



Military Transition Guide



ORION
TALENT

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Section 1

Beginning the Transition

Section 1 – Beginning the Transition

Orion Talent was founded in 1991 by five former Junior Military Officers who met while working for a recruiting firm in Atlanta, Georgia. The team had successfully thrived as a cohesive unit in the midst of a fiercely competitive environment due to their cooperation, idea sharing, and their ability to put the interest of the group ahead of their individual interests. When the firm they were working for was no longer meeting their personal and professional standards, the team of five decided to venture on their own and focus exclusively on serving job seekers transitioning from the military.

Since 1991, Orion Talent is proud to have helped more than 30,000 military leaders find jobs in Corporate America, and we have placed more veterans than any other military recruiting firm. Our company consists of former military professionals representing all branches of the Armed Forces. The Orion Talent family is now comprised of five regional offices located in San Diego, Austin, Cincinnati, Virginia Beach, and Raleigh; with corporate headquarters also located in Raleigh.

Throughout our company's history we have maintained certain values that set us apart, including personal integrity and professional ethics, dignity and respect for every individual that we work with, and an unyielding commitment to teamwork. Put into practice, these values allow us to deliver superior customer service, personal attention to each and every candidate and client, and an unmatched dedication to establishing the best fit between job seeker and employer.

Orion Talent exists to strengthen the fabric of America by providing ethical leaders to America's companies. We provide our honorable service members with what is in short supply when they exit the military - we listen, consult, and treat them with the honesty and dignity they deserve.

Orion's Core Purpose and Values

Our Purpose

To strengthen American Business with Best-in-Class Military Talent, through the relentless pursuit of excellence and unwavering commitment to our Nation's Military Professionals.

Our Values

- Excellence
- Teamwork
- Innovation
- Warrior Ethos
- Commitment

How We Can Help

We understand that preparing for and making a career transition can be a very stressful life event. We are here to help. Here is an overview of the services we can provide and what we can do to help you.

We represent you in your career search

Our team is here to help you. The Orion Candidate Recruiter is your representative in the hiring process. Your Recruiter will assist you in preparing your resume and with interview preparation. Once a Recruiter introduces you to a career opportunity with one of our clients, an Account Executive will serve as your liaison to that client. Our Account Executive



team works with hundreds of companies nationwide to give you the largest number of career opportunities possible. Together, we work to find that win-win situation: the right “fit” for both you and the company.

The Hiring Process

Orion places candidates in one of 3 ways: hiring conferences, mini-conferences[®], or direct placements. These are not mutually exclusive methods of placement; we may utilize any or all of these methods in your career transition. We will tailor a customized plan for you based on your unique situation.

Hiring Conferences

Hiring Conferences are not job fairs. Hiring Conferences are regional or national hiring events that feature multiple companies looking to hire for specific opportunities. Hiring Conferences are the most efficient way to find a position, because they enable you to receive professional interview training and interview with multiple companies at the same time and place. Day One of the conference is a preparation day that consists of an interview workshop and briefings on the companies in attendance. Day Two consists of individual interviews personally matched for you by your Orion Recruiting team based on your qualifications and preferences. You should receive an invitation four to six weeks prior to the event, possibly closer as new clients confirm and new opportunities appear. We recommend that you plan to attend a hiring conference 60-90 days prior to your planned start date. Conferences are by invitation only and spots are limited, so confirm attendance with your Orion Recruiter as soon as possible.

Mini-Conference[®]

Mini-conferences[®] are hiring events held for a single company with multiple positions available. Your Orion Recruiter will contact you as mini-conference[®] opportunities arise that are a match for your qualifications and preferences. Typically, interviews will be conducted onsite and the hiring process is expedited. Mini-conferences[®] are our second most effective means of helping you find your next career.

Direct Placement

Direct Placement is a means of helping you by presenting you an opportunity with a specific company. Your Orion Recruiter will contact you as direct placement opportunities arise that are a match for your qualifications and preferences. Typically, the hiring process for direct placement is more deliberate and will involve a screening interview (typically on the telephone) followed by an onsite interview. Direct placement relies heavily on your resume to convince a Hiring Manager to move forward with you. Conferences and Mini Conferences help eliminate the chance of not being considered for a position based solely on a perceived issue with your resume.

Most companies find it more cost efficient to conduct their hiring in a conference format, where they have the opportunity to evaluate several candidates at one time. As a result, fewer companies are choosing to go the direct placement route. What this means to you is simple: Hiring Conferences are our most effective means of helping you find a position.

Cost



Our services are completely **FREE OF CHARGE** for you. Companies pay us to recruit and prepare qualified candidates. As a transitioning military technician and/or leader, you have many traits that company's desire: technical expertise, responsibility, dedication, discipline, leadership and a maturity that surpasses that of your civilian peers. These companies understand the investment needed to hire candidates of your quality.

Preparing for Your Transition

This is an important step for both you and Orion Talent as we begin to form a mutually rewarding partnership. To accomplish this, we both must be focused on certain responsibilities. We can assure you that we will employ every resource available to assist you in your transition. You will also have certain responsibilities as you prepare for your transition:

- Dedicate yourself to a detailed self-analysis of your strengths, areas that need improvement, special skills, abilities and desires. Commit to interviewing practice and professional reading. Only YOU can articulate your value to a company.
- Set aside time to attend scheduled interviewing workshops, as well as one-on-one interviews by phone or during base visits with your Orion Recruiter. We will always let you know in advance when we will be at your base. It is critical that you make your career search a priority.
- Keep your file current at all times. Please be proactive and let us know of any updates to your transition plan (timeline, preferences, etc.) or any changes to your resume so we can best assist you. Ensure that we have all pertinent contact information (work, home, cell and civilian email address).
- Please be responsive. As you approach your transition time, we will need to reach you at all times. Check your email frequently. Opportunities come open with little notice; if we cannot contact you, we cannot submit you for that opportunity. Never hesitate to call us if there is anything we can assist you with!
- Please ensure your e-mail address, ring-back, and voice mail messages are professional, courteous and concise. Be aware of your social media footprint. Employers are increasingly using searches of social media sites when making hiring decisions. You are responsible for the image you portray on-line, via e-mail, and over the phone. Don't let your dream job slip away due to an issue that you can easily alleviate!

Orion Talent is here to make your transition a successful one! With a combined effort of five regional offices throughout the nation, 50+ regional hiring conferences per year, trained consultants and several thousand client companies, no other firm can provide you the same depth of resources, experience and exceptional customer service. Please feel free to call your Orion Recruiter with any questions or concerns. We look forward to helping you find your next career!

Your Transition Timeline

We typically start working with candidates who are approximately 12 months from their planned start date. Based on that timeline, you can use the following checklist as a guide to ensure you are doing everything possible to prepare yourself for your transition:

12-7 months out

- Conduct an initial phone screen with an Orion Recruiter to determine initial interests and establish general target locations. Your recruiter will send you an initial preparation packet.
- Establish your timeline. Let your recruiter know your planned Earliest Start Date.
- Complete a rough draft of your resume using one of our approved formats.
- Read *Knock 'Em Dead* by Martin Yate.
- Begin your professional reading in target areas using our suggested reading list.
- If Applicable: Attend a base visit presentation and/or schedule a base visit interview.

6 - 4 months out

- Complete a final draft of your resume with the help from your Orion recruiter.
- Complete the interview preparation sections of the Orion Transition Guide.
- Continue professional readings.
- During this time, we will contact you in order to answer any questions and confirm your transition plan.

4 months out

- Finalize plans to attend conference, as recommended by recruiter.
- Make any final adjustments to your resume. Ensure you have suitable references that know they are being used as one of your references.
- Ensure your Orion Candidate file is accurate by speaking with your recruiter and reviewing the information we have listed (i.e. location preferences, earliest start date, education level, rank, years of service, etc.).
- Continue professional readings and interview preparation.

3 months out - separation

- Attend a hiring conference. Communicate with the recruiter to conduct follow up interviews, solicit offer advice, and finalize accepting an offer.
- Should the conference not provide the targeted career opportunity, coordinate with your recruiter to attend another hiring conference, mini-conference, and/or be submitted to an opportunity via direct placement.
- Start work in your new career with Orion's assistance.

Industries and Typical Positions

What am I qualified for? We've been asked this question many times. Just as the positions in the military vary widely, so do the career tracks in the corporate world. We realize that you may still be in the process of deciding what you want in a new career. Your next career should be based on your qualifications, skills, goals, and the type of work you would like to do. Below we've listed some of the industries and career fields that the vast majority of transitioning technicians and leaders move into as they separate from the military, to give you a better idea of what opportunities exist and where you may best fit.

We highly recommend being open to a wide range of industries and position types during your career search. Much like being flexible on geography, being open on 'fit' allows you to find the best possible career choice. The positions listed below are generally where most technician or leadership experienced Service Members begin their civilian career. Keep in mind that these positions are only a starting point. You can expect promotions to more appealing shifts or other positions that will draw upon your leadership from the military and your newly acquired business skills.

Manufacturing

The Manufacturing industry is a great place to begin a second career, as the U.S. manufacturing sector is a robust, dynamic industry. The U.S. manufacturing sector by itself is the eighth largest economy in the world per the Manufacturing Institute, producing more than 21% of the world's goods. It employs more than 12 million Americans (9% of the U.S. workforce) and U.S. manufacturers conduct two-thirds of all research and development in the United States. Military technicians and leaders can find amazing careers throughout the manufacturing industry. Candidates enter in the workforce with a strong potential for increasing levels of leadership responsibility and a long career with those companies.

Each manufacturing plant varies in the complexity of its machinery and the skill level of the people on the production line. Some plants are very labor intensive, requiring strong technicians and managers to get the job done. Other plants vary from semi-automated to fully automated plants where computerized machines do the manufacturing and the work force consists of highly trained operators and maintenance technicians. As companies introduce newer and faster equipment, the production line constantly changes. An individual in manufacturing must be able to adapt to changes. It is the job of Technicians, Production Supervisor and the Plant Engineers to maximize efficiency, increase production, lower cost, and improve product quality. The transition to Manufacturing is one of the best areas for Military Service Members due to the direct correlation of your military experience and leadership style. Unlike many other career paths, you can hit the ground running and make an immediate impact on the organization's bottom line and profitability.

Below are some examples of Orion clients in the Manufacturing industry:

General Electric	Applied Materials	Honeywell	Dell
Nabisco	Toyota	Frito Lay	Georgia Pacific
John Deere	US Steel	Clorox	Bridgestone Firestone
Siemens	Hershey	Coca-Cola	Honda



How military candidates support the Manufacturing Industry:

Maintenance Technicians: After receiving tremendous training and real world experience on trouble shooting electrical, mechanical and/or electronic systems, military trained technicians can make an instant impact working on a maintenance team in a manufacturing environment. Maintenance Technicians work a variety of schedules. Some positions are as a member of a large team while others are more independent. Because Technicians in the military are taught preventive, immediate, emergency and scheduled maintenance, as well as working well under stress and in arduous conditions, maintenance repair technicians thrive in manufacturing today.

Production Supervisor: Supervisors that are able to understand the relationship between quality, quantity, maintenance, safety and the people they supervise are of critical importance within manufacturing. Supervisors bring a depth of leadership, ethics, and a proven record of success that continues on the manufacturing floor. Supervisors that are able to operate in a wide variety of environments from labor- intensive, low tech to semiconductor chip manufacturing, high-tech. Companies constantly seek team leaders to positively affect their work environment in need of positive and progressive leadership.

Quality Engineering and Improvement: During the mid to late 90s, American Manufacturing became increasingly aware of the relationship between quality, waste, cost, and efficiency. Military trained candidates were brought in to help improve and influence change in manufacturing. This occurred through quality initiative programs that included six sigma programs or upgrading technology and machinery. Companies have relied on military candidates to be change agents — personnel with strong communication skills, technically adept, and strong motivation and influencing skills.

Logistics and Transportation: If you make it, you have to move it. Military trained logistics candidates move assets through air, land, and sea on a daily basis. They understand inventory control management, supply chain management and how people and technology leverage the efficiencies of them. At the same time, they understand how logistics must support the manufacturing process and its effect on the bottom line of cost of goods sold or profit margins.

Semiconductor Industry

Semiconductor device manufacturing is the process used to create integrated circuits. Semiconductor devices are used in virtually all electrical and electronic systems (cell-phones, computers, televisions, automobiles, airplanes, power production & distribution, automation, data-centers, servers, etc.). The highly technical process required to make semiconductor components offers a fast paced, challenging, and exciting career for transitioning Service Members.

Below are some examples of Orion clients in the Semiconductor Industry:

Intel	GLOBALFOUNDRIES	Samsung	IBM
IM Flash	Lam Research	KLA-Tencor	ASM
ASML	Nikon	Analog Devices	Micron
Texas Instruments	Novellus	Kokusai	TEL America



How military candidates support the Semiconductor Industry:

Maintenance Technicians: After receiving tremendous training and real world experience on trouble shooting electrical, mechanical and/or electronic systems military trained technicians can make an instant impact working on a maintenance team in semiconductor manufacturing facility known as a "FAB". FAB's are arguably the most high-tech environments in the World. These positions typically work a compressed work schedule that allows for built-in overtime and more days-off. A typical schedule is three days on followed by four days off, then four days on followed by three days off (3-4, 4-3).

Facility Technicians: Semiconductor facilities require complex power, HVAC, air purification, water purification, and filtration systems. They are operated with some of the most advanced technology available. Military trained mechanics and electrical technicians with experience in power generation, HVAC, and other facility related equipment are a perfect fit for these roles. Most schedules offer a compressed work week with built-in overtime.

Customer Engineers / Installation Engineers: A semiconductor facility (FAB) is owned and operated by one company, but requires the technical expertise and technology offered by dozens of other companies. For this reason, some of the best opportunities in the industry are with the many companies that support a FAB. Military technicians fit well with these specialized companies due to their technical experience and their ability to communicate up, down and laterally within an organization. Customer Engineers & Installation Engineers are the subject matter experts on their equipment and ultimately responsible for any issues that need to be corrected. These positions provide detailed and specialized training on one system or process. These positions often offer a company vehicle or car allowance. Many of these positions require little to no travel between FABs, while others offer regular travel to several FABs.

Energy Industry - Power Generation

Power Generation and Installation Servicing are the areas where military candidates have excelled in the Power Generation portion of the Energy Industry. Candidates with a strong potential for increasing levels of leadership responsibility, tremendous technical knowledge and a desire for a long career can find a stable and rewarding career within the Energy Industry.

Below are some examples of Orion clients in the Energy Industry:

Siemens	GE Energy	Energy	Mirant
Calpine	ABB Power	Exelon	Progress
Constellation Energy	Reliant	PSEG	GDF Suez Energy

How military candidates support the Power Generation Industry:

Plant Operations & Maintenance Technicians (O&M Technicians): Candidates that operate, install, troubleshoot, and repair all power plant equipment and systems. They are tasked to develop operating and maintenance procedures for plant equipment to ensure consistent and safe operation. This includes electronic or mechanical diagnostics and the capacity to operate a computerized maintenance management system. They also train and develop other employees in performing preventive maintenance and routine equipment service activities.

Maintenance Technician: Candidates that bring the ability to focus on maintenance programs that optimize equipment reliability to maximize plant capacity. Typical types of stationary equipment that Maintenance Technicians are working on include boilers, steam systems, turbines, heat exchangers, furnaces, storage vessels, cooling towers, and auxiliary systems. Maintenance Technicians also conduct root cause failure analysis to identify and eliminate problems through long-term solutions.

Instrumentation & Electrical Technician: Candidates that are technical specialists are responsible for the overall site technical activity in the areas of instrumentation and control, electronics or mechanical systems. Candidates are responsible for maintaining the plant's low, medium and high voltage electrical systems. They perform electrical wiring and repairs as necessary, administrative tasks and upkeep of the maintenance management system, field instrument calibrations, repairs, troubleshooting, modifications and related work.

Maintenance Foreman: Companies hire military candidates as Maintenance Foremen. They are responsible for the safe, reliable, environmentally sound and efficient execution of maintenance work. After receiving world class training and applying those skills and traits on a daily basis in the military, companies look for candidates that understand the complexities of mechanical, electronic, and electrical systems. They are able to supervise mechanics, or in some cases be the mechanic. Candidates that have worked in a variety of work conditions with diverse work groups and understand the need to provide sound, straight-forward leadership will be able to successfully get the job done.

