on your decision to focus on skills required for developing a career in agriculture.

Since 2009, the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) has been assisting veterans in building their agricultural businesses or finding employment in agricultural pursuits. We are proud to partner with the Wounded Warrior Project® to provide focused, individualized job-readiness support to veterans.

In January 2014, FVC hired an experienced career development professional and soon thereafter launched our Career Development Program. Its purpose is to provide our members with the kind of one-on-one, in-depth assistance that can mean the difference when trying to get the interview for an agriculture job or enhance an agriculture career.

Our individualized approach to providing you with career guidance, along with this workbook, is central to our career support to veterans. We hope that you will find the assessment tools in this workbook helpful in understanding your individual strengths, areas for focus, and career related preferences.

Our professional staff stands ready to work with you as you pursue your career goals!

Best,

Michael P. O’Gorman
Executive Director
Farmer Veteran Coalition
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Throughout your life, you acquired a set of values — beliefs and ideas that are important to you. For example, you may believe that you should always be honest or that you must always be a loyal friend. Clarifying your work values, that subset of values that relate to your career, is essential. Your work values are both intrinsic, relating to the actual tasks involved in practicing a particular occupation, and extrinsic, relating to the by-products of an occupation. An intrinsic value might be helping others, while an example of an extrinsic value is earning a lot of money.

This is by no means an exhaustive list — if you think of other values to add, keep track on your own list.

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Underline all the values most important to your work life for the next few years.
2. Narrow down the list of underlined words by circling the top 5 values that are absolutely essential to you.
3. Prioritize those top 5 and rank them in space below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Content</th>
<th>Work Setting</th>
<th>Work Relationships</th>
<th>Intrinsic Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenging</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>Deadline pressure</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Surroundings</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Prestige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading edge</td>
<td>High earnings</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail-oriented</td>
<td>Action-orientated</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activism</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Helping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Relaxed pace</td>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Contributing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Income</td>
<td>People contact</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rank your top 5 values (from the 5 words you circled)**

#1 should be your most important value — something you cannot live without at your workplace!

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________
4. ____________________________
5. ____________________________

**Place these top values on the Bullseye Target, page 33**

**Created by Stanford University Career Center**

**GO THE EXTRA MILE;**
Learn more about work values
http://www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Work_Values/
Transferable skills are universal; meaning, regardless of the type of work one is performing, these skills are not job-related, like speaking a foreign language or using a specific type of equipment. These will be the skills you want to present to an employer and even use on the job you’re applying for.

Review these SIX categories of transferable skills and determine whether you posses a “strong” rating or whether you “would like to have” that skill. Some skills may be repeated in another category; it just gives you a different way of thinking about that skill.

In the column under “Strong” place an “X” in that column if you are confident in this skill.

In the column under “would like to have” place a check mark “✓” if you want to add this possible skill to your career goals list.

*Remember: skills can be learned from a variety of settings, including from your military service, employment, training, education, hobbies, and volunteering.*

### MANAGEMENT SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control budgets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arrange activities or events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase sales or efficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speak well in public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruct others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervise others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work well as part of a group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Write well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize or manage projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritize work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TANGIBLE SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assemble or construct things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operate or use tools and machinery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build, observe, inspect things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repair things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct or repair buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use complex equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive or operate vehicles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use hand/eye coordination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good with your hands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weigh trucks/patients/precious metals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## DATA SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyze data or facts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keep financial records</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Locate answers or information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculate, compute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manage money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for accuracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observe or inspect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classify data or things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Record facts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare, inspect, or record facts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Set up budgets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count, observe, compile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Synthesize</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detail-oriented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Take inventory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Track information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PEOPLE SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Persuade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confront others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pleasant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sociable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tactful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgoing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# VERBAL/CREATIVE SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correspond with others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate verbally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Create new ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Retain information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingenious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Write clearly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use words carefully</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Original</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Play instrument</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing/Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Present artistic ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Leadership Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Would like to have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrange social functions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mediate problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Motivate people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiate agreements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Results-oriented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain things to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Run meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate new tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-confident</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-controlled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-motivated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identify two strong skills in each of the “transferable skills” categories — If you have not identified a strong skill in a category, then identify the two skills you would like to learn from your “would like to have” columns.

