


**2008** **TOP 50**   
**MILITARY  
FRIENDLY  
EMPLOYERS®**

# HIRING AMERICA'S VETERANS

Veterans are needed now more than ever. BY JOSHUA HUDSON

**T**he price of gas and food is rising, and there are real concerns how troubles on Wall Street will affect Americans on Main Street. The news has put the concerns of the economy on the front page, yet the predictions by the Bureau of Labor Statistics show unprecedented growth in the demand for qualified employees in corporate America. For the companies on this year's "Top 50 Military-Friendly Employers®" list, searching for the best this country has to offer is simple; look at the wealth of talented, educated and experienced in the world's best job training program – the U.S. Armed Forces.

"We believe candidates with military experience are an asset and present a competitive advantage," said Darryll Fortune, director of global public relations for Johnson Controls. He knows his company needs employees who bring ingenuity, a positive attitude, state-of-the-art training and experience to remain competitive in our global economy. That is why Johnson Controls recruits so heavily amongst military transitioners and this year's No. 1 on *G.I. Jobs'* "Top 50 Military-Friendly Employers®" list.

"Over the years we have moved up in our rankings of the 'Top 50' list," Fortune said. "We are proud of that ascent and our hiring standards have not changed just because of the economic downturn. We still require talent and continually look for employees accustomed to accepting challenges in very diverse environments. This is why we appreciate having a military talent pool to recruit from." 



## Employment in a Downturn

While the economy may bring concern to the pocketbook, it has not deterred corporate America. This is when businesses challenge themselves toward greater success. These are times when business looks for employees with fortitude, attitude and spirit. This is when experience in BDUs translates well on a résumé.

Sears Holdings has invested heavily in its military talent over the past year. As the media continues to paint a darker image of the economy, Sears is investing in employees who cannot only weather the storm but navigate the company into prosperous waters.

“Despite today’s economic environment, we continue to select candidates based on knowledge skills, abilities and experience,” said Katie Regan, director of corporate communications for Sears. “Military hiring continues to be an important element of our talent acquisition strategy. Most military candidates possess qualities that align with the skills and experiences we want in all of our Sears associates.”

Employees with military experience perform beyond expectations. They possess transferable skills that can’t be taught in the classroom or in the boardroom. The military creates problem solvers who can adapt to any environment. Their time-management and critical-thinking skills increase work flow and efficiency. Training and experience for the battlefield puts leadership and management skills in the boardroom.

Sears’ significant focus on hiring military experience is reflected in jumping 25 positions on the “Top 50” list.

“To be recognized as a military-friendly employer by *G.I. Jobs* is a great honor for our company, regardless of where we fall on the list,” Regan said. “Military support is more than a tradition at Sears Holding. The upward shift in our ranking to No. 25 is a result of a company-wide commitment to valuing and leveraging the strengths and talents of our military-experienced associates to enhance the culture, growth and success of Sears Holdings.”

## “We Are Hiring”

The Top 50 list represents diverse industries and geographies. From railroads to microchips, from finance to utilities; the entire country is looking for veteran talent to keep our country moving forward.

As the baby boomer generation retires, their generation of experience is retiring as well. Their replacements, the “Gen-Y” Millennials, are generalized as “incredibly talented, but their inexperience is trumped only by a sense of inherent entitlement.”

According to Susan Heathfield, a 35-year HR consultant and employment reporter, the challenge when hiring Millennials is they “seek leadership, and even structure, from their older and managerial coworkers”: older coworkers who are retiring.

Corporate America needs employees who can lead today, not tomorrow. They are looking for new candidates who will “increase the benchmarks,” “raise the bar” and “hit the ground running.” The largest wealth of ready-to-lead technical and professional experience is in the thousands of highly-qualified, and motivated, service members who leave the service each year. As baby-boomer

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ments increase so does corporate America's » interest in military-veteran talent.

This increased interest is reflected in the increasing interest in corporate military recruiting programs across all industries. Ranked No. 16 on our Top 50 list, General Electric has developed programs specifically catered to recruiting military talent.