Operations Supervisor: Military candidates can make an impact on the bottom line as they lead their plant operators in the safe operation of a plant. Candidates that understand the relationship between hard work, technology, and front line leadership. Operations Supervisors coordinate maintenance, troubleshoot problems, and review work requests as required. Supervisors also provide training for new employees and assimilate them into their team.

Oil & Gas Industry

The Oil & Gas industry includes the process of exploration, extraction, refining, transporting and marketing/selling petroleum products. The industry's main products are gasoline, fuel oil, and natural gas. Oil is also the raw material for many other products including; chemical products, pharmaceuticals, solvents, fertilizers, pesticides, and plastics. Approximately 40% of the energy used in North America comes from oil. The World consumes 30 billion barrels of oil per year and the United States consumes 25% of the total. Due to this industry's robust size and multitude of diverse positions available, oil & gas offers a terrific post-military career.

Below are some examples of Orion clients in the Energy Industry:

ExxonMobil	Sunoco	Shell	BP Solar
ConocoPhillips	Hess	Schlumberger	Chevron
National Oilwell	Occidental	Horizon Offshore	CITGO



How military candidates support the Oil & Gas Industry:

Refinery Technician: Candidates that operate, install, troubleshoot, and repair all refinery equipment and systems. They are tasked to develop operating and maintenance procedures for refinery equipment to ensure consistent and safe operation. This includes electronic or mechanical diagnostics and the capacity to operate a computerized maintenance management system. They also train and develop other employees in performing preventive maintenance and routine equipment service activities.

Maintenance Engineer: Candidates focus on maintenance programs that optimize equipment reliability to maximize plant capacity. Typical types of refinery stationary equipment that Maintenance Engineers work on include heat exchangers, furnaces, storage vessels, cooling towers, and refinery pipelines. Maintenance Engineers also conduct root cause failure analysis to identify and eliminate problems through long-term solutions.

Refinery Operations Supervisor: Candidates are trained to make a positive impact on the bottom line as they lead their plant operators in the safe operation of a refinery or plant. These candidates understand the relationship between hard work, technology, and front line leadership. Refinery Operations Supervisors coordinate with maintenance, troubleshoot problems, and review work requests as required. Supervisors also provide training for new employees and assimilate them into their team.

Planning & Controls Project Engineer: Candidates have the project management skills and experience to oversee project activities associated with financial control, procurement, subcontracting, and project control. Project control is defined as change control, estimating, cost control, scheduling and project reporting. Candidates provide systems, procedures, and structures that help the entire team meet optimization and utilization goals.

Maintenance Foreman: Candidates are responsible for the safe, reliable, environmentally sound and efficient execution of maintenance activities. After receiving world class training and applying those skills and traits on a daily basis in the military, candidates understand the complexities of mechanical, electronic, and electrical systems. Military Service Members are able to supervise technicians or if the need arises be the technician.

Getting Started on Your Career Search

Getting your career search started can be an extremely stressful time in your life. The Orion Talent Team is here to help and we have built this document to serve as a guide. Now that you have an overview of our services and the types of positions that we recruit for, we will dive into developing your resume and interview skills.

Section 2

Resume Preparation

Section 2 – Resume

Resume Purpose

A good resume summarizes your accomplishments, education, work experience, and should reflect your strengths in a concise, coherent manner. Through your resume, you typically have about 30 seconds to convince a potential employer that you warrant an interview. A resume will not get you a job. It is intended to provide a professional summary of your skills, education and experience. Think of your resume as a “business card” or the “highlights” of your professional achievements. Your resume serves as a topic outline for an in-person interview; and guides the conversation to the points you want to stress about your background. Because of this, you do not need to include all of the information about your background on your resume. Your resume is, simply, a snapshot of your accomplishments, education and work experience. Think of it as a way to give the interviewer information from which to ask questions; from there you can expand on the information.

Resume Preparation & Guidelines

Here are some key points to keep in mind as you develop your resume:

- **Do not include an objective statement.** Space is limited so use it wisely. We won't present your resume to any position that you are not qualified for, or haven't expressed an interest in.
- **Include a summary.** A summary is a well written concise **paragraph** that focuses the reader's attention on your most important qualities, achievements, and abilities.
- **Keep resume length to one page** (if you cannot get all of it onto one page, go to two pages, but **NEVER more than two pages**).
- When you are selecting a font for your resume, **the font size should be between 10 and 12** to allow for readability (don't make section headers bigger.) Your name (which should be placed at the top of your resume) can be slightly larger.
- Use a **font such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri**. Black is the only acceptable font color.
- **Do not be afraid to change the margins.** This will often adjust the information to fit far better on the page (do not make the margins smaller than 0.5 inches).
- The information listed (specifically **experience and education**) should be in **reverse chronological order** (with the most recent first).
- Set off your **accomplishments and work experience in a “bullet” format**.
- Your accomplishments should be **quantifiable** and each accomplishment should be supported with **tangible results**. For example: “Achieved a 98% completion rate, 13% above average.” Use your evaluations to find some great accomplishment bullet points.
- **Never use pronouns such as: I, me, my, our.** Never speak in the first person.
- List GPA if it is 3.0 or higher.
- **Personal information is not information for a resume (age, health, marital status, etc.).**

- **No need to put “References Supplied Upon Request” or include reference at the end of your resume.** Of course you will supply outstanding references when requested.
- Spelling and grammar on your resume must be correct and consistent. Double and triple-check to make sure you have no grammatical or punctuation errors. **Triple Check Spelling!**
- Spell checking programs usually will not check words that are in all CAPS. The easiest way to avoid this issue is to not put words in all CAPS. If you choose to use all CAPS for section headers, you must check the spelling of these words carefully.
- Do not use military jargon. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms. Write your resume so any reader will understand what you are trying to convey.
- Your email address should be professional. For example, JohnSmith@email.com. Not, harleydude@email.com.
- **Check the tense.** If you are listing information about a past position, it should **all** be in past tense. Additionally, if you are listing information about a present position, it should **all** be in present tense.
- Should be formatted consistently in use of italics, spacing, capital letters, bullets, boldface, and underlining.
- There should not be any date gaps on your resume. You need to adequately cover all time periods specified on your resume.
- Pictures or icons are not acceptable on professional resumes.
- Resume paper should be a neutral color, preferably white or off-white.
- Do not use text boxes when formatting your resume. Use a standard MS Word document.
- **Remove any hyperlinks** on your resume (ex. when your email address shows up blue and underlined, right click and select “remove hyperlink”)
- Make sure you can back up what you include on your resume.

When in doubt, consult with the Orion Recruiting Team. We will work with you to develop the strongest resume for you based on your background and experience. That being said, we know that it is challenging as a transitioning service member to create a resume in an easy to read format that best highlights your skill set. The best format will be the standard chronological style detailed below. A more seasoned veteran can still use a chronological format, but may also consider the skills based / combination style resume below.

Chronological Resumes

You should typically use a chronological resume if your professional experience and your professional timeline are relatively easy to follow. This format lists your professional experience in reverse chronological order, so a potential interviewer, military or non-military, can easily follow your professional timeline and get a good overall understanding of what you are qualified to do in a very short period of time. The sample chronological resume format in this section should serve as an excellent starting point when developing your own chronological resume.

NAME
Address
Phone Number(s) • Email Address

ELECTRICAL OPERATOR/TECHNICIAN

A top-performing and versatile Electrical Operator and Technician with a record of sustained high standards in operations and a strong military background in generating and distributing electrical power, including managing projects, directing engineering teams, conducting system maintenance and repairs, and testing hardware and equipment. Goal-oriented and analytical, a flexible employee capable of working independently or as part of team, and focused on utilizing a strong set of talents and skills to advance projects and deliver exceptional results with a focus and understanding of meeting deadlines.

KEY STRENGTHS

Electrical Power Generation & Distribution	Technical Maintenance	Troubleshooting & Repair
Maintenance Team Management	Nuclear Theory	Scheduling & Planning
Problem Solving	Professional Communication	Reactor Safety Design Casualty
Recognition, Control, and Restoration	Electrical Theory	Mathematics
Thermodynamics & Steam Cycle Operations	Diagnostics	Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

US NAVY, SAN DIEGO, CA 2008-PRESENT

NUCLEAR MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN & WORK CENTER SUPERVISOR

- **Leadership:** Organized and directed the completion of preventive and corrective maintenance, and supervised over 25 different technicians in the troubleshooting and repair of faulty equipment. **Results:** decreased system downtime by 25%
- Performed maintenance, repair and alterations in electrical systems, and maintained power and lighting circuits (4160V, 450V, and 120V), electrical fixtures, motors, steam turbine generators, motor generators, diesel generators, controllers, switchboards, and voltage and frequency regulators.
- Detected, combated, and repaired damage from electrical equipment fires, grounds, and open or short circuits.
- Selected as one of three Second Class Petty Officers to perform hands on training of nonqualified personnel, including level of knowledge checks and oral boards.
- Awarded the Naval Achievement Medal for critical role execution of divisional maintenance
- Qualified Reactor Operator and Shutdown Reactor Operator, a position whom are system experts, responsible for the direct supervision of personnel in power plant operations, maintenance, troubleshooting and repair.
- Chosen to be one of three technicians assigned to a team to troubleshoot and perform critical repairs to the ships electrical switchboard allowing the ship to get underway on time as well as recommencing critical reactor operations while underway.
- Chosen as lead maintainer, executing over 200 maintenance items while ensuring the highest Quality Assurance.
- **Planning:** Chosen as Lead Planner, coordinated shipboard jobs between multiple shipyard depots and the Navy, and maintained relationships between naval and civilian contractors to ensure timely completion of over 300 high priority nuclear jobs. **Results:** Completed shipboard jobs 2 months ahead of schedule
- Wrote hundreds of work packages by researching and interpreting schematics for electrical tagout isolations for personnel safety during necessary preventative and corrective maintenance.
- **Training:** Selected to conduct education, training and qualification of over 100 personnel in all aspects of the reactor plant and electrical distribution system during routine operations, complex evolutions, and casualty control actions. **Results:** Increased qualification rate by over 50%

EDUCATION

Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, Nuclear Trained Operator Specializing In Electrical Equipment and Operations **Graduated 2 of 26**
Nuclear Power School, Mathematics, Nuclear physics, Electrical Power Theory and Generation, Nuclear Reactor Technology, Thermodynamics, Chemistry, Materials Science and Metallurgy, Health physics, Reactor principles **Graduated 15 of 125**
Nuclear Field 'A' School, Mathematics, Electricity, Electronic Fundamentals, Digital Circuits, Electrical Equipment Graduate **Graduated 4 of 30**

NAME

Address

Phone Number(s) • Email Address

ELECTRONIC TECHNICIAN

A top-performing and versatile Electronic Technician with a record of sustained high standards in troubleshooting and a strong military background of electronics systems in support of propulsion plants, including managing projects, directing engineering and maintenance teams, conducting system maintenance and repairs, and testing hardware and equipment. Goal-oriented and analytical, a flexible employee capable of working independently or as part of team, and focused on utilizing a strong set of talents and skills to advance projects and deliver exceptional results with a focus and understanding of meeting deadlines.

KEY STRENGTHS

Engineering	Component Repair	Troubleshooting
Maintenance Team Management	Nuclear Theory	Scheduling & Planning
Problem Solving	Professional Communication	Reactor Safety Design Casualty
Recognition, Control, and Restoration	Solid State Devices	Digital Logic
Thermodynamics & Steam Cycle Operations	Diagnostics	Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**US NAVY, SAN DIEGO, CA 2008-PRESENT****NUCLEAR MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN & WORK CENTER SUPERVISOR**

- **Leadership:** Organized and directed the completion of preventive and corrective maintenance, and supervised over 25 different technicians in the troubleshooting and repair of faulty equipment. **Results:** decreased system downtime by 25%
- Performed maintenance, repair and alterations in reactor digital instrumentation and control equipment, alarm systems, power monitoring equipment, AC/DC circuits, microprocessors, data buses (VME and electrical distribution).
- Detected, combated, and repaired damage from electrical equipment fires, grounds, and open or short circuits.
- **Selected** as one of three Second Class Petty Officers to perform hands on training of nonqualified personnel, including level of knowledge checks and oral boards.
- **Awarded** the Naval Achievement Medal for critical role execution of divisional maintenance
- Qualified Reactor Operator and Shutdown Reactor Operator a position whom are system experts, responsible for the direct supervision of personnel in power plant operations, maintenance, troubleshooting and repair.
- **Chosen** to be one of two technicians assigned to a team to troubleshoot and perform critical repairs to the reactors instrumentation and control system allowing the ship to get underway on time as well as recommencing critical reactor operations while underway.
- **Chosen** as lead maintainer, executing over 200 maintenance items while ensuring the highest Quality Assurance.
- **Planning:** Chosen as Lead Planner, coordinated shipboard jobs between multiple shipyard depots and the Navy, and maintained relationships between naval and civilian contractors to ensure timely completion of over 300 high priority nuclear jobs. **Results:** Completed shipboard jobs 2 months ahead of schedule
- Accountable for certification reviews on work procedures, material packages and workmanship practices to ensure compliance with directives and standards.
- **Training:** Selected to conduct education, training and qualification of over 100 personnel in all aspects of the reactor plant and electronic systems during routine operations, complex evolutions, and casualty control actions. **Results:** Increased qualification rate by over 50%

EDUCATION**Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, Nuclear Trained Operator Specializing In Reactor Equipment and Operations****Graduated 2 of 26****Nuclear Power School, Mathematics, Nuclear physics, Electrical Power Theory and Generation, Nuclear Reactor Technology, Thermodynamics, Chemistry, Materials Science and Metallurgy, Health physics, Reactor principles** **Graduated 15 of 125****Nuclear Field 'A' School, (Electronics) Graduate** **Graduated 4 of 30**



NAME
 Address
 Phone Number(s) • Email Address

MECHANICAL OPERATOR/TECHNICIAN

A top-performing and versatile Mechanical Operator and Technician with a record of sustained high standards in operations and a strong military background of mechanical systems in support of nuclear propulsion plants, including managing projects, directing engineering teams, conducting system maintenance and repairs, and testing hardware and equipment. Goal-oriented and analytical, a flexible employee capable of working independently or as part of team, and focused on utilizing a strong set of talents and skills to advance projects and deliver exceptional results with a focus and understanding of meeting deadlines.

KEY STRENGTHS

Steam and Water Systems	Technical Maintenance	Troubleshooting & Repair
Maintenance Team Management	Nuclear Theory	Scheduling & Planning
Problem Solving	Professional Communication	Reactor Safety Design Casualty
Recognition, Control, and Restoration	Pump and Valve Overhaul	Mathematics
Thermodynamics & Steam Cycle Operations	Diagnostics	Leadership

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

US NAVY, SAN DIEGO, CA 2008-PRESENT

NUCLEAR MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN & WORK CENTER SUPERVISOR

- **Leadership:** Organized and directed the completion of preventive and corrective maintenance, and supervised over 25 different technicians in the troubleshooting and repair of faulty equipment. **Results:** decreased system downtime by 25%
- Performed maintenance, repair and alterations to over 100 maintenance items made up of pump overhauls, valve overhauls, relief valve set point testing, heat exchanger cleaning, steam turbine bearing inspections and maintained steam turbines, steam boiler, pumps, expansion water tanks, air compressors, air dryers and reactor coolant pressures and temperatures.
- Detected, combated, and repaired damage from electrical equipment fires, grounds, and open or short circuits.
- **Selected** as one of three Second Class Petty Officers to perform hands on training of nonqualified personnel, including level of knowledge checks and oral boards.
- **Awarded** the Naval Achievement Medal for critical role execution of divisional maintenance
- Qualified Engine room Supervisor/Chief Reactor Watch/Chief Machinery Operator a position whom are system experts, responsible for the direct supervision of personnel in power plant operations, maintenance, troubleshooting and repair.
- **Chosen** to be one of two technicians assigned to a team to troubleshoot and perform critical repairs to the ships reverse osmosis unit allowing the ship to get underway on time as well as recommencing critical reactor operations while underway.
- **Chosen** as lead maintainer, executing over 200 maintenance items while ensuring the highest Quality Assurance.
- **Planning:** Chosen as Lead Planner, coordinated shipboard jobs between multiple shipyard depots and the Navy, and maintained relationships between naval and civilian contractors to ensure timely completion of over 300 high priority nuclear jobs. **Results:** Completed shipboard jobs 2 months ahead of schedule
- Accountable for certification reviews on work procedures, material packages and workmanship practices to ensure compliance with directives and standards.
- **Training:** Selected to conduct education, training and qualification of over 100 personnel in all aspects of the reactor plant and mechanical systems during routine operations, complex evolutions, and casualty control actions. **Results:** Increased qualification rate by over 50%

EDUCATION

Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, Nuclear Trained Operator Specializing In Reactor Equipment and Operations

Graduated 2 of 26

Nuclear Power School, Mathematics, Nuclear physics, Electrical Power Theory and Generation, Nuclear Reactor Technology, Thermodynamics, Chemistry, Materials Science and Metallurgy, Health physics, Reactor principles **Graduated 15 of 125**

Nuclear Field 'A' School, (Mechanical) Graduate **Graduated 4 of 30**

Skills Based / Combination Resume



You should typically use a skill based / combination resume if you have more than 15 years of professional experience. You may also want to consider this style if you have a very diverse professional background and are trying to tailor your resume for a specific industry or position. This format starts with a professional summary and highlights of key professional attributes that you want to emphasize. The skill based / combination format allows a potential interviewer to view your background in an easy to read format that emphasizes the skill sets that you are trying to convey. The sample format below should serve as an excellent starting point when developing your own skill based / combination style resume.