- **Management**
  1. ______________________ 2. ______________________

- **Tangible**
  1. ______________________ 2. ______________________

- **Data**
  1. ______________________ 2. ______________________

- **People**
  1. ______________________ 2. ______________________

- **Verbal/Creative**
  1. ______________________ 2. ______________________

- **Leadership**
  1. ______________________ 2. ______________________

---

**Do you have these top transferable skills employers want?**

1. Collaborators — someone who can work within a “team” environment
2. Communicators — you can express ideas
3. Decision-makers and problem-solvers — you can work independently
4. Information gathers — you can collect and process information
5. Planners, organizers and people who can prioritize tasks

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*National Association of Colleges and Employers, Job Outlook Survey 2012.*
Dr. John Holland’s theory is that people and work environments can be loosely classified into six different groups, and that different people’s personalities may find different environments more to their liking.

While you may have some interests or similarities with all six categories, we usually fall into two or three. Most people and most jobs are best represented by some combination of these categories.
Which 2–3 categories best match your interests?

___ (R) Realistic (Doers)
People who have athletic ability, prefer to work with objects, machines, tools, plants or animals, or to be outdoors. They prefer jobs such as mechanic, construction worker, ranch hand, farmer/grower, floral designer, property manager, forester, or carpenter.

___ (I) Investigative (Thinkers)
People who like to observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate, or solve problems. They look for the following types of jobs: agronomist, biologist, engineer, environmental monitor, web designer, and computer programmer.

___ (A) Artistic (Creators)
People who are artistic, innovative, or have intuitive abilities and like to work in unstructured situations using their imagination and creativity. You find this type of person among landscape designers, architects, photographers, writers or other positions that require independence and creativity.

___ (S) Social (Helpers)
People who like to work with people to enlighten, inform, help, train, or cure them, or are skilled with words. These people look for jobs that involve teaching, counseling, social work, or even as park ranger.

___ (E) Enterprising (Persuaders)
People who like to work with people, influencing, persuading, leading, or managing for organizational goals or economic gain. Examples of the jobs they like would be farm manager, banker or financial planner, stock broker or even public relations specialist.

___ (C) Conventional (Organizers)
People who like to work with data, have clerical or numerical ability, carry out tasks in detail, or follow through on others’ instructions. They like jobs where rules and orders are clear and where they can complete an assigned task on time. You often find them in jobs such as office assistant, warehouse or shopkeeper, budget analyst, librarian, and insurance adjuster.

What 2–3 letters of Holland’s Code did you select?

___  ___  ___
Careers in agriculture, food, and natural resources fall into seven types of career clusters or categories. These career clusters contain occupations in the same field of work that require similar skills. These clusters can help you plan your job search and identify additional training or education.

Following are the seven career clusters with a few examples of occupations in each cluster. For a more extensive list of occupations with detailed job descriptions, go to http://www.onetonline.org/find/career?c=1.

Does your Holland Code match any of these occupations?

What job would you place in the middle of the Bullseye Target on page 33?
Food Products and Processing Systems
- Agricultural Inspectors
- Food Science Technicians
- Aquacultural Managers
- Butchers
- Chemical Technicians
- Farm and Ranch Managers

Plant Systems
- Foresters
- Landscaping and Grounds Keeping
- Nursery Workers
- Greenhouse Managers
- Soil and Plant Scientists
- Floral Designers

Animal Systems
- Breeders
- Trainers
- Aquacultural Managers
- Farm and Home Management Advisors
- Veterinarians
- Veterinary Technicians

Power, Structural, and Technical Systems
- Equipment Operators
- Equipment Mechanics
- Service Technicians
- Parts Salesperson
- Agricultural Science Teachers, Postsecondary
- Crop Duster Mechanics

Natural Resources Systems
- Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary
- Commercial Drivers
- Earth Drillers
- Engineering Technicians
- Environmental Specialists
- Fish and Game Wardens and Foresters

Environmental Service Systems
- Compliance Inspectors
- Environmental Engineers
- Hazardous Materials Removal Workers
- Occupational Health and Safety Specialists
- Pest Control Workers
- Recycling Coordinators

Agribusiness Systems
- Agricultural Science Teachers, Postsecondary
- Audio and Video Equipment Technicians
- Buyers and Purchasing Agents, Farm Products
- Farm Labor Contractors
- Financial Managers, Branch or Department
- Food Scientists and Technologists

GO THE EXTRA MILE;
For videos relating to these career clusters, go to:
THE RESUME
Different resume styles highlight different types of experience. Before you start writing, think about what format might be best suited to highlight your qualifications. Your resume should focus on achievements that demonstrate your skills, knowledge, expertise, and record of performance.

