

# Veterans Serving Veterans Advice from the Front

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Bexar County Veterans Service Officer

Whether discharged after four years or retiring after 20, the challenges of transition are the same. From Corporal to Colonel, most of us experience the same excitement and anxiety about moving into the next chapter in our lives. Going from having a strong sense of camaraderie, shared mission and built-in support systems, it can feel overwhelming finding a new career, community, and purpose.

Now with an "outside the gate" perspective, I love helping Veterans find success in their new life. Whether helping navigate the VA system, connecting them to Veterans' resources or simply introducing them to other Veterans to bring back that sense of camaraderie, there are many out here willing to lend a hand!

Of course, early financial planning, job market and cost of living research are all important. Finding available resources, however, is also important. Workshops, networking and career building opportunities exist everywhere. Reach out to your new or prospective community via Marine for Life, Soldier for Life or to anyone who has transitioned. Using civic organizations, family and friends to establish your network is also vital!

There is another key ingredient to success in transition -- EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT. Most Veterans will not walk into a position that is commensurate with the level of leadership, responsibility and pay they had while on active duty. No company would place the same level of responsibility on a 21-year-old with a few years of experience as the military does. We need to come to terms with that. Sometimes we have to humble ourselves and look at an opportunity as a possible stepping stone towards a great career. Don't sell yourself short, but be realistic.

Veterans bring extremely valuable skills and qualities to the workforce. However, what many Veterans don't do well is convey

After 20 years of service as a U.S. Marine, I have the pleasure of serving those who served. As a County Veterans Service Officer, I assist Veterans access the benefits they have earned through service to our country. From our nation's oldest to those who are transitioning from military service today, my team and I are in a position to help and that is truly an honor.

how their skills and experience will make them a great asset and "fit" within a company. As a Marine with 20 years of leadership experience who had played a vital role in the support of over 25,000 troops in two theaters of war, how was I not even interviewed for an administrative position? I knew I could perform the job well! Yet, I did not convey how my experience related to the position I was seeking at an environmental company. Use the available resources to help translate your skills and experience.

America loves its Veterans and there is a sea of goodwill but, ultimately, we need to promote ourselves as a good business decision. We

bring talent, motivation, leadership and experience, but getting a foot in the door requires us to show that we can align to an organization's culture and values, to be open to opportunities we had not considered, and being a bit humble – confident in our abilities and proud of our service, yet humble.

We served our country proudly and selflessly.

That mindset should follow us always. The ethos we embodied on active duty will serve us well into civilian life if we continue to live by it long after we've hung up the uniform. 



Queta Marquez has served in her position in Bexar County, Texas since December 2013. She is the proud mother of Marisa, Amaya and Miguel, and 2nd mom to her nephew, Derrian.

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