Key points for a skill based / combination resume:

- Ensure your summary paragraph accurately outlines your professional experience.
- Carefully select the **three** to **four** skills that you will list and detail the achievements that support each skill. Highlight those skills that are most relevant to the employers that you will be targeting. The first skill set listed should be your strongest and the one that you want to emphasize the most.
- Your achievements supporting each skill set should be specific, concise and quantifiable where possible.
- Your Employment Chronology section should not contain any gaps in your timeline.

Sample Skills Based / Combination Resume



NAME

Address

Phone Number(s) • Email Address

SUMMARY: Highly qualified results-oriented individual with over 18 years progressive responsibility and leadership experience in program management, recruiting, training and military aviation. Self-motivated, articulate and technically savvy individual with a can-do attitude. Assertive team player who performs well in fast-paced environments. Proven team builder and skilled problem solver.

Program Integration
Problem Solver

Organizational Skills
Team Builder

Communication Skills
Secret Clearance

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Responsible for \$250M Global Air Traffic Management avionics upgrade program for 15 Boeing Aircraft
- Led 12 acquisition managers and engineers developing strategic plan for Boeing 707 avionics upgrade program
- Restructured \$250M baseline delivering capability 2.5 years early, averting negative operational impacts
- Spearheaded \$5M cockpit avionics upgrade program evaluation to reduce ownership costs between common airframes for total AF fleet of 48 Boeing aircraft; saving AF \$20M
- Directed 5 member Test & Evaluation Team for AF Distributed Common Ground System that provided intelligence data to users worldwide; developed overall test strategy and plans; reduced testing cost by \$635K

LEADERSHIP

- Supervised 250 member flight training organization that was rated "Overall Excellent" during HQ inspection
- Directed 5 member team that managed ground, weapon and flight safety programs for 9,576 individuals, 4 flying units and 27 organizations; reduced mishaps by 12%; won Best Ground Safety Program out of 8 installations.
- Led Executive Programs/Projects as Special Assistant to military CEO of 4,900 plus member organization; prepared/presented briefings to Congressional, DoD, and foreign Distinguished Visitors
- Turned around Officer Recruitment Program in two months, from 59% to 110% of goal; supervised, trained, and motivated force of 12 Air Force recruiters

ASSET MANAGEMENT

- Managed \$1.1 billion flying training program of 11,250 training allocations for 286 different student courses ensuring maximum utilization of all training allocations; produced 1200 AF pilots and 1000 crewmembers
- Solved severe AF pilot shortage by standing up reserve programs in active duty units; saving AF \$66M
- Led team which evaluated/purchased two Boeing 737 aircraft; saving AF \$4.4M
- Resolved long standing proprietary rights issues with major defense contractor; saving AF \$2.5M
- Developed/negotiated a fair and equitable three year employee downsizing plan; saving AF \$3.1M

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

- Convinced leadership that 'Big Safari' RC-135 (707) avionics upgrade solution not optimal; prevented major waste of funds and ensured customer received avionics upgrade package that met worldwide requirements

- Briefed technical requirements for Global Air Traffic Management and impacts of aircraft that are non-compliant; persuaded leadership to accept short-term solutions to continue flight operations until compliant
- Directed 16 member risk mitigation working group that identified 46 avionics upgrade risks and mitigation efforts; developed decision brief and received overwhelming approval of plan from senior leadership

TEAM BUILDING

- Interacted effectively on all organizational levels to achieve consensus, motivated and fostered team spirit
- Led 10 member Operational Risk Management team--developed strategy, plan, and metric for 27 organizations
- Coordinated 15 member team supporting 10 senior general officers for annual conference; to include accommodations, cuisine, transportation, and conference center logistical support
- Trained 60 member aircraft mishap response team ready to respond anywhere in New England
- Spearheaded team of 25 Combined Federal Campaign fundraisers, achieving 122% of goal and 43% contribution increase from prior year. Raised over \$82,000 with 81% participation rate from 800+ employees

EMPLOYMENT CHRONOLOGY

US Air Force, US and worldwide assignments 1993 – 2013

Test and Evaluation Manager	Hanscom AFB, MA	Feb 07 – Jun 07
Director of Flight/Ground Safety Programs	Hanscom AFB, MA	Dec 05 - Feb 07
Acquisition Program Manager	Hanscom AFB, MA	Dec 04 - Nov 05
Resource Program Manager	Randolph AFB, TX	Sep 02 – Nov 04
General Aide to CEO	Randolph AFB, TX	Jan 01 - Sep 02
District Sales Manager and Recruiter	Portsmouth, NH	Jan 98 - Dec 01
Aviator, KC-135 Tanker Navigator	Mather AFB, CA; Pease AFB, NH	Aug 93 - Dec 97

EDUCATION

BS, Professional Aeronautics, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, GPA 4.0
 Mid-Level Manager/Supervisor Program, 12 weeks in-residence, Maxwell AFB, MI
 Senior-Level Manager/Supervisor Program, 40 weeks non-residence, Hanscom AFB, MA

TRAINING

Intermediate System Acquisition Management, 3 weeks in-residence, Hanscom AFB, MA
 Developmental and Operational Testing & Evaluation, Hanscom AFB, MA
 Fundamental of System Acquisition Management, Naval Center of Acquisition Training
 Aircraft Mishap Investigation Training, Kirtland AFB, NM

CERTIFICATION

Project Management Professional by Project Management Institute
 Instructional System Development Certification, perfected lesson plan development to formal presentation

OTHER INFORMATION

Computer literate: Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, Outlook, and Microsoft Project
 FAA instrument pilot

Resume Changes

Resumes are living documents that change on a regular basis, especially with the wide array of opinions and advice available on the topic. Make sure that you practice solid file management. If you make changes to your resume, send us an update so that we are using the most current document.

Now that your resume is complete, you have the ability to secure an interview. In the next sections, we will start exploring what to expect in the interview process and how to prepare to win them when they come along.

Action Verbs for Resumes

ACCOMPLISHED	DETERMINED	INSTALLED	RECOMMENDED
ACHIEVED	DEvised	INSTITUTED	RECORDED
ACQUIRED	DIRECTED	INSTRUCTED	RECRUITED
ACTIVATED	DISTRIBUTED	INSTRUMENTED	REDUCED
ADAPTED	DROVE	INTEGRATED	REFINED
ADJUSTED	DUPLICATED	INTERPRUTED	RELATED
ADMINISTERED	EDITED	INTERVIEWED	REORGANIZED
ADVERTISED	EDUCATED	INTRODUCED	REPORTED
ADVISED	EFFECTED	INVENTED	REPRESENTED
ALLOCATED	ENLARGED	INVESTIGATED	RESEARCHED
ANALYZED	ENLISTED	LECTURED	RESOLVED
APPLIED	ENSURED	LED	RESPONDED
APPROVED	EQUIPPED	LOCATED	RESTORED
ARRANGED	ESTABLISHED	MAINTAINED	RESTRUCTURED
ASSEMBLED	EVALUATED	MANAGED	RETRIEVED
ASSISTED	EXAMINED	MANIPULATED	REVIEWED
BALANCED	EXECUTED	MARKETED	REVISED
BOUGHT	EXHIBITED	MEASURED	SCHEDULED
BUDGETED	EXPANDED	MINIMIZED	SELECTED
BUILT	EXPEDITED	MODERNIZED	SERVED
CALCULATED	EXPLAINED	MODIFIED	SET UP
CATALOGUED	FABRICATED	MONITORED	SHIPPED
CHAired	FACILITATED	MOTIVATED	SOLD
CHANGED	FAMILIARIZED	NEGOTIATED	SOLVED
CHECKED	FED	NOTIFIED	SORTED
CLEANED	FINALIZED	OBSERVED	SPECIFIED
COLLABORAED	FINANCED	OBTAINED	STAFFED
COMPLIED	FORMULATED	OPERATED	STANDARDIZED
COMPLETED	FORWARDED	ORGANIZED	STARTED

COMPOSED	GENERATED	OVERHAULED	STRENGTHENED
COMPUTED	GOVERNED	OVERSAW	STRUCTURED
CONCEIVED	GRANTED	PACKED	STUDIED
CONCEPTUALIZED	GUARANTEED	PATROLLED	SUPERVISED
CONCILIATED	GUIDED	PERSUADED	SUPPLIED
CONDENSED	HANDLED	PHOTOCOPIED	SUPPORTED
CONDUCTED	HEADED	PLANNED	SURVEYED
CONSTRUCTED	HELPED	PREPARED	SYNTHESIZED
CONSULTED	HIRED	PRESENTED	TAUGHT
CONSUMED	IDENTIFIED	PRESIDED	TRACKED
CONTRACTED	ILLUSTRATED	PROCESSED	TRAINED
CONTROLLED	IMPLEMENTED	PRODUCED	TRANSFERRED
COORDINATED	IMPROVED	PROGRAMMED	TRANSLATED
CORRECTED	INCREASED	PROMOTED	TRANSMITTED
COUNSELED	INDEXED	PROPOSED	TRANSPORTED
CREATED	INDOCTRINATED	PUBLICIZED	TYPED
DECIDED	INFLUENCED	PUBLISHED	UPDATED
DEFINED	INFORMED	PURCHASED	UPGRADED
DELEGATED	INITIATED	QUANTIFIED	USED

Chronological Resume Worksheet

Many transitioning service members struggle with where to begin developing their resume. It really can be as simple as the worksheet below. Start by filling in the basic items. With the help of the Orion Recruiting Team, we can take this basic information and develop a solid resume.

While completing this worksheet, pay special attention to the accomplishments. Most candidates reiterate responsibilities in this area. What will truly make you stand out in the market will be a track record of performance supported by consistent accomplishments in every billet. Read through your evaluations for the following:

- Rankings, especially those against your peers or peer units. If you can consistently show you were rated in the top 25% or better, these are strong numbers to show.
- Quantifiable numbers, such as maintenance readiness rates, or unit evaluation scores. While the reader may not understand what deployment readiness means, they will definitely understand concrete numbers such as “98% readiness rate, highest in the unit.”
- Outstanding comments from evaluators can also be strong accomplishments to list, even if a number is not attached.
- Try to show where you have improved a process, saved time or money, or overcame obstacles to achieve success.

Once you have completed this worksheet, either scan or utilize our downloadable sample resume, type up a rough draft and send to a recruiter for review and further development.

EDUCATION

Degree	School	Year	GPA	
• Key Activities				

EXPERIENCE

Rank, Occupational Specialty, Service

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		
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• Achievement: <hr/>		
• Achievement: <hr/>		
• Achievement: <hr/>		

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		
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• Achievement: <hr/>		
• Achievement: <hr/>		
• Achievement: <hr/>		

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		
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• Achievement: <hr/>		

Billet Held	Duty Station / Base	Month Year - Present
Responsibilities:		
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• Achievement: <hr/>		
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Section 3

Introduction to Interviewing

Section 3 – Introduction to Interviewing



This section is designed to provide an over view of the types of interviews and how they are typically structured. While this section is oriented towards an Orion Hiring Conference format, the tips included can be applied to any interview. Many transitioning military service members have never had to interview for a position. In the military, natural career progression and a demonstrated record of performance dictate the particular jobs you have secured. Corporate America is different. In order to secure the position you are targeting, you must be able to convince an interviewer that your military experience and your demonstrated track record of performance are a strong fit for their organization. The candidate who can best relate his or her background and strengths to an interviewer will be the one who gets the job.

Take time to read this and other literature on interviewing. This section breaks down different aspects of the typical interview, and the following sections will introduce you to interviewing techniques, common questions, and tools to help you prepare. As you review the information, identify the areas you feel you need to concentrate on the most. Begin developing examples and working through your answers and let us know if you need any assistance. Self-study is a critical component of your transition. Remember that the time you spend preparing is a tremendous investment in your future.

The career transition is not easy. As Veterans, we understand the personal and professional stressors that you are dealing with. The Orion staff is here to assist and guide you through the transition process. Please consult us on any issue – the only bad question is the one that you do not ask.

Getting Started

There are 4 basic steps you should take when preparing for an interview: research yourself, practice, research the company, and prepare logistically.

Research Yourself

It is guaranteed that you will be asked a question that you did not prepare for during an interview, so it is crucial that you know and understand your performance history to be able to answer any question. You must analyze your strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures, in order to:

- Emphasize specific strengths during an interview
- Talk about specific examples using names, dates and places that you can relate to support your answers
- Sell yourself

We recommend that you lay out your evaluations, awards, and your resume and utilize Section 4 of this transition guide to begin organizing your experiences and associating them to common interview topics. As you learn about the STAR format, you will be able to expand these examples into a well-rounded interview response. We have also provided detailed lists of sample interview questions for further review and consideration. Once you have thought about the key situations that you want to use in your interviews, then you develop them further by practicing them.

Practice

Once you have organized your examples (as mentioned above), we suggest writing out your answers. This will help you formulate well thought out answers and will ensure you do not miss key details. While writing out your answers is a start, you must also take the time to practice your responses out loud, whether it is with the Orion Recruiting Team, a friend or spouse, tape recorder or by videotaping yourself to check idiosyncrasies. Know your resume and be prepared to explain the responsibilities, roles and achievements of each position. Thinking through your answers is not enough for most people. It is important to verbalize them. It is much easier in an interview setting to answer questions you have already practiced out loud.

Company Research

The first interview requires basic research to ensure that you have general knowledge of the company. The information you uncover in your research will allow you to ask thoughtful questions that illustrate a strong interest and potential fit with the company. The second interview will require much more in-depth research. For any interview, take time to understand the following information:

- Company Mission, Vision, and Values
- Industry
- Current status, Products, Customers, Competition
- History
- Corporate structure (HQ location, size, divisions, international or domestic, public or private)

There are many free sources of information that can be helpful:

- Forbes Magazine online
- Wall Street Journal
- CNNmoney.com
- LinkedIn
- Company Website

Logistics

In order for an interview to go as smoothly as possible, you must make sure you are logistically prepared. Arrive early, look sharp, and present a professional image. Make sure your attire is ready and you know where the interview is. If you can answer the following questions, you should be set for you interview:

- What time is your interview?
- Who are you interviewing with?
- Do you have a phone number to call in case an issue arises and you may be late?
- Where is your interview?
- How long are you going to be there?

- How long does it take to get there?
- What is the attire for your interview?
- Is your attire ready?
- Did you remember to bring extra resumes in a professional folder (portfolio) with paper and pen?
- Do you have a brag book (a 3 ring binder, with plastic sleeves containing resumes, evaluations, transcripts, awards)?