There are two basic resume formats: chronological and functional. The main difference between them is the amount of emphasis you give your job history compared to the amount you give your skills.

1. A **chronological format** highlights your employment history. This format can work if you have a solid work history in a particular job or field and you’re planning on looking for a similar position.

2. A **functional format** highlights your skills. Use this format to show what you’re capable of doing, even if it’s not directly related to your work history. It’s the best choice if you’re changing careers.

The best resumes are usually a **combination** of these formats because it organizes your most relevant experiences into skill areas and a brief chronology of jobs you’ve held. This is a good format for career changers (e.g. transitioning from military to civilian career), those with employment gaps, or those who have little work experience.

The most persuasive resume will always match the employer’s needs, so it’s essential to communicate your skills and abilities. Your skills can be integrated throughout your resume. Here are some of the resume sections in which skills can be highlighted:

- In your summary of experience statement
- In a special skills section (core competencies)
- As part of your accomplishments (listed under your job title)
- In your continuing education section, such as certificates/training

“Your resume should capture more than the facts of your career; it should shed light on who you are as a leader.”
—Jeff Tripician, Chief Marketing Officer/EVP Sales, Niman Ranch

*These suggestions developed by the U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration’s online job assistance network: CareerOneStop [https://www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/Writeafirstdraft.aspx.](https://www.careeronestop.org/ResumeGuide/Writeafirstdraft.aspx)*
MOST COMMON SECTIONS FOR RESUME INCLUDE:

- Name and contact information (address/cell phone or home phone/email) Your name should be the biggest font on the page usually 16 pt. font

- Objective — (Optional: should be specific enough and highlight skills for the job you’re applying to.) Should be brief and concisely stated in either resume or cover letter or both

  On the resume, the Objective is the first heading after your name/address/contact information

- Summary of Experience — (Optional: used if you have more than 10 years in a certain area of training)

- Core Competencies — (Optional: bullet points of specific skills)

- Work History — (Consists of job title, employer, location, dates — if more than a year, then use years only 20XX–20XX). Include both paid and unpaid experience. Use action verbs to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments that are most relevant to the position you are seeking.

- Military Experience — (If you have additional job experience, you can also make this its own section)

- Education — (If recent, this is placed under Objective or Experience Summary; if not recent — more than 3 years — then it is usually placed as last heading item.)

- Certifications/Training — (usually after Work History)

- Not part of resume, but necessary — References — These should be listed on a separate page and provided only upon request. List three to five supervisors or teachers (with their permission). For each reference you’ll need: name, title, professional address, telephone number, and email address.

Remember, employers want to see your accomplishments and contributions, so don’t just list duties or responsibilities.
QUICK TIPS:

- Translate military jargon into civilian terms
  - Assume the hiring manager knows nothing about the military
  - “Commanded” = “Supervised” or “Directed”
  - Quantify your statements: “250 personnel,” “$3M budget,” etc.
- Focus on skills, qualifications and accomplishments that are transferable
  - Use action verbs: Improved, Oversaw, Supervised, Coordinated, Accomplished, Examined
- Do not use acronyms; spell out all affiliations
- If you’ve held numerous ranks and duties, choose the ones with responsibilities that are most relevant to the position for which you are applying.
- Offer brief explanations for any phrases or titles that may not be self-explanatory
- In brief, for each of your roles with an employer, describe a situation that included an assignment that needed to be achieved, the action taken to accomplish the assignment and the result of that action.

