

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a brown turtleneck, stands with her arms crossed and a smile. In the background, a military truck and a helicopter are visible in a field. The image is overlaid with a blue and orange geometric design.

# MILITARY SOLUTIONS FOR THE BUSINESS OF WORK

Unexpected Lessons in Getting  
the Job Done & Getting Ahead



**ORION**  
TALENT

# INTRODUCTION

Not everyone thinks about the U.S. military as an employer, but that is one of its most impressive functions.

With millions of active-duty and reserve personnel around the world to manage 24/7, the military is one of the largest, most sophisticated employers in the world. And, with more than 240 years in operation, it's also one of the oldest, yet perhaps most unexpected sources to turn to for workplace insight.

Can a centuries-old institution designed for national protection offer relevant lessons in workforce management today? It can. In fact, you will be surprised at how many military practices and principles apply to everyday workplace challenges.

In this eBook, Orion Talent shares seven of these military-inspired workplace lessons provided by four successful veteran leaders who proudly served in the armed forces and whose stories you'll read.

# 240+

YEARS OF MILITARY OPERATION





# TRAIN, TRAIN, AND TRAIN EVEN MORE

“In the military you train, train, train to be ready to go at any time. In wartime, in peacetime. The training is constant.” That workplace lesson from former Orion Talent CEO and former Marine pilot, Mike Starich, is a reminder of how important continuous learning is on the job.

## The Value of Persistent Training

Persistent training ensures soldiers are always mission ready and able to deploy at any time. The rigorous culture of training is also something that allows the military to keep pace with innovation and maintain advanced systems for security and protection. “The military starts with training from the very beginning,” explained Orion Talent’s Christianna Casanave, Director of Recruiting Operations and a former U.S. Army Officer, Combat Veteran, and Army Bronze Star Medal recipient.

## PERSISTENCE

“From the moment you go into ROTC or officer training, you are tested every day. Whether it is going through an obstacle course, field training or mocking up an emergency, the military is the best at preparing their folks for the unexpected.” – Christianna Casanave

## Good Is What We Fall Back on in Challenging Times

For Mike Starich, the memories of grueling field exercises are a reminder of the power of human potential. “It was invaluable learning. Big stresses were put on us, such as physical exhaustion, bad weather, and difficult - if not impossible - objectives. And we were expected to stay mentally focused, come up with plans using our training, and execute on them,” he said. “We could fall back on our training, despite the stress, and push through. We knew what to do.”

Business leaders and hiring managers today can make the mistake of thinking they are “too busy to train.” They look to hire ready-skilled, experienced, and pre-trained talent and offer minimal learning. That’s an unacceptable and dangerous risk in the military. Is it an acceptable risk for a business? Only if the business is willing to sacrifice innovation, expertise, and competitive advantage along the way. If not, more robust and frequent training is a must for future-forward businesses today.



# MISSION FIRST, PEOPLE ALWAYS

When Tim Isacco, Former COO of Orion Talent, recalls what motivated him to join the Army, he thinks of values and tradition. A fifth-generation graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Tim comes from a long line of Army service members who collectively have served in a multitude of ranks, all the way up to four-star general. In his daily work, he finds the Army motto “mission first, people always” is a powerful guiding principle.

## Great Ambition Requires Great People

The simple idea behind “mission first, people always” is to always define and communicate what you are doing, its greater purpose, and who is going to do the work, explained Tim. Great ideas and ambitious plans are not unique to any business. But a strong mission without the right talent will fail. Great people without a clear and motivating mission will fail.

## Unite Your Team with Shared Purpose

The military is known for effectively communicating shared purpose by keeping the mission, values, codes, and traditions top of mind for every soldier. “I know that I want to work with people who share the same purpose and believe in the kind of high integrity that I do. I was raised with the values of honesty and integrity, and they were emphasized in my time at West Point and on active duty,” he said.

## INTEGRITY

“Employers with strong values and a clear and well communicated purpose have the same ability to unite their workforce behind a common mission.” – Tim Isacco

Shared purpose is what unites teams and fuels individual and collective momentum. The better employers are at communicating the greater mission behind daily work and big endeavors, the more committed, connected and productive employees will be.





# KNOW YOUR HISTORY (AND THE HISTORY-MAKERS)

Who has time for history lessons? Who needs to know company history and institutional norms? The innovators and the overachievers, according to Mike Wooster, Orion Talent's Vice President- Recruiting.