Any logistical misstep can cause you to be nervous or rushed. If it happens, stay calm. Remember to check yourself in the mirror before each interview. Always have a phone number to call in the event that you will be late to the interview.

Types of Interviews

There are two primary types of interviews used by companies: a screening interview and selection interview. It is important to understand that every company's hiring process is different. Some companies may require only one interview while others may require two or more. It is also not uncommon to see a company conduct testing (personality or skills based) as an intermediate step in the hiring process. Here is an overview of the major types of interviews and tips on how to handle them.

Screening Interview

Your first interview with a company will often be a screening interview. The purpose of a screening interview is to ensure that prospective candidates meet the basic qualifications for a given position. It may take place in person or on the telephone. If you meet the basic qualifications for the position, express interest in the position, and make a positive impression on the interviewer, you will likely be selected for a selection interview.

Keys to Success

Research the company. Read the job summary carefully. Understand the position and know the key attributes that the company is looking for.

Using your research and the job summary as a guide, tailor your answers to emphasize the key attributes that you have identified.

Know your audience. You need to know the background of your interviewer. Is the interviewer from Human Resources, or are they from Operations? Are they former military? The Orion Account Executive responsible for that company can give you all of that information.

Be personable. All things being equal, companies hire individuals that they like.

Selection Interviews / Second Interviews

Selection interviews are typically conducted in-person at Hiring Conferences or on-site at the companies location. The purpose of a selection interview is to determine whether a candidate will be selected for the position he or she is interviewing for. A selection interview is typically more rigorous than a screening interview. At this point, a company is

trying to decide whether or not you should either be moved to the next step in the hiring process or an offer is going to be extended, so there will be more scrutiny on you. The company wants to know if you are qualified for the job. Are you a good cultural fit? Can you make an immediate impact or will you need extensive training? Questions will be more specific and your answers typically need to be more detailed. Selection interviews can come in several forms.

One-on-one Interview. A one-on-one interview is an interview with a single interviewer. The key to a one-on-one interview is to build rapport with the interviewer. Smile. Be friendly. Try to match your interviewer's energy level. Typically, you will have a short period of time to make an impact. Know the position and the key attributes the company is looking for and emphasize those things.

Round-Robin Interview. A round-robin interview is a series of one-on-one interviews with the same company on the same day. Round-robin interviews are the interview technique most commonly used by our client companies. On-site, you will interview with multiple interviewers one after another. The key to a round-robin interview is giving good consistent answers and keeping your energy level up throughout the entire day. Interviewers will typically meet to discuss your answers and will scrutinize any inconsistencies. It is also very important to ask each interviewer questions, even if previous interviewers have answered them, so that each interviewer feels you are interested and engaged in the conversation.

Panel Interview. A panel interview is an interview that consists of two or more interviewers. Typically, each of the interviewers will ask questions. For a company, the purpose of a panel interview is to gain multiple perspectives on a prospective candidate in a time efficient setting. The key to a panel interview is to keep all interviewers involved, even if one person is directing most of the questions. They may or may not be the key decision maker. Make eye contact with all interviewers even when answering a question for a specific individual.

Stress Interview. A stress interview is designed to test your responses in a stressful environment. An interviewer is going to try to intimidate you. The purpose is to weed out candidates who do not deal well with adversity. The interviewer will make deliberate attempts to see how you handle yourself using methods such as sarcasm, argumentative style questions, or long awkward silences. The key to a stress interview is recognizing that you are in a stress interview. Do not take it personally. Stay calm, focused, and don't allow yourself to be rushed. Ask for clarification if you need it. Know how to push back. Tactfully ask an interviewer for a couple of problems they are facing and propose solutions. Be positive.

Irregular Interviews. Many companies prefer to evaluate a candidate in a non-traditional setting in addition to the standard formal interview. Common irregular interviews may be a lunch interview, dinner interview, field ride / job shadow, and a plant tour. There are a few keys to preparing for these interviews. First, remember that you are always being interviewed, so the same interview fundamentals apply here as they do in a more standard interview format. Next, always be yourself. One of the main purposes of these types of interviews is to get to know the 'real you', so be yourself, but always stay professional. Finally, engage in conversation and ask questions. Since an irregular interview often involves give and take conversation, make sure you are showing your interest in the opportunity by asking intelligent questions. Remember, your Orion Recruiter will be available to help you prepare for these types of interviews.

Telephone Interviews. Telephone interviews are common and are frequently used at various stages of the hiring process for many companies. It is far easier and more cost effective to conduct phone interviews than face-to-face interviews. Often phone interviews are not scheduled and could occur at any time during your career search. Here are some tips for telephone interviews:

- While you are searching for a new career, always expect phone calls from potential employers.
- Ensure you have a professional and courteous voice mail message.
- Ensure you have a standard ring-back tone.
- Do not answer the phone if you are unable to speak (i.e. while driving or when you are in a loud environment).
- Check your voice mail messages daily and always return messages within 24 hours. If you do not connect with the person you are calling back, always leave a polite voice mail.
- If you work a night shift and receive a message during the day, it is fine to call the person back during odd hours and leave a return message. It is imperative that you do this only if you know the number is not their cell phone number.
- Focus on the conversation and nothing else.
- Always remember that the goal of a phone interview is to get to the first or next face-to-face interview.

The Interview

Regardless of the type of interview being conducted, you should go into a prospective interview with a plan. Your plan should be built around the key attributes uncovered during your research that you must communicate to effectively convince the interviewer you are a fit for their position. Each of these attributes should be supported by real examples from your career. It is helpful if you think of the interview as a research paper comprised of an introduction, a body, and a conclusion with your key attributes forming your thesis.

The First 5 Minutes (The Introduction):

Like the introduction to a paper, an introductory portion of an interview is critical. During the first five minutes, you will set the tone for your interview. Make a good first impression. Look sharp and present a professional image. Relax, smile, and remember your plan. Your resume got your foot in the door, now you must effectively show the interviewer why you are a fit for the position. Keep the following tips in mind during the introduction portion of your interview:

- **Be on time** – Show up early and make a good impression. Being late can derail your interview before it starts. At a Hiring Conference, arrive at the door five minutes early, but wait until the scheduled start time of the interview to knock on the door.
- **Eye contact, firm handshake, and smile** – Company representatives often tell us that they determine people who are not ‘fits’ for their company within the first 5 minutes of an interview. Make the best first impression you can - it counts! Make sure your attire is sharp and professional, and make sure your body language reflects the type of image you are trying to project. Be confident and personable. Smile. It will help you relax.
- **Build rapport** – Most professional interviewers will immediately attempt to put you at ease in order to find out who you really are. This should assist you in relaxing, but do not forget your setting. Do not get too comfortable

or lose your professional bearing, but keep in mind most interviewers select individuals that, above meeting the basic qualifications for a position, they like personally.

- **Start off strong** – Typically, the first question is some variation of “tell me about yourself.” These types of questions allow you to introduce yourself to the interviewer. What the manager wants to hear is why you are a fit for the position. An ideal answer will tell your story, make an impact, last 2-3 minutes, and be tailored (using your thesis) for that interview. This question will be your first chance to talk about your background and will set a positive tone for the rest of your interview. Do not say anything that may detract from your candidacy for the position. Prepare and practice for this type of question.

The Next 30 Minutes (The Body)

During the body of your interview, the interviewer will ask you a series of questions for approximately 20-30 minutes, depending on the position, that will focus on your qualifications. Some questions are behavioral (looking for specific examples when you demonstrated a particular behavior); others can be company oriented to get a feel of how much you know about the position and industry. Other questions may be technical and used to gauge your core technical skill-sets. Regardless of the type of question being asked, your answers should highlight your qualifications, personality, and interest in the position they are seeking to fill.

You should keep the following question in the back of your mind during the body of your interview: “Why are they asking me this question?” Any question asked is an attempt to see if you are a good match for the position they are interviewing for. Your responses need to be genuine, practiced and tailored to the job. It is important to make an impact here. Keep the following in mind during the body of your interview:

Have a plan. You must have a plan before you walk in the door, and stay on course! Know what a company is looking for and have three points (strengths/attributes) that you need to emphasize that align with what the company is looking for. Rehearse your answers to maintain concise responses and to avoid rambling. Stick to your plan.

Be sincere. Be confident and genuine. Avoid clichés. Do not attempt to pass generic textbook answers as your own. Back up your answers with specific, detailed examples from your career. The more substance you can lend to a trait or accomplishment, the more believable and interesting you will be to an interviewer.

Show interest and enthusiasm. This of course isn’t the time to pull out the football game cheers. However, make sure your interest and excitement in the job are apparent. Qualified but disinterested will not get you a second interview. Energy and enthusiasm go a long way. If you are a very even keeled person, verbalize your interest. Tell them you are excited about the job. Would you prefer to hire someone who came across as disinterested or enthusiastic?

Be specific. Examples will add depth to your answers and make you stand out. Be as specific as possible. Try to include names, places, and time periods in your answers. Remember, everyone says that they are a leader, a communicator, a problem-solver, and/or a technical subject matter expert. Prove it with examples that illustrate your strengths. Vague answers will not suffice while six-minute monologues will lose your audience’s interest. Your best bet is to stick with professional examples in your responses unless they request a personal one.

Stay focused. In a hiring conference setting, after the fourth interview of the day, it is easy to become a victim to question overload. Maintain your concentration; the interviewer will provide indications of the qualities he/she is seeking. A perceptive candidate often picks up clues from the interviewer and tailors answers accordingly. Also, keep track of what is being said. You don't want to be caught asking a question on material that was already covered.

Pay attention to non-verbal signals. Facial expressions and body language can significantly aid you in determining how the interview is progressing. If an interviewer appears interested (leaning forward, smiling, etc.), expound and give further detail; if you feel like you are losing them (glassy eyes, yawns, crossed arms, looking at their watch), wrap it up and put the ball back in their court.

Listen to the questions being asked. You want to make sure you are answering the question that was asked, not the question you want to answer. Make sure you listen to the question completely. Pause. Then answer the question. Don't feel like you have to answer as quickly as possible. It is much better to take a second to collect your thoughts and give a good answer than it is to recover from a poor answer that you did not give much thought to.

Focus on the opportunity at hand. In an attempt to calibrate your focus and motivation, interviewers may present you with different potential opportunities within their company. That opportunity may really exist; however, you do not want to talk yourself out of the original position. Inform the interviewer that the other opportunity sounds interesting, but you really would like to pursue the original position. The same ploy is sometimes used when the subject of compensation or location is brought up. The interviewer is normally testing for hidden motivators or requirements that might eliminate your candidacy for the position.

Interview like it's your top choice. Always put your best foot forward even if the opportunity is not appealing at first glance. Make the company become interested enough in you to bring you out for a secondary interview. It is very hard to determine a company's culture based off one individual and without a site visit. A job description is not enough information to determine if the company is a fit for you (especially if you are not familiar with Corporate America as of yet). There may also be hidden opportunities within a company that better suit your qualifications and desires. Keep an open mind about career options.

Focus on your body language. Ensure you look the interviewer in the eyes, but not to the point of making the interviewer uncomfortable. Think conversation, not inquisition. Be cognizant of your own body language. Sit straight, lean forward, and avoid distracting gestures.

Never interrupt the interviewer. This isn't your show, so go with the flow. Let the interviewer conduct the session at his or her pace. Concentrate on getting in sync with them. However, the best interview is a dialogue. Establish rapport with the interviewer, and work on the smooth exchange of information. Continually self-evaluate. How do you sound? Do you think the interviewer is getting a fair evaluation of your talents based on your responses? Are you cocky or meek? Are you still upbeat and smiling?

Keep it positive. An interview is not a confession. Everything you say should reflect positively upon you and what you will bring to your employer. You must come across as someone the interviewer will want on his or her team, not someone who needs redemption.

Pace yourself. Think about the questions and formulate your answer. Some questions are easier to answer than others. Avoid the temptation to hurry a reply. It is acceptable and proper to take a moment or two to think about your answer. Stay natural and don't allow yourself to become unnerved by tough questions. Some difficult questions do not have "correct" answers; the interviewer may just want to evaluate your thought processes.

Continually self-evaluate. How do you sound? Do you think the interviewer is getting a fair evaluation of your talents based on your responses? Are you cocky or meek? Are you still upbeat and smiling?

Relax, relax, relax. Being a little nervous is natural. However, it should not be noticeable to the interviewer. Be confident in your preparation and your attributes. Practice will make you more confident in your answers.

Wrapping It Up (The Conclusion)

You have just completed answering a series of questions focused on your qualifications, now it is time to wrap up the interview. At this point, an interviewer is going to give you the opportunity to ask some questions of your own. You must have questions. Since questions equal interest in the mind of an interviewer, they are a critical component of your interview. Formulate 3-5 well thought out questions that show that you are:

- Well prepared
- Show genuine interest in the position
- Set you up for your close.

Keys to Success

Do not ask questions that should have been answered in your research (company philosophy, products, general competitors). Check with your Orion Account Executive on job related questions (company technology, training, career path).

You have a limited amount of time to ask questions in an interview; focus on those that fit the 3 criteria above.

Focus on questions that will assist you in your career decision.

Avoid questions that will raise red flags, or "what's in it for me" questions (benefits, vacation days, salary, etc.). You do not want to create the impression that you are more interested in benefits than in what you can do for the team.

Ask about the hiring process. "What is the next step?" is a great question to ask if the answer has not already been provided through the interview.

Ask sincere questions in which you are genuinely interested in the answer.

Closing the Interview

“The Close” is a term used to describe the process of gaining some form of commitment from the prospective customer. This is where it all comes together. In this case, the interviewer is the customer. By paying attention and asking the appropriate questions, you should uncover the employer’s needs. The needs that you are able to satisfy (through the use of your talents) become potential benefits to the employer. Focus on those needs during your close.

It is important that every potential candidate, regardless of the type of job you are seeking, understands the mechanics of the close. You must be able to convey your desire to work for the interviewer’s company. We recommend that you always close an interview, no matter what type of position you are interviewing for.

By practicing closing techniques, you will feel more natural and comfortable when you “close.” Do not attempt anything in an interview that feels canned or forced. Experiment with different closes and find the one that works best for you. Regardless of your closing technique, a close should consist of three points:

Thank the interviewer for their time. Be genuine. “Thanks for taking the time to interview me today.”

Remember to smile.

Sell yourself. How hard you sell the interviewer is up to you, but at a minimum, you should tell the interviewer that you believe you are a strong fit for the position and list a couple of qualities that you think are particularly strong: “I think I am a very strong fit for this position. You are looking for a strong leader and communicator, and those are two of my strengths.”

Ask for what you want. After a first interview, you should ask to go on-site and meet the rest of their team. After a final interview, you should ask for an offer. “I am really looking forward to going on-site and meeting the rest of your team. When can we set that up?” or “I am looking forward to receiving an offer.”

A great interview is not complete without a good close. Make sure the company knows you are interested as you are leaving the interview. Do not leave the company wondering if you are interested.

Most Common Mistakes

Over the years, we have noted some common mistakes that others have made that can hurt you in the interview process. Remember it is not always the most qualified person who gets the offer; rather, it is often the person who has the best interview. Make sure to avoid the following mistakes.

Lack of enthusiasm. You must show energy and enthusiasm if you want to be seriously considered for any opportunity. If a company does not see your desire or enthusiasm for a position during an interview, you will not likely be considered further for the position.

Vague answers. A strong answer is supported by a detailed example. If you do not provide an example, or the examples you provide to support your answers are weak or vague, your answers will not make the impact you

need to land the position. An experienced interviewer will typically interpret your lack of solid examples as inadequate professional experience and disqualify you for the position.

Inadequate personality. Would you hire someone who demonstrated a poor attitude, lack of poise, lack of self-confidence, acted timid, or couldn't complete his or her thoughts? You must come across as a confident, personable individual to make a positive impact on an interviewer.

Lack of goals and objectives. Companies hire Veterans because they are focused and goal oriented. Know what you want going into an interview. A company will not hire a poorly motivated individual or someone who does not know what he or she wants, acts indecisive, or someone who is not goal oriented.

Lack of interest. A company simply will not hire someone who shows a lack of interest in the company or someone who is not interested in the type of work offered. Focus on getting your foot in the door. Learn the business and get promoted. Focus on the long-term career opportunities the company offers. Companies typically do not offer upper level positions to individuals without operational experience in their company or industry. Show interest in the position being offered and realize that all positions are stepping stones to other opportunities if you do the right things.