DO’S

- List months and years of employment, along with city and state for each employer
- List jobs starting with current or most recent
- List your participation in activities that involve teamwork
- Always tailor your resume based on your research of the company and the job you seek

DON’TS

- Repeat information
- Include personal information such as age, height, gender or use “me, myself or I”
- Mention high school unless you just graduated
- Mention skills that you don’t want to use

GO THE EXTRA MILE


Both the Navy Cool and Army Cool websites provide you with descriptions of civilian jobs that most closely relate to your military position, so be sure that they accurately describe your responsibilities. Select “Credential Search” at the top of the page and enter your job title.

Army: https://www.cool.army.mil/index.htm
Your Name Here

Address, City, ST, ZIP Code · Telephone · Email

PROFILE
Dedicated professional with eight years of outstanding performance in the U.S. Military: earned two promotions and excelled as a leader. Accountable and ambitious, able to remain focused and productive in challenging situations. Offering top-quality customer service and security operations.

SKILLS
Customer Relations · Security Operations · Asset Protection · Emergency Preparedness · Crisis Management · Defensive Techniques · Firearms Proficiency · First Aide · Computer Literate: Windows, Internet, Fluent in English & Spanish

AREAS of STRENGTH

Security
Producing a safe environment for customers and staff by providing personal and asset protection via advance security, investigations, detailed inspections, and emergency response.
- Accounted for the safety of equipment valued at $600,000+.
- Secured the personal safety, training, and performance of nine U.S. Army soldiers.
- Promoted security operations: monitored and instructed classes consisting of 39 to 130 students, strengthening knowledge and proper execution of First Aid, Survival, War tactics, and Security.
- Proved security response with tenacity, endurance, and dedication by remaining of sound mind and proving to be a leader during challenging times in Iraq.

Customer Service
Offering productive and friendly services that enhance team performance and ensure a professional customer-focused image for employers
- Promoted within (an uncommon) short period by demonstrating an over-achieving dedication that maximized results for the entire team.
- Provided internal customer service by relating with all personnel in a congenial and professional manner that facilitated the development of a diversified group.
- Enhanced soldiers’ individual and professional growth, developing them into independent decision-makers.

Operations & Administration
Ensuring optimal procedures and workflow operations, experience in organizational leadership.
- Organized schedules for over 39 soldiers, successfully enhancing time efficiency.
- Prevented over 15 cancellations, persuaded and negotiated renewals

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

U.S. Army National Guard, Sanford, FL. Squad Leader/Sergeant 2001 to 2004
Florida Solar, Olympian Pool Services, Sanford, FL Pool Tech 2001 to 2002
U.S. Army, Baumholder, Germany Team Leader/Sergeant 1996 to 2001

EDUCATION
Primary Leadership Development Course, Hohenfels, Germany 1999
U.S. Army Basic Training, Ft Benning, GA 1996
**Action Verbs for making your resume or cover letter more compelling**

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Preparing for the Interview means knowing how to “sell” yourself:

- Dress for success
- Your personal “pitch” or “elevator speech”
- Practicing with an “informational Interview”

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Select apparel, fragrances, jewelry, hairstyle, etc. that do not detract from your professional image. The interviewer’s attention should be focused on what you say and your qualifications.
- Make sure your hair is clean, neat and professionally styled. Avoid styles that cover over more than your forehead or one that you have to brush back.
- Remove facial and body piercings other than single ear jewelry for interviews.
- Visible tattoos should be covered to avoid distraction.
- Apparel should be clean and neatly pressed.
- Apparel should fit well and remain in place while sitting and/or walking.
- Choose professional apparel that you like for which you receive positive feedback from people who are knowledgeable about the industry standard or specific company policy.
- Less is more. Keep your look simple and successful until you become accustomed to the environment and learn about the company’s dress code.