## History Puts Challenges into Perspective

Mike Wooster, who deployed twice during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as a Navy Aviation Electronics Technician and Master Training Specialist in the Navy, saw its sense of history as one of the greatest tactical advantages of the U.S. Military. "The history lessons you get as a part of your time in the military start even before you join. It starts with the recruitment when they tell you about the history of this 240-year-old organization that's endured war and pandemics and more," he said, "It's in boot camp that you start to hear about the incredible challenges that those before you overcame."

## Leverage Veteran Knowledge

While most businesses will not have the centuries of experience and history that military branches have, they do have veterans. How is your business transferring institutional and cultural knowledge from the old guard to the new hires? "Whenever you are assigned a new post in the military or transfer to a new location, you are assigned a sponsor, a mentor, or a coach. Sometimes it's all three and sometimes it's three in one," explained Tim. "Their job is to teach you the ropes, share knowledge, be there to answer questions, and provide support."

## MENTORSHIP

While people often discuss the ideas of mentors as a 'nice-to-have' in business, mentorship in the military is an essential way to transfer historical and cultural knowledge.

The result is a more quickly established sense of workplace camaraderie, better insights to get work done, and commitment to collaboration that benefits the mentees, the mentors, and the whole organization.



# ONE THIRD PLANNING, TWO THIRDS ACTION

For Orion's Director of Recruiting Operations Christianna Casanave, the bias to action she learned in the Army is something she continually works to engrain in her teams and in the workforce management solutions she plans and deploys for large enterprises. "It's easy to get caught in planning mode and hesitate to act. When I was in the Army, we countered that human tendency to put off the execution of the work with the one-thirds, two-thirds rule, and to this day, it's one of the best ways to get people working."

## Plan Well but Don't Overthink

The one-thirds, two-thirds rule applies to team projects and major undertakings. The idea is to allocate one-third of the work to the leaders and strategists who need to build a sound plan of action. The remaining two-thirds of the time should be dedicated to the team executing on the plan, aka getting the work done. It's a time management system that puts the emphasis on action and ensures people aren't stuck overthinking and losing ground.

## Build a Bias for Action

"In workforce building today, we need to be biased to action—finding the talent, doing the assessments, making the hires. Instead, a tremendous amount of time is spent in the planning and pondering stages. As a result, many businesses are losing talent to organizations with bias for action," said Christianna.

Slow action in other areas of workforce management, such as getting rid of ineffective employees or upgrading technology, will also put a business behind the competition.

## EFFICIENCY

Empowering HR, talent acquisition teams, and hiring managers to act with more speed and vigor is key to overcoming workforce management bottlenecks and inefficiencies.





# EMPOWER TALENT LEADERS

No one joins the military looking for an easy job. It's expected to be hard yet rewarding. The same is true in workforce management and HR. Hard decisions and conversations are part of the rewarding yet challenging people-centric job.

## Backing the Hard Choices of Talent Leaders

In the military, the chain of command empowers leaders to make hard choices that support the greater mission. Tim felt that support when he took over as a young Platoon Leader in the Army and it reminds him of the kinds of challenges workforce leaders are confronted with all the time.

"I had to remove someone who had been there for 27 years. I had to tell him he needed to go and get a new job. He looked at me and shook his head, but I was in command. It was my call. My military and officer training gave me the confidence that it was the right thing to do and that we needed to create a new culture in this unit," he said.

Workforce transformation and optimization also relies on bold leaders who are willing to make hard choices. HR and talent acquisition teams that are given a seat and a voice at the leadership table are going to be more effective, decisive business partners.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Empowering talent leaders to make decisions that support the company mission— both the hard decisions and the easy ones—encourages continuous improvement and a confident, action-oriented workforce management team.



## INNOVATE

## RETOOL &amp; INNOVATE

Technology leadership makes a tremendous difference in competitiveness and productivity in the military and in business. Starich had a profound realization regarding the advantage technology offers during a Red Flag aerial air combat exercise while in the Marines.

## LEADERSHIP

“My squadron was flying old airplanes at the time, F-4s. And while we affectionately joked about how old our aircraft were, the harsh reality of the tech difference was made plain during that exercise. After seeing the F-15 in action, I realized how important technology was. The lesson? You have to stay a leader in technology. It wins.” – Mike Starich

## Embrace Tech Innovation

Talent acquisition and workforce management today demand tech excellence as well. Businesses that are accelerating and optimizing talent sourcing and engagement with technology achieve better hiring results in all aspects: quality, speed, and quantity. Technology for managing and supporting remote and distributed teams has also become essential to communication and productivity for many businesses. And systems that guide and monitor the entire employment life cycle are key to helping employers identify and address issues early on, such as turnover and skill gaps, while also keeping them connected to key talent pools like alumni, interns, and consulting resources.