Poor communication skills. You have to do some self-analysis. Research yourself. Practice interview questions. If you don't practice, you won't be able to communicate as effectively as you will need to in an interview setting. Poor communication or presentation skills typically result from a lack of preparation. Always remember you are competing for any position you interview for. If you are not practicing, you can bet that some of your competition is!

Unrealistic salary demands. Be realistic. Get your foot in the door and work your way up. The most successful candidates are the candidates that focus on the opportunity and long term growth potential a company offers versus compensation.

Objections to travel. You must be eager to do what the position requires. If the position requires travel, you must convince the interviewer that you want and enjoy traveling.

Poor personal appearance. Appearance in an interview is critically important. Dress like a professional. Treat this interview as if you are going to meet your commanding officer for the first time. If it is formal interview you should dress like the President of the United States when he is giving a speech. A poor appearance can doom an interview from the start.

Failure to research the company. If you cannot tell an interviewer why you are interested in the company or provide some basic information that shows you have done some research, most interviewers will interpret your lack of preparation as a lack of interest. Be a professional and take your job search seriously. Research the company in advance of your interview.

Geographically fixed. The reality of the job market is that the more flexible you are geographically, the more opportunities you will be able to see. Think hard about what you are open to. Everybody has drivers that influence their search, but don't restrict yourself to the point that you have to settle for a position you are not happy with. You must convince an interviewer that you want to relocate to the location of the position or you will have little chance of being selected.

Not asking questions. Not asking questions is perceived as not being interested. Even with the 5th interviewer of the day, ask them something. Find out what they see as the biggest challenges in the role or ask about what they like about the company. Ask *something*. Don't say that everyone else answered all your questions.

Failure to close the interview. Don't let the interviewer wonder if you are interested. At a minimum, thank them for their time and reiterate your interest in the position.

Developing Your Plan

Now that you have an overview of the types of interviews and their typical structure, you can start developing your interview plan. The first place to begin is researching yourself and your career experiences and organizing them. The next step is to take those experiences and expand them using the STAR format. Once you understand the simple structure of the STAR format, you must begin expanding your examples / stories by writing them down. The final step is to prepare by verbalizing these answers. Once you have taken those steps, you should be prepared to interview effectively. The work pages in this next section will help you start to get organized.

Section 4

Researching Your Background

Section 4 – Researching Your Background



As mentioned in Section 3, to begin your interview preparation you must research yourself. In this section, we will help you prepare for some common interview questions, review the STAR format, and provide space to begin writing down your best examples from your military career. We will only be jotting down the key words to remind you of these stories and will associate them to common interview topics. We strongly recommend that you write out your interview answers in order to think through them fully. This should be done outside of this workbook format.

The purpose behind having specific examples prepared is that it allows you to be able to effectively communicate your best selling points and career achievements, regardless of the question that is asked. Having a repertoire of solid stories is one of the greatest resources that you can have as you prepare for interviews - instead of just giving your theory behind a topic, you can show how you have put those thoughts into practice in real world experiences. Good examples will also help differentiate you and your potential competition.

Tell Me About Yourself

One of the more predictable yet important questions you can prepare for is “Tell me about yourself.” It is important because it will set the tone for your interview. This is a predictable question most employers will ask, or a similarly phrased question, in an effort to assess your ability to effectively communicate your background and experience. Because this is one of the first questions asked in an interview, you should develop an impactful answer. Your answer must illustrate what about you is advantageous for the company you are interviewing with. An effective answer will highlight your skills and strengths and give an employer an insight into your decision making processes. The best answer to this question will also be tailored for that employer and touch upon specific strengths and experiences which are particularly relevant to the position you are seeking. You’ll want to have a transitional statement to close your answer, letting them know why you are transitioning from the service or your current role (always be positive) and what you are looking for in your next career. You must be enthusiastic and confident in your answer.

The best answers for this question are well rehearsed. Spend some time to build a good outline of the key points and practice your answer. Saying an answer out loud is particularly effective. Done well, this question can really get an interview off to a great start! The manager should be excited that what you just told them really demonstrates you could be a great fit for the job.

The below worksheets will help you expand and organize your, “tell me about yourself,” response. Pay special attention to the items that you choose to highlight by ensuring that each item is relevant to your career. Highlighting key accomplishments and achievements will help to guide the interview in a positive direction.

Tell Me About Yourself

- 2 – 3 minute overview of your skills
- Key Selling Points
- Solid Transitions
- Why are you here today?

Starting Point: _____

Highlight 1: _____

Highlight 2: _____

Highlight 3: _____

Highlight 4: _____

Current Situation: _____

Why are you looking? _____

The STAR Format

When developing examples from your career that will highlight the skills, traits and experiences that are commonly explored in interviews, you must utilize the STAR format to help you frame your answer effectively. The STAR Format is:

Situation. The situation is the background story to the example that you are about to provide. Where were you? Who were you with? At what point in your career did this example occur? Paint a solid picture for the interviewer so they can relate to the rest of your story.

Task. The task can be referred to in several ways. The mission you were assigned. The problem that you had to solve. The challenge that you were facing. You need to make it clear to the interviewer what task you were working to complete.

Actions. The Actions are the steps that you took to accomplish the task, or solve the problem that you described above. Be specific! Make it clear to the interviewer what YOU did. You cannot speak in generalities here, because the interviewer will not understand the depth of your experience and thus will not be able to evaluate you effectively.

Results. You seal a solid STAR format interview response with quantifiable results. Were your actions successful in accomplishing the Task? How successful? Can you provide numbers that prove the level of your success? These are key steps to consider.

The STAR format is an extremely useful tool intended to ensure that you can communicate your background clearly for the interviewer. We are not looking to provide the content of your interview answer, but rather to ensure that the experiences that you have are articulated clearly, allowing the interviewer to effectively evaluate your experience and skill sets against the position.

When considering what examples that you want to use as you start laying out your experiences, consider the following pointers:

Start by taking an inventory of your most marketable and relevant traits and strengths. Here are a few examples: Technical Skills (electronics, electrical, mechanical), Quality Assurance, Supervision, Leadership, Process Improvement, Innovation, Goal Oriented, Overcoming Obstacles, ability to learn quickly and adapt, ability to lead and motivate a team to accomplish great things.

Once you have taken inventory of yourself and your experience, focus on developing your best STAR format examples, regardless of interview question / topic. Your best examples will be impactful, and typically will relate to several common interview topics. Develop your best examples first, and then see what interview topics they match up with.

Avoid examples that do not translate well to civilian careers, such as targeting or eliminating insurgents. While you can be proud of your military accomplishments and there is no doubt that the planning and leadership that you used to achieve these tasks is relevant, the shock value of such statements may concern the interviewer. Soften the terminology and translate the experience to fit for the general population.

Focus on what you specifically did in your career. As Veterans, we often push recognition down to our team. That is a quality that translates into the private sector, but the employer in the interview is looking to hire you, not your team. They want to know what you specifically did to accomplish your tasks and achieve results.

Identifying Your Examples

Many candidates prepare for interviews by focusing on a list of interview questions and working to develop an answer for each of them. This can be helpful, and we will provide dozens of sample questions to work on, but we strongly suggest that you focus on your background first. What are your best stories? If you know your background well and focus on what interview topics your best experiences associate to, you can put yourself in a position to answer any question.

The Orion Team suggests that you use your resume, evaluations, awards, certifications and any other background documentation to assist you in identifying your key experiences and selling points. Fill out the background worksheet on the next page, and then use the STAR format to develop your examples.

Maintenance 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Troubleshooting 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Problem Solving 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
Improving Performance 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Significant Achievement 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Process Improvement 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
Sold Idea or Influenced Others 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Strengths 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Weakness 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
Failure 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Conflict – Peer / Junior 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	Conflict - Senior 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Developing Your Examples

The worksheets on the following pages will help you expand your experiences developed earlier in this section utilizing the STAR format. Pay special attention to the Actions that you took to accomplish your Results. These are key areas to an effective interview. Note that we have only included one form for each topic. Utilize your own worksheets for additional examples.

Once you have sketched out your STAR format for these key examples, write out these stories in a narrative format, and then practice out loud. Verbalizing your answers will ensure a well-rounded, detailed story that can be adjusted to fit the question asked.

Our next section will expand on specific questions that are often asked in the interview process. Once you have a solid understanding of what makes a good interview response, write out your answers in detail and then practice them out loud!

Maintenance

- You maintained equipment.
- Required you to overcome an obstacle.
- Demonstrates your knowledge.
- Details a significant accomplishment.

Example:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Troubleshooting

- You troubleshoot and repaired equipment.
- Required you to overcome an obstacle.
- Demonstrates your knowledge.
- Details a significant accomplishment.

Example:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Problem Solving

- Set the stage and clearly define the problem
- Focus on what *you* did, even if part of a team – explain your thought process within the problem
- What was the result of solving the problem?

Problem:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Improving Performance

- Do not criticize or talk down. Focus on your people skills.
- Quantify if possible to show performance before and after your actions.

Poor Performer: _____

Situation: _____

Task: _____

Actions: _____

Results: _____

Significant Achievement

- Occurred over an extended period of time.
- Demonstrates your ability to learn new skills and use resources effectively.
- Is NOT something that numerous other applicants have done (graduating, getting married, etc).

Achievement: _____

Situation: _____

Task: _____

Actions: _____

Results: _____

Process Improvement

- Examples where you recognized an inefficiency
- Systems that you created or actions that you took to improve this inefficiency
- Is the new process still being used? Do you have a measure of effectiveness?

Process: _____

Situation: _____

Task: _____

Actions: _____

Results: _____

Sold an Idea / Influenced Others

- Try to show your understanding of the sales process in your answer. Not just jamming your idea down someone's throat. Show that you first sought to understand the problem and what the decision maker wanted or needed and then developed a solution to meet those needs. Explain the benefits your solution delivered.

Sold Idea: _____

Situation: _____

Task: _____

Actions: _____

Results: _____

Strengths

- What are your strengths and how have you used them in your career?
- Demonstrate how your strengths were effective with an example.
- Relate to the position.

Strength:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Weakness

- An ongoing challenge you have worked to overcome (through training, planning, controls, etc.)
- The Actions are the steps you took to improve upon your weakness.

Weakness:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Failure

- Not mission critical or with severe consequences
- Own up to it
- What did you learn from the situation? How have you used the lessons learned to be successful since?

Failure:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Dealing with Conflict with a Peer or between Subordinates

- Do not speak negatively. Focus on people skills.
- When / How did you deal with it?
- What did you learn from the situation?

Conflict:

Situation:

Task:

Actions:

Results:

Dealing with Conflict with a Supervisor

- Do not speak negatively. Focus on people skills.
- What did you learn from the situation? Did you still accomplish the mission?

Conflict: _____

Situation: _____

Task: _____

Actions: _____

Results: _____

Section 5

Detailed Interview Preparation

Expanding Your Examples

Now that you have gained an introduction to interviewing and started sketching out your best career examples, now you must get more in-depth to ensure your experiences will adequately answer the questions asked by an interviewer. This section will help you focus on the most common questions and provide key considerations in answering these questions.

It is essential that you remember the STAR format when developing your examples. We also encourage you to review the Interview Preparation Library on our website as you start to work on these answers. Contact your recruiter for information on how to access this portion of the website.

Remember, write out your answers and then practice out loud!

Standard Interview Questions

Most interviews, regardless of the type of position or industry, will have some similar questions. Here are some of the standard questions you may encounter in any type of interview.

1. Tell me about yourself.

- Do not go longer than two to four minutes.
- Think of this as a commercial. You have an opportunity to sell the product (you), and you have complete control over what you say.
- Your statement should be well rehearsed and practiced.
- Speak briefly about high school and college (extracurricular activities and work experience), and then work through your professional experience.
- Do not get bogged down in the details unless the interviewer asks for specific details.
- Highlight key achievements and accomplishments that help illustrate why you are a great candidate for the company and position you are interviewing for.
- Your statement needs to be about your work experience and education, not about your personal life and family.

2. What are your strengths?

- Have at least three for each type of position you are applying for.
- Each strength should have a specific example from your experience. Quantifiable examples are best (#'s, %'s, \$'s, and time).
- Technical Interview: Stress your troubleshooting skills, ability to diagnose and fix problems, critical thinking, customer service, ability to learn new equipment quickly, etc.
- Leadership and Management Interview: Stress leadership skills, mission accomplishment, planning and organization skills, conflict resolution skills, the ability to see the big picture, etc.

- Sales Interview: Stress competitiveness, autonomous work skills, communication skills, relationship building skills, etc.
3. What has distinguished you from your peers?
- Companies interview multiple people for each available position. You must be able to convince a hiring manager that you are the best person for the position.
 - Were you selected from a group of peers for a particularly demanding assignment or project?
 - Were you ranked higher than your peers during evaluations?
 - Were you recognized or awarded for doing something above and beyond your typical position?
 - Have you completed additional training that goes beyond the majority of people in your field?
 - Are you the “go to” person for a particular system, issue, or piece of equipment?
 - What makes you great?
4. What are your weaknesses?
- Have a couple in mind, but only answer with one of them. Everyone has weaknesses and competent people know their weaknesses and take steps to improve them.
 - Keep the answer as unrelated to the core strengths required for the position as possible. For example: If the position requires constant interaction with customers, don’t say your weakness is dealing with people.
 - Explain how you are working to improve your weakness and the steps you have already taken to get better. This shows you are self-aware and focused on improvement.
 - Interviews are not confessions, so be selective in what you share.
 - Don’t use canned answers. For example: “My weakness is I’m a workaholic.” Hiring managers hear canned answers all the time. Be genuine and if you are going to use a commonly heard answer, back it up with some examples.
5. Why are you (or did you) leaving the military?
- Like everything in an interview, keep your answer positive.
 - This is not the time to bad mouth your previous boss or employer.
 - Answer the question in terms of wanting new challenges or meeting your goals.
6. Have you dealt with conflict in the past?
- Everyone has dealt with conflict.
 - Cite specific examples.
 - Managers are looking for conflict resolution and problems to be solved.
 - Rigidity is not usually the best approach to resolving conflict in the corporate world. Military veterans have an often unfair stereotype of being too rigid. Think about Gunnery Sergeant Highway (my way or the highway type thinking). Corporate America is looking for dynamic and thoughtful people that listen and consider other people’s perspectives.

7. Have you ever failed?

- You have, we all have. A manager does not want to hire a person that has never failed. If you have never failed, how do you (or the manager) know how you will respond and deal with failure?
- The interviewer is looking for how you responded and reacted to failure. What did you learn from it? Did you try again, or give up?
- Underscore that you do not make the same mistakes repeatedly.

8. What are some of your significant accomplishments?

- Have at least three.
- Quantify and qualify each accomplishment. For example: “My division’s operational readiness rate increased 10% during my tenure as the Leading Petty Officer. Our readiness posture was 5% over the Navy standard.”
- Always explain the specific role you played in the accomplishment. The manager is not hiring your team of coworkers; they are hiring you.

9. How do you motivate your people?

- Don’t just give an answer, give examples.
- Stress the importance you place on motivating others while keeping your own motivation high.

10. Which position in your work history did you like the best?

- Whatever your answer, support it with the reasons you enjoyed the position so much.
- Ensure the position you mention is relatable to the position you are interviewing for.

11. What do you like about us?

- Solid knowledge of the position, company, products, services, and philosophy are essential to answering this question.
- The interviewer is checking to see if you have done your research.
- The interviewer wants to know that you see the position and company from a realistic viewpoint and that you truly want to work for them.

12. Do you have any questions for me?

- In the interviewer’s mind, if you don’t have any questions, you must not have interest in the company or position.
- Ensure your questions demonstrate curiosity and enthusiasm.
- Your questions need to go beyond information that can quickly and easily be found on the company’s website.
- Your questions should not be about what the company can do for you (i.e. pay, benefits, vacation, etc.).
- Your questions should show you are genuinely interested in the company and position.

Technical Interview Preparation



The purpose of a technical interview is to assess your overall fitness for a technical position within a given organization. A technical interview will focus primarily on your technical background and experience, but an interviewer will also ask questions about your leadership experiences, soft skills, and communication skills.