GUIDELINE FOR WOMEN’S INTERVIEW ATTIRE

- Select a skirted suit, pantsuit or conservatively tailored dress.
- Skirts are traditionally knee-length but those slightly shorter or longer are also acceptable.
- Select blouses or sweaters that provide visual interest, but avoid transparent, tight fit, or have low necklines, revealing waistlines or details that detract from your face as a focal point. Typically, arms are covered at least to the biceps and often to the wrist.
• Always wear hose to interviews. Wear plain-style, non-patterned hosiery and select colors that flatter your coloring. For traditional industries, wear a neutral color. For other industries, you may choose to wear hose that coordinates with your skirt. Carry an extra pair in case of runs.
• Perfume should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear perfume.
• Use natural-looking makeup and clear nail polish. This keeps the focus on the interview.
• Do not carry a purse and a briefcase. Choose one or the other.
• Wear flat shoes or low pumps in colors that avoid making your feet a focal point. Be sure that they are clean and polished. Avoid shoes that hinder walking fast. This lowers credibility. Avoid open-toed shoes.
• Add accessories to express your personality and accentuate your best features. A scarf or necklace is an effective way to focus on your face. Keep it simple!
• Women in general wear too many accessories at the same time such as earrings, necklaces, and rings. These can accentuate your personality and can be an asset if worn in moderation. Avoid dangling earrings and wear no more than one ring per hand and a dress watch. Be sure all jewelry focuses on the face.

GUIDELINES FOR MEN’S INTERVIEW ATTIRE
• Wear a matching suit in navy, black or gray (pinstripe or solid) or wear a navy blazer and gray dress slacks. This attire serves as a visual background that draws the eye to the face.
• Wear white or a light blue dress shirt that contrasts with the jacket and/or tie. Typically, arms should be covered to the wrist. Exposing arms by rolling up your sleeves is interpreted as less powerful and is less formal.
• A (silk or silk-like) tie should coordinate with the jacket and pant, but choose one that strongly contrasts with the color of your shirt; selecting subtle or simple patterns enhances credibility.
• Socks should be calf-length or above the calf. Choose natural-fiber blends that allow a flow of air and do not hold in perspiration and heat. Choose colors such as dark blue, black or gray.
• Wear conservative, clean, and polished shoes.
• Select lace-up (not slip-on) dress shoes. The color should be dark or blend with pant.
• Select a leather belt that visually blends or matches your shoes.
• A short hair cut and no facial hair is expected.
• Minimize jewelry. Avoid a necklace. Wear no more than one ring per hand and a dress watch. Be sure all jewelry supports a focus on the face.
• A full-length coat can be worn over your suit; avoid casual coats.
• Cologne should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear cologne.
• Your briefcase is part of visual effect; consider a simple portfolio as an effective substitute, and try to select a color that supports your visual effect.
MORE TIPS

An interview is a discussion between you and an employer to find out if you can do the job. It’s your chance to make a good impression. However, there are certain rules you should follow.

- Dress smartly, look bright and attentive, and speak clearly and confidently. Don’t forget that in the first few minutes, only 7% of the interviewer’s opinion of you is formed by what you say — the rest is judged on how you look, act and sound.
- Know the interview location ahead of time and plan to arrive between 10–15 minutes early.
- Get your outfit ready the night before.
- Read the description again and research the company so that you understand the mission.
- Prepare answers for the main questions — for example, why do you want the job, what are your strengths and weaknesses, what are the main tasks in this job?
- Make about three or four points in each answer.
- Quote real examples of when you’ve used certain skills — just saying you’ve got a skill isn’t enough.
- Take a second to understand interview questions. It’s OK to ask for clarification before giving your answer.
- Sell yourself: no one else is going to! Be positive about yourself and your experiences (See next section on “the elevator speech”)
- Prepare some questions to ask at the end of the interview — use it as an opportunity to find out more about the role and the company. (Don’t ask about money or perks just yet!)
- Know ahead of time your market worth and set your own salary range because if the interviewer asks you about salary, you need to be prepared.
- Turn off your cell phone: treat the interviewers with respect and give them your undivided attention.
- Keep your answers focused on what you can do for the employer, not what they can do for you.
- When you are introduced to the interviewer, shake hands and when the interview ends, shake hands again and if you want the job, let the interviewer know you are very interested in the position.
- Get the interviewer’s business card and within 24 hours send him/her a thank you note to thank them for inviting you to interview.
WHAT NOT TO DO

• Don’t be late and don’t be too early; if you arrive more than 20 minutes ahead of schedule, use the time to sit in your car and go over your notes
• Don’t swear or use slang words
• Don’t slouch in your seat or do anything that makes you look uninterested
• Don’t smoke or chew gum
• Don’t lie: the interviewer may see through you. Even if you get the job, your employer can dismiss you if they find out that you have not been honest
• Don’t let your nervousness show too much; a few nerves are normal but extreme nerves will affect your performance. Use deep breathing techniques. Being prepared will help lessen the nervousness
• Don’t be arrogant and assume you’ve got the job. Nothing turns off employers more than someone who is disrespectful and over-confident
• Don’t discuss controversial topics such as religion, politics and gender relations
• Don’t read from notes or your resume — you should be familiar enough with your own history to be able to talk about it unprompted. It is OK to read your questions for the interviewer from your notes
• Don’t criticize former employers or colleagues. Interviewers may mark you down as a troublemaker and a gossip
• Don’t argue with the interviewer, no matter what. Remember to keep things positive!

