



**Remarks by Tim Isacco  
Chief Operating Officer  
Orion International**

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**Tim Isacco**

Thank you Dr. Pon.

It is my honor to be here today, not only to represent Orion International and our Corporate Clients who have hired Veterans through our organization; but more importantly, to speak on behalf of the thousands of Veterans currently searching for their next career.

In my 17 years at Orion, I have never seen a workforce more open and enthusiastic toward Veteran hiring, and a climate more conducive to employing our Veterans. However, one look at the statistics shows that there is still more work to be done.

When Orion International was founded by Veterans in 1991, with the mission “to strengthen the fabric of America” by providing transitioning Military Officers into the civilian workforce, job prospects for Veterans were not that bright. A few years later, Orion became the first military recruiting firm to begin placing enlisted service members. To date, we have found careers for more than 17,000 enlisted service members and Non-Commissioned Officers, and an additional 12,000 Officers.

Within our industry, record keeping is vital, and is a critical component to ensuring the best career match for every Veteran and organization with whom we work. We track details on our Job Seekers’ branch of service; their military occupation; the training and education received; their term of service; and where they’ve been stationed - to create a clear profile for our corporate clients. Of the nearly 100 data points we track on every Veteran Job Seeker, we have never kept record of whether or not our Veterans are disabled. Why? It’s has never been relevant. Our clients appreciate the true value a Veteran brings to their workforce, regardless of the presence or absence of a disability.

In today’s post-9/11 Military, disabilities resulting from time in service are a fact of life for many separating from Active Duty. To the naked eye, some of these wounds are not visible. As a company led and operated by Veterans, it has been our instinct that Employers are hiring Veterans with Service Connected Disabilities at a much higher frequency than they realize.

When we were asked to participate in this project with the Warrior Transition Command, we set out to find out if this was true. We invited more than 4,000 Veterans hired by our client companies in the last 2 years to complete an anonymous survey. Of the 450 Veterans who responded, more than half - 52.5% - have a Service Connected Disability.

Internally, we invited our own Veteran workforce to complete the same survey. 56% of responses indicated a Service Connected Disability.

These results reinforce what we have long felt – that *Veterans perform very well within our organization, and within Corporate America at large, regardless of their disability status.*

However, as Dr. Pon aptly stated, and as we see daily, there is often times a disconnect when it comes to translating a ‘military’ resume into ‘civilian’, or understanding a Veteran’s background and skill set to determine a best fit.

While many companies recognize the value that Veterans add, they aren’t sure how to best assimilate Veterans into their organizations. It is vital for Corporate America to realize that while all Veterans are trained within a military occupation that brings a specific level of training and qualifications, Veterans universally possess many soft skills that make them invaluable within the workforce.

These include, and are certainly not limited to:

- Leadership
- Tireless work ethic
- The ability to ‘do more with less’, and
- Proven performance under the most difficult of situations

I truly believe that Employers who have established formal Military Hiring Programs have not done so for patriotic reasons, or because it is the “right thing to do”, although both of those factors are noble. Rather, these companies hire Veterans because they have a positive impact on their organizations’ bottom line. Veterans tend to learn more quickly than their civilian peers with similar education, and are promoted faster based on performance.

Despite all of this, if a Hiring Manager doesn’t know what to look for when evaluating a Veteran, he or she may miss out on their top performer of tomorrow. We know this because we talk to these Veterans *every day*.

Over twenty years of experience has taught us a great deal about what works and what doesn’t work for Employers who are looking to start a Military Hiring program.

We offer these best practices to organizations developing a Military Hiring Strategy:

- 1) Create a Plan. Your organization should align the decision makers, Talent Acquisition, Human Resources and Operations Managers to develop your hiring plan.
- 2) Set Measurable Objectives and Goals. It is critical to be able to measure program results, so before you begin, determine your criteria for success. Select the

- performance indicators you will track including metrics on hiring, performance data, and retention rates.
- 3) Take the time to learn about and understand Military Talent. Focus on gaining a clear understanding about the backgrounds and skill sets that are well suited to match the targeted positions within your organization.
  - 4) Develop a marketing campaign specifically designed to reach Veterans. Traditional recruiting methods aimed to the civilian job seeker have proven ineffective. It is important to reach Veterans where they are, keeping in mind the uniqueness of their job search situation. Create a campaign uniquely targeted for the Veterans you would like to hire.
  - 5) Make on-boarding a priority. Create networking opportunities, mentorship programs, and pay special attention to benefits that will appeal to Veterans in order to assist them in their continuing transition into the civilian world. Optimization of a Military Hiring Plan, even with flawless execution of Steps 1 through 4, will not occur without a thorough on-boarding process for newly recruited Veterans.

Today's Military men and women are tomorrow's Corporate Leaders. But the fact is they'll never get so much a foot in the door, if Corporate America doesn't know how to find them.

On behalf of Orion International, we are grateful for the opportunity to further promote the issue of Veteran employment through this initiative by the Warrior Transition Command.

At this time, it's my pleasure to welcome Rob Roberts to share his perspective as a disabled Veteran.

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