



THE INSTITUTE OF
LEADERSHIP



**Veteran
productivity skills**



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1.0 Executive Summary

The Institute of Leadership conducted comprehensive research between 2022 and 2023 to investigate the valuable and transferable productivity skills that military veterans and Service leavers bring to civilian organisations. The research encompassed two distinct survey audiences: military veterans and Service leavers, as well as employers of veterans. The survey results shed light on key insights regarding productivity skills, industry representation, job roles, gender balance, age demographics, and preferred skills in both military and civilian environments.

This document explores the valuable productivity skills that military veterans and Service leavers bring to civilian workplaces, contributing to increased efficiency, effectiveness, and overall success. It reviews relevant literature and highlights the positive impact veterans have on productivity, drawing from studies in various industries. The benefits of veteran productivity skills are outlined, emphasising their role in driving business success, increased output, cost savings, innovation, employee engagement, reputation building, competitiveness, and operational excellence. These skills, including: leadership, discipline, adaptability, teamwork, problem-solving, and professionalism, contribute to improved productivity, increased output, cost savings, innovation, employee engagement, enhanced reputation, competitiveness, and operational excellence. Employers stand to benefit significantly from harnessing the unique productivity skills that veterans bring to their organisations, ultimately driving success and growth.

Overall, the research underscores the significance of Time Management, Problem Solving, and Adaptability as key productivity skills consistently valued both by military veterans and Service leavers as well as by employers in civilian organisations. The findings emphasise the rich potential veterans bring to the workforce. The alignment of preferred skills between veterans and employers indicates a strong foundation for successful transitions to contributions in civilian workplaces.



2.0 Introduction

2.1 Background

This White Paper explores the importance of productivity skills for military veterans and Service leavers and provides insights into strategies for enhancing their productivity in civilian careers. It highlights the unique strengths possessed by military veterans and Service leavers and discusses the challenges they may encounter during the transition from military to civilian life. The paper outlines key productivity skills that military veterans and Service leavers can leverage and suggests practical approaches to develop and maximise these skills. By emphasising the value of a comprehensive support system, this White Paper aims to assist military veterans and Service leavers in achieving fulfilling and successful post-military careers.

Any organisation that wants to be successful relies upon its workforce to be productive. Whether it's an SME, Enterprise or a Large Corporate, identifying the productivity skills that will add value is important. It is then essential to ensure current teams are trained in those productivity skills or to recruit people who already possess those skills.

The Armed Forces spend millions of pounds every year training their members to be leaders and to have the right skills for their roles. One of the by-products of all this training is a comprehensive library of productivity skills. This makes any Service leaver and veteran a golden source of transferable skills that can complement most types of employment.

2.2 Purpose

This White Paper also aims to serve as a comprehensive resource for military veterans, Service leavers, employers, educators, and organisations invested in supporting the successful transition and productive integration of military veterans and Service leavers into civilian careers. By recognising and harnessing the unique skills possessed by military veterans and Service leavers, we can foster an environment that enables their productivity and facilitates their contributions to the UK workforce.





3.0 Strengths of Military Veterans and Service Leavers

Military veterans and Service leavers possess a range of strengths that can significantly contribute to their productivity in civilian careers. Some of the key strengths commonly found among military veterans and Service leavers:

Problem-Solving and Decision-Making: Military training instils critical thinking skills, strategic planning, and the ability to make decisions under pressure. Military veterans and Service leavers are skilled at analysing complex problems, developing creative solutions, and implementing effective strategies.

Leadership and Teamwork: Veterans and Service leavers are experienced team players who understand the value of collaboration and cooperation. They have often worked in diverse teams, developed strong interpersonal skills, and can assume leadership roles when necessary.

Work Ethic and Discipline: Veterans and Service leavers are trained to adhere to strict schedules, follow procedures, and exhibit a strong work ethic. They understand the importance of punctuality, accountability, and completing tasks to the best of their abilities.

Resilience and Adaptability: Military Service often exposes individuals to challenging and high-pressure situations, teaching them to adapt to changing circumstances and persevere through adversity. Veterans and Service leavers possess resilience, enabling them to handle stressful situations effectively.