Above all, preparation is the key to performing well in interviews. Research the role and organization, and prepare evidence and examples of your skills and competencies.

“Never ask too many questions in your first interview if there will be a second one. In the first interview you need to come prepared to show them you are the one for the job. Ask 2–3 questions at the end of the interview and no more. The second interview you can ask all the questions you need to make the decision if the job is for you.”
—Lori Culler, Founder of AgHires
Preparing Your Elevator Speech

An “elevator pitch” is used as a marketing tool for introducing yourself in a concise and timely manner. It’s called the elevator pitch because the message you want to convey should only take 30 seconds – the time it takes to ride up the elevator. It’s an opportunity to communicate to a potential employer what you can do for the company.

Your 30-second introduction of yourself should also encourage the listener to want to hear more.

Your pitch is all about:
• Who you are
• What you do
• What is your value

Here are some tips to assist you in developing a 30-second pitch

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE — Before writing any part of your elevator speech, research your audience. You will be much more likely to succeed if your elevator speech is clearly targeted at the individuals you are speaking to. Having a generic elevator pitch is almost certain to fail.

KNOW YOURSELF — Before you can convince anyone of your proposition, you need to know exactly what it is. You need to define precisely what you are offering, what problems you can solve and what benefits you bring to a prospective contact or employers. Answer the following questions:

1. What are your key strengths?
2. What adjectives come to mind to describe you?
3. What is it you are trying to “sell” about yourself: skills, job experience, career goals.
4. Why are you interested in the company or industry the person represents?

OUTLINE YOUR TALK — Start an outline of your material using bullet points. You don’t need to add any detail at this stage; simply write a few notes to help remind you of what you really want to say.

PRACTICE

PRACTICE

PRACTICE
THE INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Informational interviews are just what they sound like: interviewing a person who does a job that you might like to pursue in order to find out more about the job — you’re gathering information to help you make a more informed decision. There are several steps to an informational interview:

1. Figuring out who and how to ask for an interview
2. Conducting the interview
3. Last but not least: Sending a thank you note

A fun website to view informational interviews is www.roadtripnation.com.

WHO AND HOW TO ASK FOR AN INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW

Friends, family, neighbors, supervisors, co-workers, and anyone else these people might know. This is the beginning of your professional networking connections. Remember, you are not interviewing about a specific job opening, but rather gathering information about an occupation you may be interested in pursuing.

GUIDELINES

- Interview three people for each occupation interest
- When you call or email, mention how you got that person’s name
- Explain that you’re seeking advice based on their experiences
- Ask to meet for 20 minutes (and stick to that timeframe!)
- Bring paper and pen with you to take notes
- Research beforehand as you would for a job interview (learn about the company they work for)
- Dress and act as you would for a job interview
- DON’T ask the person for a job
- DO ask the person if they can refer you to another individual for more research
CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Okay, you’ve got the interview scheduled, now what? There are many questions that you can ask during an informational interview. Just about the only question that you shouldn’t ask is: “Do you have a job open?” Remember that you are there to gather information, not to find a job. The following is a list of potential informational interview questions, but you should really tailor your list to the person and the type of position:

1. What type of training did you pursue for your job?
2. What is a typical day like for you?
3. What do you like about your job?
4. What do you dislike about your job?
5. Were there any surprises about your job?
6. What type of professional development do you want?
7. What advice would you give someone interested in your line of work?
8. How do you see your field changing in the next five to ten years?
9. Would you be able to refer me to another professional in this same field?
10. Ask for their business card, then follow-up with a personal “thank you”

SENDING A THANK YOU NOTE

The importance of the thank you note can’t be emphasized enough. Almost no one sends written thank you notes these days, so sending one to the person you interviewed will instantly make you stand out from the crowd, and the person is more likely to remember you. The note doesn’t have to be long; a few sentences thanking the person for taking the time to meet with you are sufficient. The note will be appreciated. And send it IMMEDIATELY!