The key to a successful technical interview is to focus on the examples in your past that will support your answers. Specific examples (with names and places) add depth and meaning to your answers.

Keys to Success

Focus on Your Technical Expertise. You are interviewing for a technical position, so you must emphasize your technical expertise and provide examples throughout your interview that show you have these essential skills. Focus on experiences where you held the most technical responsibility.

Understand What the Company Needs. Every company is looking for something different. Research the company, talk to the Orion Account Executive and your Orion Recruiter, and analyze the job summary to identify the three key attributes a company needs from a candidate in this position.

Tailor Your Strengths. Tailor your strengths to the company's needs. As a successful military technician, you have a number of strengths. Emphasize the strengths that match up with the company's needs throughout your interview, and always support with an example.

Technical Examples. You must support your answers with specific examples. Have examples that highlight your technical skills. Those examples will add depth to your answers and make an impact on the interviewer.

Energy and Enthusiasm. Show the interviewer that you want the job. Would you hire someone who seemed disinterested? An interviewer won't either. You must convince an interviewer that you are excited about the company and the job in order to land the position.

Discuss your Adaptability. Express to the interviewer that you are able to learn quickly and be adaptable. The technical work you have done in the military will not match exactly to what most companies need, so you need to stress that you can apply what you know to new systems and learn quickly.

Brush Up on Your Given Technical Field. Take some time to go back and review some of the basic concepts and theories from your technical discipline, especially if you are more than a year removed from using it on a daily basis.

Ask Good Questions. Questions equal interest to an interviewer. Ask well thought out questions about the equipment, systems, culture, training, employees, and company that demonstrate a genuine interest in the company. Good questions can help build rapport with an interviewer.

Close the Interview. Don't overlook the close. Make sure the interviewer knows you want the job by closing the interview.

Sample Technical Questions

The list of sample technical questions below is by no means comprehensive, but it should serve as a good starting point when preparing for a technical interview. Practice these questions until you can comfortably verbalize your answers. The more preparation you do prior to your interview, the better you will perform in your interview.

Some of the most common interview questions are listed below. You need to personalize your answers with specific examples from your past to avoid sounding over-coached and disingenuous.

- **Why are you interested in this technical role?** Make it clear to the interviewer where your technical interest comes from (past experience, hobbies, goals, etc.) and utilize specific career examples that show your technical aptitude, such as discussing your favorite technical billet and how you succeeded.
- **What technical experience do you have?** Take the time to explain your career field and highlight examples that show strong technical methodologies. Sell the interviewer that you have the interest AND the aptitude based off of your past experiences. Give detailed answers that illustrate your complete knowledge of the systems you worked on.
- **How did you apply your technical skillset in your last position?** The military moves you around, so you may not be in your career field when you transition. Bridge the gap for the interviewer to make it clear that you had to use the same analytical principles in each billet, and reinforce that through the results you demonstrate.
- **What special technical qualifications do you possess?** We receive great training in the military, but not all of our schools are clear to the civilian employer. Highlight the training that you have received, focusing on the technical aspects and relating that to the position.

Additional Technical Interview Questions

The following questions are examples of more specific questions that may be asked in the interview. Utilizing your best examples developed previously, you should be able to adjust the presentation of your experiences to answer these effectively.

General Technical Questions:

- How would you troubleshoot a problem without the benefit of a technical manual?
- Describe your troubleshooting thought process.
- Describe the system(s) you have experience with.
- What type of test equipment have you used?
- How do you rate your ability to read schematics, blueprints and technical drawings?
- What was the most complicated technical problem you had to solve?
- What were you the “go to” person for in your last position?

Electrical / Electronics:

- Describe Ohms Law for me in the simplest terms.
- In an electrical circuit, what is resistance measured in?
- In an electrical circuit, what is current measured in?
- In an electrical circuit, what is voltage measured in?
- What is the difference between a series and parallel circuit?
- Explain the difference between AC & DC power?
- What is a PLC?
- Explain ladder logic.
- What is the difference between analog and digital?
- Provide an example of an analog and digital circuit.
- What does a resistor do?
- What does a diode do?
- Explain what happens when a circuit shorts.
- Explain what happens when a circuit is open.

Mechanical:

- What is the purpose of a needle valve in a hydraulic line?
- In constructing a hydraulic system, what material should never be used?
- What is the best way to protect a pressure gage from pressure surges in a hydraulic circuit?
- What is the first thing you should check if you are troubleshooting a pneumatic system?
- What is the point at which a pry bar pivots called?
- Explain how gear ratios work.
- Explain how an internal combustion engine works.
- Explain how a gas turbine / jet engine works.
- Explain how a boiler works. How is a boiler used to create electricity?

Reading

Companies will be looking for solid experience and the ability to learn quickly and adapt. We recommend selecting at least one book from each section of our ready list to ensure that you have a well-rounded skill set and perspective. You will notice the reading list also contains a section of sales books. Even if you are focused on a technical career, you should read at least one sales book. Until you get “the offer”, you are in the business of selling yourself, so learn how to do it. *Please refer to the end of this section for a comprehensive reading list.*

Leadership Interview Preparation

The purpose of a leadership interview is to assess your overall fit for a supervisory role within a given organization. A leadership interview will focus primarily on your supervisory skills and experience, but an interviewer will also typically

ask questions about your background, qualifications, and communication skills. An interviewer will also want to explore how you have dealt with conflict in the past.

The key to a successful leadership interview is to focus on the examples in your past that will support your answers. Specific examples (with names and places) add depth and meaning to your answers. Giving an answer on philosophy alone will not work in a management interview.

Keys to Success

Focus On Leadership. You are interviewing for a leadership position, so you must emphasize your leadership skills and provide examples throughout your interview that show you are a strong leader. Focus on jobs where you held the most responsibility. Also, remember to talk about your soft skills.

Understand What The Company Needs. Every company is looking for something different. Research the company, talk to the Orion Account Executive and your Orion Recruiter, and analyze the job summary to identify the three key attributes a company needs from a candidate in this position.

Tailor Your Strengths. Tailor your strengths to the company's needs. As a successful military leader, you have a number of strengths. Emphasize the strengths that match up with that company's needs throughout your interview.

Examples, Examples, Examples. You must support your answers with specific examples. Those examples will add depth to your answers and make an impact on the interviewer.

Energy and Enthusiasm. Show the interviewer that you want the job. Would you hire someone who seemed disinterested? An interviewer won't either. You must convince an interviewer that you are excited about the company and the job in order to land the position.

Ask Good Questions. Questions equal interest to an interviewer. Ask well thought out questions about the culture, training, employees, and company that demonstrate a genuine interest in the company. Good questions can help build rapport with an interviewer.

Close the Interview. Don't overlook the close. Make sure the interviewer knows you want the job by closing the interview.

Sample Leadership Questions

The list of sample leadership questions below is by no means comprehensive, but it should serve as a good starting point when preparing for a leadership interview. Practice these questions until you can comfortably verbalize your answers. The more preparation you do prior to your interview, the better you will perform during the interview.

Some of the most common interview questions are listed below. We have included tips or sample answers to give you a good idea of what you should discuss. You should personalize your answers with specific examples from your past to avoid sounding over-coached and disingenuous. Your ability to personalize your answers and give specific examples in support of those answers will differentiate you from other candidates who may be competing for the same position, so the key now is to develop these answers further. Write them out and practice them out loud.

Remember three things when you practice questions for a leadership interview and you will be successful:

- (1) Avoid cliché answers.
 - (2) Give solid, STAR format examples.
 - (3) Focus on your leadership skills.
- **What are your strengths?** Tailor your answers to the job you are interviewing for: For leadership positions, focus primarily on leadership, mission focus, communication and planning skills. Always provide an example of how you have used this strength.
 - **What is your biggest professional achievement?** An ideal answer should be a professional achievement that is significant, makes an impact, and somehow relates to the job you are interviewing for (i.e. shows significant leadership under stressful conditions like combat).
 - **Which job did you like best in the military and why?** Tailor your answer for a leadership position. Focus on the job where you held the most responsibility and was the most leadership intensive. An interviewer wants to know that the job you liked best is similar to the position you are interviewing for. Make sure you highlight the skills that you learned in the past and how they translate to a career in the civilian workforce.
 - **What is your leadership style?** You must overcome the military stigma. Show them you are a strong leader, but have a flexible leadership style and great communication skills. Companies want a mature decision maker who is able to motivate a team of diverse individuals.
 - **Give me an example of dealing with conflict.** Be specific. Focus on an actual event where you dealt with conflict in a workplace. An ideal example will show your ability to mediate a hostile situation and maintain a positive work environment. Your ability to provide a good example will show the interviewer how you will react at their company, so make sure are you sending the right message.
 - **Are you open to shift work?** Many management positions occur in a shift work environment, such as a distribution center, power generation facility, or a manufacturing facility. The flexible candidate, open to shift work, will typically take the lead in the interview process for these roles. Remember, off shift work is not expected to last forever, as folks often move to the day shift with career progression.
 - **What are your long and short term goals?** Companies hire military leaders because they are goal driven individuals. Define short and long term, and then state your goals. They should be professional and related to the company as best as possible. A good example of a short term goal would be to come on board, learn quickly and make an impact and demonstrate your ability to take on more responsibility. In the long term, you can look to continually learn, be challenged and keep building the value you bring to your organization so you can be selected for increasing roles of responsibility.

Additional Leadership Interview Questions

The following questions are examples of more complicated questions that may be asked in the interview. Utilizing your best examples developed previously, you should be able to adjust the presentation of your experiences to answer these just as effectively.

- What date are you ready to start your new career?
- Why are you interested in management?
- Why did you join the military?
- What are your location preferences?
- Have you interviewed with any companies in the past 6 months? If so, which ones and for what locations?
- Do you currently have any other offers? If so, which companies and for what salary?
- Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?
- Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?
- Name three of your strengths.
- Name three of your weaknesses.
- How do you deal with stress?
- Are you open to shift work?
- Are you open to working overtime?
- How many days in a month are you willing to travel?
- What is a long day to you?
- How many hours a week are you open to working?
- Tell me about a project you led from start to finish.
- Have you ever had a mentor? If so, what did he or she do for you?
- What was the last book that you read and why?
- What was the last movie you watched and why?
- Describe a time that you...
 - Took a risk
 - Led a team through a challenging situation
- How would you characterize your leadership style?
- Describe a time when you had to deal with a poor performer.
- How do you deal with conflict?
- Who is your favorite leader and why? How did they handle conflict?
- How do you motivate people?
- If you had to give me a 5K “window”, what would your annual salary expectations be?
- Why should I hire you?
- What do you know about our company?
- What makes you qualified for this position?

Reading



If your goal is to enter the private sector in a production/operations management position, the books on our reading list will be extremely helpful. Your leadership experience is a very valuable asset. Companies will be looking for sound leadership principals and the ability to learn quickly and adapt. Reading a couple of the books on the reading list will allow you to combine your practical leadership experience with supplemental information on the industry that can provide you the edge you need in an interview. We recommend selecting at least one book from each section in addition to a book or two on interviewing. You will notice the reading list also contains a section of sales books. Even if you are focused on operations, management or an engineering position, you should read at least one sales book. Until you get “the offer,” you are in the business of selling yourself, so learn how to do it.

Please refer to the end of this section for a comprehensive reading list.

Sales Interview Preparation

In general, sales is a critical component of any corporation. Without an aggressive, self-motivated, professional sales force promoting a product, there would be no reason to have a manufacturing facility or logistics infrastructure. As a sales representative for a given company, you begin the actual business cycle between customer and vendor. While a sales career is significantly different than a technical or leadership career, you will find all interviewers are looking for the best talent for their companies. However, a career in sales typically involves working in a more dynamic and less structured environment than in most other careers. Therefore, candidates interested in sales must be able to deal with change and think well on their feet.

Your goal in sales is to gain access to potential clients and artfully influence them to commit to buying your products. Accomplishing that goal is the key to your professional success as a sales person and how you will ultimately be evaluated. Sales is a performance oriented career where your success is measured and evaluated as it relates to the corporate bottom line. Nowhere in business will you find more readily identifiable goals than in sales. Every action and effort in sales must have a purpose, and that purpose is measured in dollars.

Sales is a very autonomous career. You may work for a company as part of a sales team, but getting the job done on a daily basis is strictly up to you. Research, client calls, scheduling, presentations, follow-up, and closing a deal are ultimately driven by you alone. An individual’s success in sales is primarily defined by his or her personality, drive, ability to influence people, and time management skills.

As you move through the interview process for sales, remember that the companies are looking for the next generation of professionals to grow their business. They need superior talent and are willing to search long and hard to find the right “fit”. During an interview, you must convince the interviewer that you have a record of performance and success, outstanding drive and motivation, the ability to work autonomously, that you are goal focused, are a problem solver, are intelligent and creative, possess strong presentation skills, and are a very competitive individual. If you can prove that you possess these attributes, you will be successful.

How to Prepare

Before you enter a sales interview, you must do four things:

- (1) Research yourself
- (2) Research the company
- (3) Develop a plan for your interview
- (4) Create a brag book

Research Yourself. Self-analysis is a critical component of sales interview preparation, your resume and military evaluation reports are good resources for this portion of your preparation. You must know your resume and be able to talk about your entire career from high school to present. It is critical that you have specific examples that add depth to your answers. Ensure you are prepared to talk about the following topics (all are key attributes companies are looking for in a successful salesperson) and have examples that support each:

- Selling and influencing a situation (This is the key question because you may not have previous sales experience. You need to have examples of times you did “sell”)
- Leadership
- Performance oriented mindset
- Demonstrated, quantifiable successes
- Drive and motivation
- Autonomous decision-making
- Goal focused problem solving
- Intelligence and the ability to learn
- Creativity and innovation
- Rapport building skills and the desire to work with people
- Aggressiveness and competitiveness
- The desire to win
- Integrity and ethics
- Persistence and dedication
- Time management

Self-analysis exercise. An easy way to perform a self-analysis is to start with your resume and a sheet like the one in Section 4. Divide it into the following four sections: (1) Accomplishments and Strengths, (2) Failures and Weaknesses, (3) Selling Change, and (4) Hobbies and Drivers.

- In section one, look at each job on your resume, and list as many successful accomplishments as you can for each position. For each accomplishment, list the personal attributes (strengths) that made you successful. A single word or short sentence is sufficient. This will help you identify all of your accomplishments and strengths.
- In section two, look at your resume and identify where you have failed. It is probably not listed there in black and white, but we all have failed somewhere. A failure does not have to be catastrophic. It just needs to be something where you didn’t achieve a 100% success. It must, however, be significant and something that you grew from

professionally. List the failure and the personal attribute or shortcoming (weakness) that was the root cause. Also identify the professional lesson you learned as a result of that failure.

- In section three, look at your resume and identify any positions where you had to implement change and present (sell) your idea. Next to that, list any objections that were raised during your presentation and how you overcame those objections. Identifying specific examples where you presented something and then overcame objections/resistance is critical to success in a sales interview.
- In section four, list what you like to do in your spare time. What are your hobbies? Then list things you want to do in the future (trips, investments, family goals, etc.) and why you want to do them. This list will help you identify what you enjoy doing, the drivers in your career search, and personal goals.

Research the Company. Researching a company prior to your interview is critical. Most of the information you need for interview preparation can be found on the corporate website. Professional journals, Google, Fortune Magazine, and the Wall Street Journal can also be excellent resources. At a minimum, companies expect you to have visited the website and know some basic information about the company. When possible, meet with a local sales representative and ask them questions about the position and industry that can help you in an interview, or meet with businesses that buy the company's products to gain their insight. When researching a company prior to your interview, make sure you are familiar with the following information:

- Corporate Structure (headquarters location, size, divisions, international or domestic, public or private)
- Product lines and services
- Products under research & development
- Top competitors
- Trends pertinent to the company and industry

Develop a Plan. Once you have researched a company and done some self-analysis, you must develop a plan for your interview. Using your company research, identify three key attributes that you must convey to an interviewer to land the job. Think of these attributes as the theme for your interview. Using your personal research, match your strengths with those key attributes and identify specific examples to support your answers. Do not go into a sales interview without a good plan.