## Keep Moving Forward

To protect and serve, the military has to be an engine of innovation, continually testing, assessing, and transforming its aircraft, vessels, ships, vehicles, weapons, networks and other tech-driven tools and systems to keep pace with an ever-advancing digital world. That perpetual forward movement is the new reality of workforce building and management as well for those determined to keep a strong talent advantage.





# A WINNING MINDSET

While wins and losses are not typically how workforce excellence is measured, the winning mindset of the U.S. military has shaped how Orion Talent leaders work. Each leader or manager may have their own definition of what winning looks like, but the boldness to aim for nothing less than victory is more than a unifying principle. It's a powerful force of high expectations and clear-eyed momentum that elevates the work and the outcomes.

**For Mike Starich**, describing the competitiveness ingrained in him in the Marines, he explains how the high standards of performance of the military stay with you. "In an aerial engagement, second place is not a good thing. You have to win," he said, "That determination to win stays with you."

**For Tim**, a winning mindset is about survival. "The military puts you into plenty of must-win scenarios. Failure is not an option," he said. For businesses, a strong workforce is always a must. The only way for businesses to survive and thrive is to have a skilled, committed workforce.

**For Christianna**, a winning mindset sets the tone on the job every day: "For me and my team, we are focused on 'winning the day,'" she said, describing how having a plan to execute and goals to achieve each day was a practice carved into her work ethic by the Army.

**For Mike Wooster**, the winning military mindset is grounded in what matters most in the workplace: people. "The military is great at instilling the fight to win in us. But behind that fight to win was always about the people you were taking care of. The machines and guns and warcraft were the tools we used. But people, those we served with and those we fought for, they were everything. They were why winning mattered."

And in the world of work, each of these winning traits—determination, refusal to fail, a careful focus on achieving milestones every day, and caring for people—has a time and place. Perhaps the most important lesson when it comes to a winning mindset is acknowledging that it matters. Nobody doubts the military's drive and mission to win. A workforce with that same level of drive has enough winning spirit to power any ambition or innovation.



## READY TO BUILD A WINNING WORKFORCE FORMULA?

Orion Talent helps businesses nationwide win with recruitment solutions that deliver great talent as well as improved workforce operations and value. We would love to do the same for you. [Click here](#) to learn more.



# MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS BEHIND THE LESSONS



**CHRISTIANNA CASANAVE**  
**ORION TALENT DIRECTOR OF  
RECRUITING OPERATIONS**

## **Military Career:**

- Years served: 6
- Roles: U.S. Army Officer and combat veteran
- Army Bronze Star Medal recipient



**MIKE WOOSTER**  
**ORION TALENT VICE  
PRESIDENT- RECRUITING**

## **Military Career:**

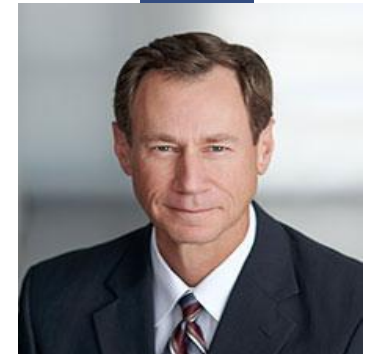
- Years Served: 8
- Roles: U.S Navy Aviation Electronics Technician, Certified Naval Instructor, and Master Training Specialist
- Deployed in wartime to Iraq and Afghanistan



**MIKE STARICH**  
**FORMER ORION TALENT CEO**

## **Military Career:**

- Years Served: 7
- Roles: U.S. Marine Corps Flight Officer and Military Officer Recruiter
- Awarded Top Recruiter each of his two years within Marine Corps Recruiting Command



**TIM ISACCO**  
**FORMER ORION TALENT COO**

## **Military Career:**

- Years Served: 7.5
- Roles: Army Infantry Officer, Company XO, Mortar Platoon Leader
- 5th Generation West Point Graduate







## ABOUT ORION TALENT

Orion Talent helps you fill 1 or 100,000 roles with the right people and the right solution, so you can build a winning team — today and into the future. We power all your talent needs through our diversity rich network of highly sought-after candidates, including an engaged community of veterans and military personnel. We connect you with ready-now candidates and design-led recruiting solutions that work for you. We're enriching lives and elevating the recruiting experience. Talent acquisition is our mission, and our mission isn't done until we've nailed it.

Contact Us: [oriontalent.com](https://oriontalent.com)