The Primary Objectives of the Informational Interview

- Investigate a specific career field
- Obtain advice on where you might fit in
- Learn the jargon and important issues in the field
- Broaden your network of contacts for future reference
- Incorporate new connections into your LinkedIn or other business social media networks

GO THE EXTRA MILE

http://www.mycareerspark.org/#/prep/how-to-present-yourself

“ It was suggested that during my initial job search, that I do at least one informational interview. So when I was introduced to someone who had more than two decades worth of experience in agriculture I asked if I could have a 20 minute meeting. At this meeting, I received great career advice that I am currently using!”
JOB SEARCH GOALS
Now that you've examined your work preferences, determined your transferable skills, crafted a resume and managed a few informational interviews, the next step is putting it all together — which means it's time to set your job search goals.

When setting goals, consider not only what you want, but also what you have to do today, next week, next month, next year and even five years from now. The job-search goals you set today will solidify into a career action plan. Also keep in mind, a short-term goal for one person may be a long-term goal for someone else. Maybe getting the job offer is a short-term goal for you and for someone else, getting into a certificate or training program is the short-term goal and the job offer is more of a long-term goal.

**EXAMPLES OF JOB SEARCH GOALS**

*(If you've completed this workbook, you've nearly completed most of these goals!)*

**SHORT-TERM GOALS**

- Identify your work preferences and financial needs
- Identify your transferable skills
- Identify careers and jobs of interest and research the qualifications
- Compare the skills you have with those required for the job
- Decide which jobs to explore further
- Decide if you need to continue your education or training
- Begin the job search

**INTERMEDIATE-TERM GOALS**

- Continue career exploration
- Structure your job search
- Develop resume, cover letter, find job leads, get interviews
- Get hired

**LONG-TERM GOALS**

- Identify additional training or experience you'll need to advance in your current position
- Keep determining new set of short and intermediate goals

*Remember to be SMART when constructing your goals.*
Specific — Your goals should emphasize what you want to happen and should be straightforward. To help you focus on your goal ask yourself:
- What do you want to achieve?
- Why is this important to do at this time?
- How are you going to do it?

Example: A general goal would be: “Get a job.” But a specific goal would be: “I will create a resume by this Friday.”

Measurable — Obviously, if you obtain the goal then you have been successful in getting it accomplished. However, usually there are several smaller steps you can measure before the goal has been reached. And if you can’t measure it, then you can’t manage it. For example, can you track your progress with target dates or specific outcomes? You can ask yourself these questions: How much? How many?

Example: “I want to schedule 3 informational interviews before February 12.” NOT “I want to schedule some informational interviews.”

Attainable — When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. Goals you set which are too far out of your reach, you probably won’t commit to doing. A goal needs to stretch you slightly so that you feel you can do it, and it will require a commitment from you to achieve it. The feeling of success that this brings will help you to remain motivated.

Example: “I will secure employment within the farming industry within the next six months.” NOT “I will get a job this week.”
Realistic — This does not mean make your goal “easy.” It means make sure your goal is “do-able.” You need to make sure the goal represents an objective you are both willing and able to work toward accomplishing. Remember to set the bar high enough for a satisfying achievement.

Example: “I will research beginning farming programs and identify 2 in my region that may provide me with supplemental experience.” NOT “I will enroll in two farming programs within the next 24 hours.”

Timely — Set a timeframe for the goal: next week, in three months, or by a specific date, etc. Giving your goal an end-point gives you a clear target to work towards. Remember, the timeframe must be measurable, attainable and realistic!

Example: “I will follow-up with my last interview by this Friday.” NOT “I will follow-up with my last interview.”

Some attribute S.M.A.R.T. goals as first appearing in the November, 1981 issue of Management Review (vol. 70, issue 11), in an article titled “There’s a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management’s goals and objectives.,” by George Doran, Arthur Miller, and James Cunningham.