Develop a Brag Book. Most sales companies will require you to sell to your client using some sort of literature. A brag book shows an interviewer that you have initiative by developing the document and that you are able to sell to that literature. A brag book should be either bounded professionally or you should use a professional portfolio and it should contain the following:

- Cover Page
- Your resume
- Your evaluation reports
- College Transcripts (unofficial copy is acceptable)
- Awards
- Articles where your achievements were noted (newspaper or other publications)

- Any other documents showing your track record of performance, success, drive, etc.
- Sales figures (if you have previous sales experience)
- A printout from the DMV webpage (to show your clean driving record)
- A list of references, including email address and phone number

Each section should be neatly tabbed and one or two significant pieces of information on each page contained in your brag book should be highlighted for quick reference. You should normally provide a copy of your brag book to your interviewer as a courtesy while using your own during the interview for reference. For more information on how to use your brag book, please contact your Orion Recruiter.

The Sales Interview

Interviewing for sales is typically a multi-step process involving anywhere between two to six interviews. Some companies require a sales candidate to conduct a field ride as part of the interview process. A field ride is an interview that allows you to shadow a sales representative during a typical day.

Always arrive early to the interview location because being late to an interview simply says you will be late to sales calls. The setting is usually professional, but comfortable. The interviewer is interested in setting a scene where he/she can get to know you. This may take place in a formal setting such as on-site at the company or in an informal setting such as an airport business center or hotel lobby. Do not let the setting influence you. Remember, sales is a social as well as a professional career. Flexibility and adaptability are as important to sales as the close.

Relax prior to the interview and be prepared to answer the questions. Have a plan. Look sharp and make a good impression; selling is about your presentation skills and your appearance is a key component of that skill set. The tone of the interview is often conversational with the most successful candidates being the individuals who can professionally and smoothly engage the interviewer in a dialogue about themselves and the company. Building rapport is key. Keep in mind that you are being evaluated the entire time, from the time you knock at the door until you exit.

Sample Sales Questions

Success in professional sales interviews hinges on your ability to communicate effectively using specific examples. Questions typically focus on three areas: your personal attributes, your professional experience, and your knowledge of the company and sales. The list of questions below is by no means comprehensive, but should be a good starting point for you as you prepare for a sales interview. Practice these questions until you are comfortable verbalizing them. If you are asked something you weren't prepared for, be flexible and think on your feet!

- **Why are you interested in sales?** Focus on your competitive nature and intrinsic motivation under challenging conditions. Make clear that you want to contribute to the success of the business by impacting the bottom line. Express how you thrive in an environment where you can be directly rewarded for your performance.
- **What have you done to prepare for a sales position?** You want to express how you have taken the initiative to lay the groundwork for a sales career. Mention any of the sales books you have read, discuss what you learned on a ride-along (field ride), and explain what type of product research you have conducted. Companies want to see that you have taken the initiative to prepare for a new career and have a true interest in their company.

- **Describe a time you sold an idea to another individual.** Be prepared to make a connection between your military experience and a possible sales situation. Ideally, select an answer where you had to sell either your supervisor or your peers on a plan or course of action. Clearly articulate the steps you took to present the idea, follow up with the result, and how your idea was implemented.
- **How competitive are you?** Start out by stating you are very competitive and transition into your examples. Have several concrete examples to support your statement and use numbers and facts to compare yourself with others to express your competitive nature. Convey that you have a history of setting high goals for yourself and how you attain them with purpose.
- **When was the last time you faced resistance, and what did you do to overcome it?** Ensure that you have a recent example (within the past 2 years) that demonstrates how you were able to overcome adversity. Make sure you show how you were able to persevere and accomplish your goal. Lay out the situation, walk through the task you were trying to accomplish, express the specific actions you took to overcome the resistance, and the final result.
- **Sell me this Pen.** This question can be asked with any product, but the pen is the most common. The key is to show the interviewer that you understand the basics of sales. Do not begin describing the pen's features and qualities. Ask the interviewer questions about what he or she is looking for in a pen. What type, size, quantity? Qualify the interviewer's needs, and then present the features of your pen that fit the "client's" need. Remember to close them and ask them for the sale!
- **Closing is Imperative.** In a sales interview, you must be prepared to "close" the interview. Anyone in sales knows that they have to ask for the order or try to gain some commitment from their client in order to move the process forward. You could have a great interview, but if you do not try to close it, the sales manager is going to notice and begin to question whether you will be able to close once you are hired. You can lead into your close naturally by asking questions. Ask or confirm what the next step is in the hiring process. You can also ask if the manager sees you as a good fit for the role or if there is anything about your background they have any questions about. If they think you are a good fit, then you can confirm your interest in the opportunity and ask if you can schedule the next interview now. If they have any objections, you still have a chance to overcome them.

Additional Sales Questions

Personal Attributes

- Describe a situation in life where your request / demand was rejected. How did it feel? What did you do?
- Describe an experience in which you felt you gained something because you persisted long enough and saw it through to success.
- To what or whom do you compare yourself?
- What is the one thing that really motivates you?
- I am... (Fill in the blank with traits)
- How do you feel when you lose?
- What are your three greatest weaknesses?
- What are your three greatest strengths?
- What has been your greatest disappointment?

- Describe a time that you have...
 - Demonstrated creativity
 - Took initiative
 - Worked without a lot of direction
 - Sold an idea to another individual (discuss how you convinced that other individual)
 - Set a goal for yourself and the steps you took to achieve it
- In 60 seconds list as many descriptors of yourself as possible.
- What do you do in your spare time?
- Define stress. How do you relieve stress?
- Define pressure. How do you relieve pressure? Is pressure different from stress?
- How do you impact your family, your friends, your associates?
- Do you prefer to work alone or with others? Why? (Measures Ego & Drive)
- Would you prefer to follow the rules or make the rules? (Measures Ego & Drive)
- What has been the toughest decision you ever had to make?
- Have you ever been aggressive to the point where you pushed someone too far?

Professional Experience

- What is the most difficult aspect of your current position?
- Why have you been successful in the past?
- Under what conditions do you work best?
- What do you consider your most significant achievement?
- What is the most stressful situation you have encountered in your current position? How did you handle it?
- How are you measured where you work? How do you work with your peers?
- Explain how your boss would describe you.
- What are the two toughest decisions you have had to make? Which was the best decision? Which was the worst?
- What are some of the additional responsibilities you have taken on recently that are not in your job description?
- What is the most striking fact about your present company?
- Do you see yourself in your current job 6 months from now?
- What has been the biggest disappointment in your professional career(s) to date?
- What was the most important thing you learned from your last job?

Sales Knowledge

- Why Sales?
- Why should I hire you over an individual with sales experience?
- Do you like to control the conversation in selling?
- When was the last time you faced resistance, and what did you do?
- What have you done to prepare yourself for selling?
- What are the top two attributes you bring to the company?
- If your sales were published to the sales force, would you like them published: Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Annually?
- What are your goals for the month of _____?

- When do you decide what you will do each day? How do you do it? How do you track it? Show me tomorrow.
- Tell me the last self-improvement book you read or presentation you listened to?
- Tell me the last Sales book you read or presentation you listened to?
- Tell me about my company. (You must cover: Company, Product Line, Typical Sales Day, R&D efforts)
- How do you continue to improve your skill level? In what continuing education or personal activities do you participate?
- How do you go about understanding and learning technical information quickly? What methods do you use?
- How long did it take you to become familiar with the technical information needed to sell your current product or services? What methods did you use? How might you improve your learning?
- What methods do you use to keep informed of what is going on in your area of responsibility? What are their benefits? Why do these methods work for you?
- What methods of learning (reading, audiovisual, computer/CBT, classroom, etc.) do you find most productive for you? What methods do you least prefer? How do you adapt to different learning situations?
- What ongoing systems or habits have you established to get information on a regular basis? Describe some results of these systems or habits.
- What sources of information do you use to keep up with what is going on in the organization? How do you use this information?

Reading List

For a sales interview, it is particularly important that you read as much as possible prior to interviewing. Most transitioning military service members have no prior sales experience, so you must make up for your lack of experience with knowledge of the industry. Interviewers can tell a well prepared candidate from a poorly prepared one. A well prepared candidate can demonstrate good overall understanding of the industry. Select two or more of the books on the comprehensive reading list as a good starting point for your career in sales. *Please refer to the end of this section for a comprehensive reading list.*

Additional Interview Preparation Information

The Salary Question

Candidates are often asked questions about their salary requirements. This question is used to screen a candidate out if the position pays less than their target. As a candidate, you do not want to price yourself out of the position, nor do you want to cut yourself short.

Keys to Success

- Know the salary range that Orion has provided. Tell the interviewer you are comfortable in that range.
- If asked again, focus on the overall opportunity. While money is important, you are more interested in the ability to grow and learn with their company.

- If pressed again, we recommend providing the employer a range. Start with the midpoint of the range provided by Orion. End with a salary number just above their stated high end. This bracket of the range will neither price you out nor sell you short.

Sample Questions to Ask an Employer

As mentioned previously, a sign that an interview is starting to wrap up is when the employer asks if you have any questions. This is a critical part of the interview for you to both convey your interest in the company and the position through asking intelligent, research based questions, but also for you to start learning more about the company in order to evaluate them.

We recommend that you have a core group of questions that you are prepared to ask any company, but we also recommend doing the research to have questions that are of a specific and current nature. You can utilize resources such as Google News to find current events information on a company.

Remember, a Lack of Questions = Lack of Interest.

General Questions

- What are you looking for in an employee for this position?
- What traits or skill sets are most important in this role?
- Is this position newly created or is it a back-fill position?
- How did the person do that was in this position before me?
- What mistakes are common to someone new to this position?
- What is unique about the product that we make in comparison to the competition?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge that I would face as a new employee?
- How is an employee evaluated and how often is this done?
- Has your company hired military before? What have been the results?
- Is there anything about my background or qualifications that you have questions or concerns about in terms of being a good fit for this position?
- What is the next step in the interview process?

Leadership Position Questions

- As you look at the plant's workforce, what area(s) require the most attention right now (quality, quantity, people, maintenance, scheduling, safety)?
- Has anyone tried any leadership techniques or tactics that have not worked well?
- How does this workforce like to be motivated in general? What has worked in the past in your plant?
- How would you characterize the management-employee relationship in the plant?
- How did you (the interviewer) get started with the company? What has been your experience?

- What is the current ranking of the territory? What is the growth potential of this territory? What is your market share in this territory / industry?
- I understand that the product's main competitors are _____. Who will be my main competition in this territory? Which products are the market leaders in this territory?
- Where do you expect me to take the territory in my first year?
- What can I do to better prepare myself before I come to work?
- Have you ever been aggressive to the point where you pushed someone too far?
- Are there any particular books or magazines that you recommend that I read to further prepare myself?
- How do our sales representatives differentiate our products from the competition?
- What traits or skill sets are most important?
- How did you (the interviewer) get started with the company? What has been your experience?
- I have read that (product) is pursuing an indication in _____. How do you expect that will impact market share?
- I have read that the company has been investing in research and development. Can you tell me if the company has any new products in the pipeline?

The Close

As discussed previously, the close is asking for some form of commitment from your customer, in this case, the employer. This is absolutely essential in an interview. Remember to focus on the key points below when writing out and practicing your close.

Thanking the interviewer for their time

Selling yourself and recapping how you fit the role

Asking for what you want

Thank You Notes

After every interview, successful or not, you should send a thank you note. This simple step can keep you in the running, reinvigorate your interview process, or simply develop a good line of communication with a professional you may work with in the future. Most experts agree that it is a great idea to send a Thank You of some kind to the interviewer for any interview that you have. Only about 10% of all people who are interviewing take the time to thank the interviewer, which makes sending the Thank You a great way to stand out to potential employers.

We suggest that you send an email version of a thank you note shortly after your interview, possibly even the same day. It may also make sense to send a hand written note that really shows your interest in the role. If you choose to send a paper thank you note, it will serve as a reminder of you and the interview a few days after the interview. It will also stand out to the interviewer. Either way, ensure that you are sending your Thank You no later than the day following the interview. We also recommend that you send a separate and unique message to each interviewer if you interviewed with more than one person at a time.

Keys to Success

Treat your thank you note much like your close. Thank them for their time, recap your fit, and ask for what you want.

Go the extra mile. Purchase nice thank you cards. They can make a difference.

Send an email and a hard copy.

Example of a handwritten Thank You note:

Dear David,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview for the maintenance technician position. I enjoyed the time spent learning about your company. As I stated in the interview, my experience troubleshooting, maintaining, and repairing prime power equipment in the Navy, make me a great fit for the position. Thank you again, and I look forward to hearing from you about a date when I could schedule my second interview!

Sincerely,
John Smith

Example of a Thank You email:

Dear David,

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to interview for the maintenance technician position with your company. I enjoyed meeting you and finding out more about your company and this opportunity.

My experience at maintaining power generation equipment in the Navy seems to match the needs of your opportunity. I would enjoy the opportunity to bring my skills and experience to a position such as the one your company is offering. I did not have a chance to mention experience on the equipment controls, which I feel would be applicable to this multi-craft role. I am confident that my education, experience, and interests make me a perfect fit for the opportunity.

I am convinced that I want to become a member of your team. I realize your time is valuable and I want to thank you again for meeting with me. I look forward to hearing from you about a date when I could schedule my second interview!

Sincerely,

John Smith
(555) 555-5555
John.smith@email.com

Recommended Reading List

Transition Prep Books

- Interviewing Handbook for Military Leaders (Paul Kreider)
- Military-to-Civilian Transition Guide (Carl S. Savino)
- What Color is Your Parachute? 2012 (Richard N. Bolles)

Business Books

- Built to Last (Jim Collins)
- Good to Great (Jim Collins)

Leadership Books

- Bringing out the Best in People (Aubrey C. Daniels)
- Management Strategies for the 21st Century (Peter F. Drucker)
- Take Command (Kelly Perdue)

Interview Preparation Books

- Interviewing Handbook for Military Leaders (Paul Kreider)
- Knock Em' Dead 2012 (Martin Yate)
- Now, Discover your Strengths (Marcus Buckingham)

Sales Books

- Ziglar on Selling (Zig Ziglar)
- Conceptual Selling (Heiman)

Manufacturing/Engineering Books

- World Class Manufacturing (Schonberger)

Monthly Periodicals

- *Fortune*
- *Wall Street Journal*

Section 6

The Final Stages of the Hiring Process

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Overview

This section is designed to give you a thorough understanding of follow-up interviews, receiving and negotiating job offers, and the final stages of the hiring process. At this point, you have completed an initial interview and the company has decided that you are a candidate of interest. Understanding how a follow up interview will be conducted will help you prepare more effectively. The information on offers and offer negotiations is included to help you make an informed decision when you get to that stage of the interview process. Your Orion Candidate Recruiter will also be there throughout the entire process to assist you.

Second Interviews

Congratulations! You have successfully completed your initial interview and are moving to a second interview! This time around, expect to spend more time at the company, talk to more people, individually and collectively, and have your skills and personality scrutinized more closely.

From an employer's perspective, the second interview is a chance to closely evaluate a candidate's abilities and interpersonal skills. Your prospective employer wants to see that you can do the job and work well with colleagues. Be aware that many employers bring in several candidates on the same day to streamline the second interview process. Your challenge is to distinguish yourself from the other candidates. Remember your interview fundamentals: have a plan, prepare good examples, and close the interview.

What to Expect

On your first interview, you probably met with one or two people. It is even possible that the only interview you have conducted was a phone interview. This time, be prepared to meet several more interviewers over the course of the day, including potential managers, coworkers and other staff members. If you meet with a panel or group, be sure to make eye contact with both the individual asking the question and the group as a whole.

You may meet individually with several people, who will most likely ask you similar questions. Keep your answers consistent but mix up your delivery so that your answers do not sound stale or staged. If possible, before the interview, acquire a list of the people you will be meeting with and do a little research on each one. Then ask questions that show your knowledge of each person.

Be sure to talk to your Orion Candidate Recruiter and the Account Executive assigned to that particular company prior to your interview to make sure you know what to expect. In most cases, we have had individuals interview at the company in the past and will be able to share some key insights.