"There are many different types of positions and training programs for military personnel," said Dave Ferguson, General Electric's program manager for military staffing and recruiting. "Our most recognizable is our Junior Officer Leadership Program, which is a unique two-year leadership program."

Military recruiting programs have become an integral part of many businesses in corporate America.

"I want candidates with enthusiasm, strong leadership, focus, dependable and willing to lead from the front," said Sally Hart, military recruiting manager for Cintas (which ranked 11 on this year's list). "Service members come to our company with a strong sense of integrity and a commitment to excellence."

These traits make the military candidate stand out amongst the pack. "Military job seekers need to realize that they have had amazing experiences that differentiate them in the eyes of many employers," said Jim McMahon, director of talent acquisition for Travelers Insurance, which ranked 31 on this year's list. "Service members have what employers are looking for."

## It is About Profit; Not Patriotism

While there is a certain amount of civic pride in hiring service members, appreciation of a veteran's service is not a foundation of good business: appreciation of veteran talent is. That is why, when corporate America looks for ways to build its business, military experience is part of the solution. Like an Ivy League diploma, military service is recognized shorthand for "quality experience and training."

There is no padding here. Companies understand the need to hire veterans. This year's "Top 50 Military-Friendly Employers®" are the best of the best in veteran hiring among companies earning more than \$1 billion in annual revenues. Each company was surveyed and found to demonstrate strong military recruiting efforts, high percentage of new military hires and instituted proactive policies for National Guard and Reservists. Out of the nearly 2,500 companies that were eligible, only 2 percent made the list.

Some of the Top 50 employers are perennial list makers; such as BNSF, Union Pacific and USAA, while others grace the list for the first time.

"Just to be among the Top 50 is an honor," said Connie McLendon, military staffing manager for BNSF, which has consistently ranked amongst the highest on the list each year.

This year's No. 1 employer, Johnson Controls, not only puts a high value in recruiting military talent, they are also a global leader in climate control systems and automotive batteries. The company's work environment needs veteran talent to stay a market leader.

"Military members bring a level of leadership experience that is very valuable to Johnson Controls," said Jan Zizzo, Johnson Control's senior recruiter. "They bring a strong work ethic, solid training and proven teamwork and are used to hard work. They have the ability to work in a diverse group, perform under pressure and they know how to evaluate situations and prioritize issues that need to be addressed."

It is those intangible skills of character that can't be taught in classrooms or read in books that is making our military veterans the perfect talent pool for hiring managers

to look to when their bosses ask them to "hire the best candidates that will be able to take our company beyond our expectations."

Applied Materials ranked No. 7 in this year's Top 50 list. Luis Gonza- »

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Military Staffing Manager  
BNSF Railway



» les, military hiring manager, places veterans at all levels and divisions within the company knowing they provide the invaluable leadership that keeps his company productive.

“We believe that the military provides an ideal pipeline to a well-qualified talent pool,” Gonzales said. “We hire veterans because they’re responsible, great team players and leaders. As new team members at Applied, they bring unparalleled maturity, and hands-on experience.”

“We target military personnel for several reasons,” said Dina Tilgner, general director recruiting for Union Pacific, which ranked No. 3 on this year’s list. “The railroad’s technical jobs often involve skills service members learned in the military.”



## The Veteran Advantage

Those who decide to serve in our Armed Forces sacrifice the sweat on the training ground, blood on the battlefield and tears on the pillows from those who wait patiently behind. Every service member steps out of their uniform and into the civilian market transformed. Like the Bionic Man, our government has made them faster, smarter, wiser.

Veterans have state-of-the-art technical training. Veterans navigated working with different cultures socially and professionally. Veterans communicate effectively with leaders and subordinates. Veterans have been groomed for greater responsibility from the day they returned their first salute.

The commercials talk about all the reasons why the military is a right choice for those looking for opportunity. Transitioning veterans are seeing just how true those advertisements were. Corporate America is waiting for a whole new generation of leaders to take up the reigns of our nation’s industries and lead us into the future. 