Use the S.M.A.R.T. goal technique and list your goals below.

List 2 short-term goals:

1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________

List 2 intermediate goals:

1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________

What obstacles do you think you might encounter along the way?

1. ____________________________

2. ____________________________

How will you make sure you will be able to overcome those obstacles?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Place Goals and Obstacles to Overcome on the Bullseye Target, page 34
An increasing number of employers are using social media sites to recruit and advertise for employees. Most jobs, however, are not posted on job boards, but are found through networking. Using social media sites as a networking tool can help you find unofficial job postings or find out about job openings through your online connections at the companies you are most interested in. Social media has become a way for professionals to network and “meet” hundreds of people. Social media will assist you with:

- Demonstrating to employers that you are well versed in current internet and social media capabilities
- Developing and showcasing your “personal brand” on your online profile
- Connections with opportunities that are otherwise never made available to job seekers because they aren’t posted on job boards
- Building your professional networking contacts, which are crucial to your job search
- Researching industries, companies, and positions of interest
- Becoming visible to hiring managers, recruiters, and other decision makers who use social media for recruiting new candidates

The key is to shift your emphasis from looking at positions to finding people. FVC recommends that you create a professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn’s strength in this market is its “#1 position” as the professional network in the world and its strong data analysis skills and capabilities.
Here are suggestions from LinkedIn for creating your profile.

1. Craft an informative profile headline
Your profile headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. (Use your elevator pitch here!)

2. Update your status weekly
A great way to stay on other people’s radar screens and enhance your professional image is to update your profile on a regular basis. This is your “headline” and should emphasize your accomplishments: Recent graduate of pest control management program.

3. LinkedIn is not Facebook
If you choose to post a photograph — and we recommend that you do — select a professional, high-quality headshot of you alone. That means no party photos, cartoon avatars, or cute pictures of your children.

4. Show off your education
Include information about all institutions you’ve attended. Include your major and minor if you have one, as well as highlights of your activities. Your LinkedIn profile is an appropriate place to show off any honors or awards you’ve received.

5. Develop a professional summary
Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter — concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Include military service plus any relevant internships, volunteer work, and extra-curricular projects from school. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text or bullet points for easy reading.

6. Fill “Specialties” with keywords
“Specialties” is the place to include key words and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person like you. The best place to find relevant keywords is in the job listings that appeal to you and the profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want.

7. Show your connectedness with badges
Joining Groups and displaying the group badges on your profile are perfect ways to fill out the professionalism of your profile and show your desire to connect to people with whom you have something in common. You can also join the LinkedIn Veteran Network as well as any industry groups related to the career you would like to pursue.

8. Collect diverse recommendations
The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, employers, and professional mentors.
9. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL
To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to “public” and claim a unique URL for your profile. Place this URL on your resume heading — underneath your name and somewhere close to your email address.

10. Share your work
A final way to enhance your LinkedIn profile is to add examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments by displaying URLs or adding LinkedIn Applications. By including URLs, you can direct people to your website, blog, or Twitter feed.

LinkedIn Veteran Mentor Network
LinkedIn offers U.S. veterans and service members the opportunity to join the LinkedIn Veteran Mentor Network. Once you join, you will receive a free one-year Job Seeker subscription, which upgrades your LinkedIn account to “premium” status. http://veterans.linkedin.com.

What are the benefits of a Job Seeker Premium account?
Get connected to hiring managers and recruiters
- Send personalized InMail messages to anyone on LinkedIn
- See up to 90 days of information on who’s viewed your profile and details on how they found you
- Find decision makers at your target companies with four Premium search filters, like Company Size, Interests, Fortune 1000, and Seniority

Get noticed by potential employers
- Apply to jobs as a Featured Applicant and rise to the top of the applicant list
- Join the OpenLink network to let anyone on LinkedIn see your full profile and contact you for free
- Draw attention to your profile with an optional Premium or job seeker badge

GO THE EXTRA MILE:
For more information, go to: http://premium.linkedin.com/jobsearch/faq.html.
Visit LinkedIn’s online Help Center for assistance with your account.

Farmer Veteran Coalition Webinar:
How to use LinkedIn for Your Job Search
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5s3hBsGkYU&feature=youtube_gdata