Keys to Success



Prior to your second interview, make sure you review this guide and your interview notes. The interviewing fundamentals covered earlier are just as applicable for second interviews. You must have a plan, practice questions, identify specific examples to use, and close an interview. In addition to the fundamentals covered previously, keep the following tips in mind as you prepare for your interview.

Be early. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to get to your interview. You will more than likely be traveling in an unfamiliar area. Err on the side of caution and leave earlier than you normally would. If possible, travel to the site the day before to make sure you are 100% sure where you are going.

Be prepared. Make sure you know the appropriate attire to wear and look as sharp as possible. Ensure you have a professional portfolio with additional copies of your resume and professional references. If you are preparing for a sales interview, make sure you have a brag book prepared. You do not want to be caught rushing around the morning of the interview because you did not properly prepare.

Develop a plan. Do additional research on the company. Talk to the Orion team and look online to ensure you can make your case. Know what the company wants and be prepared to talk to those points. Identify strengths and examples to support your case.

Do not assume anything. You do not have the job yet. You must impress everybody you speak with. Be friendly to everyone. Janitors, secretaries, assistants and other support staff sometimes have the ear of key decision makers. Be courteous.

Close the interview. You must close the interview and ask for the job. Show them you want the job in no uncertain terms and close the deal.

Offers

It is important that you consider everything when making a decision because an offer does not consist exclusively of a base salary. If the company cannot meet your salary requirements, it may be able to make it up to you in other ways, such as overtime, bonuses, company vehicle, or growth potential. Job satisfaction and advancement potential are two things you should also weigh heavily when considering an offer.

Remember, we are here to help. Consult with your Orion Recruiter during the offer process. We will help answer questions and work with you to ensure you get the best possible overall package. It is a critical time in the hiring process, so please make sure you talk with us regularly.

Keys to Success

Companies typically give a candidate anywhere between two to ten days to consider a potential offer. Some companies will specify the decision deadline in an offer letter. The current business standard is five business days. You should be deliberating on your decision throughout the hiring process and be prepared to make a decision as soon as possible.

Waiting until the last moment possible to accept an offer can make an unintended poor first impression. The Orion team will guide you throughout the offer process. Use our experience to your advantage.

Salary: What Can I Expect to Receive?

The short answer is it varies depending on your qualifications, background, the job location, and the pay range for the specific position. Rest assured the entire Orion team is here to help you secure the best possible overall package for you.

In some cases there is not much flexibility when it comes to salary. The pay structure for entire companies is often based on internal equity: what other individuals with similar qualifications who are currently at the company make. So, major fluctuations in that number can upset the whole system. But even notoriously competitive industries will bend a little. Most companies have a small pay band, typically a few thousand dollars, that they can flex based on an individual's performance during the interview process. The best interviewers are typically on the top end of a company's pay band. Keep that in mind when you are preparing for second or subsequent interviews.

Other companies tend to be less flexible about basic pay. When some companies extend an offer, they base it on what they perceive as your market value. These companies feel that they have a pretty good idea about what they have to pay to be competitive and attract the best candidates.

Keep in mind that the company's benefits package can add several thousand dollars to an offer and salary alone should not be the only consideration when evaluating an offer. Think about the entire package and decide what best meets the needs of you and your family. Talk through your offer with your Orion Recruiter. Your recruiter can answer any questions you may have to ensure you have all the information to make the best possible decision.

Negotiating

Many people think that once they have landed and aced an interview, all of their work is done. But, sometimes deciding whether or not to accept a job offer can be just as stressful and time-consuming as getting to that point in the first place. One point of contention is salary negotiation. This process can be overwhelming, particularly for job seekers without a great deal of experience.

Negotiating a fair and practical salary is a critical step in the job search process, and one that can be navigated smoothly if you know what to do -- and what not to do. Do not try this on your own. Use the Orion Team and our extensive experience to gain the best possible offer for you. Offer negotiation is one of our most important roles in the hiring process. We have an established relationship with the company that we can leverage to ensure you are getting the best overall offer. Consult with us throughout the offer process and use our expertise to your advantage.

It is also important to remember that good companies recognize great talent and they will pay fair market value for it. Do not overvalue yourself initially. You are entering a new industry; it will not take good companies long to recognize that you are a valuable contributor.

In the end, negotiating is not necessarily about winning at all costs. It is about agreeing on terms of a job offer that will satisfy you. Do not get greedy. If you receive a fair offer for a position you want, quit while you are ahead. If you continue to negotiate for the sake of negotiating -- even after you have received a fair job offer -- you may end up hurting yourself. A company could simply end negotiations and present you with an ultimatum. You also risk alienating your future boss. And you certainly do not want your boss to resent you before you have even started work. The bottom line is that salary negotiations, like anything else, need to be done respectfully and kept in perspective. Always be courteous, direct and honest. Consult with us and we will work to secure the best possible overall package for you.

Making Your Decision

Keep in mind that while your base salary and benefits package are important to your overall decision on whether a company is a good long term match for you, there are other factors that should impact your decision. Career advancement, stability, company culture, and job satisfaction should all be important factors in your final decision. Weigh all of those factors when considering a prospective offer.

Over the years, we have seen many candidates who have spurned the highest initial salary offer for one that paid less, but offered them a foot in the door in a great company, in a growing industry, that afforded them the opportunity for rapid growth in position and responsibility. We have seen candidates get promoted multiple times and double their initial salary in just a few years because they got their foot in the door of the right company, at the right time and performed well. This can be a big decision. Look down the road at where you want to be and consider whether the opportunity can really help you get there. In the end, you must make a decision that is best for you and the Orion Talent Team is here to help you every step along the way.

Civilian Benefits

Most transitioning military professionals do not know what to expect when entering the civilian workforce in terms of the benefits package they can expect to receive. This section is meant to provide an overview on typical benefits packages in the types of companies in which we usually place our candidates.

In addition to salary, a company's benefit package is a key component to an overall job package, and the more information you have when considering an offer, the better decision you can make. This section is not all-inclusive, but it is intended to highlight the most common benefit options provided by employers today.

Overtime

Many positions offer a base salary in the form of an hourly wage. For hourly waged positions and non-exempt salaried positions, hours worked beyond 40 hours in a work week are typically paid at a time-and-a-half (1.5x) rate. Many employees make as much or even more than their total base salary in overtime hours. In some situations, overtime may be paid at double (2.0x) the base rate. Often overtime is built-in to the work schedule, so it is a consistent and reliable portion of the total income.

Compressed Work Week



Many companies run multiple shifts to allow for 24 hour per day operations. In some cases this allows for compressed work weeks where employees work three or four days per week and have built-in overtime. This allows for three or four day weekends each week! Essentially only work 50% of the year!

Bonuses

Bonuses can significantly increase the value of your overall compensation package. Listed below are a variety of bonuses companies can offer. You may receive one or more of these bonuses depending on how your individual compensation package is structured. Consult your Orion Candidate Recruiter if you have any questions concerning a bonus or bonuses you may be in line to receive.

Signing Bonus

Some companies may offer a signing bonus as an incentive to accept a company's offer. Signing bonuses are usually paid within 30 days of a candidate accepting a position. Signing bonuses are not standard components of every company's compensation package. Several years ago, a signing bonus was more common. Today, they are given out much less frequently. Typically, a signing bonus must be paid back in full if a candidate does not complete a predetermined period of time with the company.

Performance Bonus

A large number of companies include a performance bonus as part of an overall compensation package. This discretionary bonus is typically based on both company and individual performance criteria and is normally paid on a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis. The amount of this bonus can vary widely depending on the individual company and position you are hired for, but are typically computed as a percentage of your base salary.

Production Bonus

Some companies include a production bonus as part of an overall compensations package. This type of bonus is typically directly tied to the overall production of a company or portion of a company. This type of bonus is common in the manufacturing industries and is used to incentivize the entire workforce. The more the company produces, the more the employees earn. In some industries these bonuses can double the base salary for employees!

Health Insurance Plans

Health Insurance is a very important component of a company's benefit package. There are a number of different types of health insurance plans available in Corporate America and it can be somewhat confusing for transitioning military members accustomed to the military's TRICARE system. When you are evaluating a company's health insurance plan, there are three critical components that you should understand: the type of plan, premiums, and co-pays. The overall cost of different healthcare plans can vary widely, but understanding the following terms can be useful when wading through a company's healthcare insurance plan.

Types of Health Plans

There are two basic health insurance plans that exist today, Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs). Both types of plans offer positives and negatives. The plan that is best for you will depend on your individual situation and a careful cost benefit analysis.

- HMOs have a limited list of doctors to choose from in your network of approved physicians. HMOs allow you to visit an “Out of Network” provider, but at a higher cost. They may require you to get a referral from your Primary Care Physician prior to seeing a specialist such as an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist. Because your options are more limited, a HMO is normally cheaper than a PPO.
- PPOs normally offer more flexibility by offering a large selection of approved doctors. They typically do not require you to get a referral from a Primary Care Physician before seeing a specialist. Because of your expanded options, a PPO is typically more expensive than a HMO.

Premiums

A premium is a payment you incur monthly in order to participate in that particular health insurance plan. The amount of your monthly premium varies based on the type of plan (HMO or PPO) you select or use, the health insurance company that is selected, and your employers’ contribution. Typically, larger companies contribute more towards your premium reducing your monthly costs. There are very few companies remaining who pay 100% of an employee’s medical premiums.

Co-Pays

Co-Pays are the out of pocket expenses you incur for using your health insurance (prescriptions, doctor’s visit, physical, emergency room visit). The amount of the co-pay depends on the health insurance plan that your company offers. For example, you may have a \$25 co-pay on a \$100 prescription. You incur an out of pocket expense of \$25 and your insurance company pays the remaining \$75.

Disability Insurance

Most companies offer two types of relatively inexpensive disability insurance: Short Term Disability Insurance and Long Term Disability Insurance.

- Short Term Disability Insurance: Short Term Disability Insurance supplements your income in case you are disabled and cannot work for an extended period of time, but typically less than one year.
- Long Term Disability Insurance: Long Term Disability Insurance supplements your income in case you are disabled and cannot work for an extended period of time. This insurance will typically start after your short term insurance is exhausted or after you have been disabled for more than 180 days.

Vacation Time, Holidays, Time Off

On average, you can expect to accrue vacation and sick days on a per month basis with most companies’ offering 7-14 days of vacation a year. Typically the number of vacation days allowed increases as an employee gains tenure. In addition to vacation days, most companies also observe certain standard national holidays throughout the year to include the following:

- New Years Day
- Memorial Day
- 4th of July

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

Other Benefits

401(k) Plans

A 401(k) is the most common type of retirement savings program offered by companies and has all but replaced the traditional pension plan. A 401(k) is a type of employer-sponsored retirement plan that allows a worker to save for retirement while deferring income tax on the saved money and earnings until withdrawal. The employee elects to have a portion of his or her wages paid directly, or "deferred", into his or her 401(k) account. In participant-directed plans (the most common option), the employee can select from a number of investment options, usually an assortment of mutual funds that emphasize stocks, bonds, money market investments, or some mix of the above.

Some companies will match a percentage of your contributions to your 401(k) program. A common employer matching formula is 50% of 401(k) employee deferral contributions up to a certain contribution limit (typically a maximum of 6%). This can be a powerful wealth builder and a valuable piece of an overall compensation package.

Relocation Assistance

Some companies offer relocation assistance on a case-by-case basis. If a company offers a relocation package, it will come in the form of either a relocation bonus or they will take care of moving your household goods, similar to a military PCS move. If you receive a relocation bonus, the amount will vary depending on company, the position you are hired for, and the physical distance involved in the move. Relocation assistance can significantly add to the overall value of an offer. Relocation assistance should not be expected in most cases.

Tuition Reimbursement

Some companies may offer tuition reimbursement for college. Typically, there is a limited amount of assistance available. Additionally, most companies require that classes taken apply directly to your position or the industry in general.

Company Car or Car Allowance

Most positions that involve a significant amount of driving (field service for example) provide either a company car or a monthly car allowance as part of your overall compensation package. A company car or allowance can add seven to ten thousand dollars to the overall value of your offer.

If a company car is provided, the company typically leases the car and pays the monthly payment, insurance, gas, and the maintenance for the vehicle. The company owns the car. Some companies allow you to use the vehicle for personal use.

If you are given a car allowance, the company covers your transportation costs in the form of a bonus. Unlike a company car, you would personally own or lease the car, and you would use the allowance to pay for the car payment, the maintenance and the insurance. In addition to the stipend, the company may also reimburse you for your work-related mileage.

Employee Stock Plans

There are three primary stock option plans that companies may offer as part of an overall compensation package: Employee Stock Option Plans, Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), and Employee Stock Purchase Plans (ESPPs). Each is different and offers unique advantages. All three can add significantly to the overall value of an offer.

Employee Stock Option Plans

Some companies use Employee Stock Option Plans as an additional way to compensate their employees. These plans allow an employee to purchase a specific number of company shares during a specified period of time at a fixed price. For example, if an employee gets an option on 100 shares at \$10 and the stock price goes up to \$20, the employee can "exercise" the option and buy those 100 shares at \$10 each, sell them on the market for \$20 each, and pocket the difference. But if the stock price never rises above the option price, the employee will simply not exercise the option.

Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs)

An ESOP is a type of tax-qualified employee benefit plan in which most or all of the assets are invested in stock of the employer. Like profit sharing and 401(k) plans, an ESOP generally must include at least all full-time employees meeting certain age and service requirements. Employees do not actually buy shares in an ESOP. Instead, the company contributes its own shares to the plan, contributes cash to buy its own stock (often from an existing owner), or, most commonly, has the plan borrow money to buy stock, with the company repaying the loan. All of these uses have significant tax benefits for the company, the employees, and the sellers. Employees gradually vest in their accounts and receive their benefits when they leave the company (although there may be distributions prior to that).

Employee Stock Purchase Plans (ESPP)

An ESPP is similar to a stock option plan. It gives employees the chance to buy stock, usually through payroll deductions over a 3- to 27-month "offering period." The price is usually discounted up to 15% from the market price. Frequently, employees can choose to buy stock at a discount from the lower of the price either at the beginning or the end of the ESPP offering period, which can increase the discount still further. As with a stock option, after acquiring the stock the employee can sell it for a quick profit or hold onto it for a while. Unlike stock options, the discounted price built into most ESPPs means that employees can profit even if the stock price has gone down since the grant date.

Keep in mind that a comprehensive benefits package can add several thousands of dollars to any job offer you receive, and should be just as much a consideration in your decision as the salary itself. The transition from a military to civilian benefits program may seem overwhelming but by ensuring that you do the research to understand the terms and what each benefit entails, you can be confident that you are informed and able to make the best decision regarding benefits to meet you and your family's needs. And of course, please ask your Orion Recruiter if there is anything we can do to help!

Paving the Way for Others

Keep in mind during the interview process and particularly after you have accepted an offer, that you represent all military candidates in the eyes of your company. Your performance will influence their opinion of future military candidates. So, put your best foot forward.

The first six months, no matter if it is your dream job, can be extremely challenging. Typically, we find that there is a transition period that most people go through when making a career change of this magnitude. There are new people and a new culture that is quite different from the military environment that you are accustomed to. After this adjustment period, most people find things settle down and things work out well.

Also keep in mind that you are representing other military candidates and Orion Talent at your new company. Orion has a great record of success in Corporate America due in large part to the success of the thousands of candidates that came before you. Their outstanding performance over the years paved the way for you now. Please keep in mind moving forward that our ability to place others with your company is directly related to your performance. Now it is your turn to advance that torch – not for Orion – but for your fellow Veterans that will follow behind you.

Post-Military Careers

Most candidates transitioning to Corporate America are not offered executive level positions. Most companies expect you to come in and learn the business and prove yourself before moving up in the organization. You have advantages over your peers. Companies value the discipline, drive, motivation, and experience of military candidates. Your experience puts you on a completely separate career path than a recent college graduate.

However, companies want to ensure you have the grounding in their business, so companies will want you to prove your worth. You should view the opportunities presented to you by the Orion Talent team as your foot in the door. Like in the military, you have to serve at a lower rank prior to gaining higher ranks. The same principle applies in Corporate America. Seize the opportunity to get your foot in the door of an outstanding company and move up.