Professionalism and Integrity: The military places great emphasis on integrity, professionalism, and a strong sense of duty. Veterans and Service leavers bring these values to their civilian careers, maintaining high standards of ethics, reliability, and dedication.

Technical and Specialised Skills: Depending on their military roles, veterans and Service leavers often possess specialised technical skills such as engineering, logistics, communications, healthcare, cybersecurity, and more. These skills can be directly applicable to various civilian industries.

3.1 Discipline and Work Ethic

It is important to recognise and harness the strengths previously highlighted when transitioning military veterans and Service leavers into civilian careers. By leveraging their unique skill set and providing the necessary support, organisations can benefit from the productivity, leadership, and dedication that military veterans and Service leavers bring to the workforce.

Veterans and Service leavers are known for their strong discipline and work ethic, which are cultivated through rigorous training and the demands of military Service. Discipline and work ethic instilled in Veterans and Service leavers make them highly reliable, focused, and dedicated individuals in their civilian careers. Their ability to work effectively under pressure, follow procedures, and demonstrate commitment can greatly contribute to their productivity and success in various employment types.

Some of the key aspects of discipline and work ethic commonly found among military veterans and Service leavers:

Accountability: Veterans and Service leavers take personal responsibility for their actions and understand the impact of their decisions on the team and mission. They are accountable for their tasks and are committed to fulfilling their obligations to the best of their abilities.

Attention to Detail: Veterans and Service leavers are trained to pay close attention to detail, as even minor oversights can have significant consequences in a military context. They bring this meticulousness to their work, ensuring accuracy and precision in their tasks.

Punctuality: Veterans and Service leavers understand the importance of being punctual and arriving on time for commitments and responsibilities. They value the efficient use of time and recognise that timeliness is crucial for successful mission execution.

Commitment and Dedication: Veterans and Service leavers exhibit a strong sense of commitment and dedication to their work. They are accustomed to going above and beyond the call of duty, demonstrating a willingness to put in the necessary effort and hours to accomplish objectives.

Adherence to Procedures and Protocols: Veterans and Service leavers understand the importance of following established procedures and protocols. They have experience operating within a structured framework and are skilled at complying with guidelines, regulations, and standard operating procedures.

Self-Motivation and Initiative: Veterans and Service leavers are often self-driven and possess a strong sense of initiative. They take the initiative to identify tasks that need to be done and proactively seek opportunities to contribute to the team's goals and overall mission.

Work Ethic: Veterans and Service leavers have a strong work ethic and are accustomed to working long hours, often in demanding and challenging environments. They embrace the value of hard work, perseverance, and a "get the job done" mentality.

3.2 Resilience and Adaptability

Veterans and Service leavers are renowned for their resilience and adaptability, which are honed through the unique experiences and challenges they face during their Service. Qualities of resilience and adaptability make veterans and Service leavers well-suited to handle dynamic work environments, evolving responsibilities, and unexpected challenges. Their ability to quickly adjust, persevere through adversity, and embrace change positions them as valuable assets in the civilian workforce.

Here are key aspects of resilience and adaptability exhibited by veterans and Service leavers:

Adapting to Change: Military Service often requires military veterans and Service leavers to adapt to rapidly changing environments, whether it's shifting missions, deployments to new locations, or adjusting to different roles and responsibilities. They develop a flexible mindset and the ability to quickly acclimatise to new situations.

Thriving in High-Pressure Environments: Military veterans and Service leavers are trained to handle high-stress situations and remain calm under pressure. They can make critical decisions and act when faced with adversity, ensuring mission success even in challenging circumstances.

Overcoming Obstacles: Military veterans and Service leavers are adept at overcoming obstacles and finding solutions to complex problems. They possess problem-solving skills and the determination to persevere through difficulties until they achieve their goals.

Resilience in the Face of Adversity: Military veterans and Service leavers have encountered and overcome various forms of adversity during their military Service, such as physical challenges, emotional stress, and demanding conditions. They develop resilience, which allows them to bounce back from setbacks, learn from failures, and maintain a positive mindset.

Embracing Diversity and Inclusion: Military Service exposes military veterans and Service leavers to diverse cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives. They learn to appreciate and work effectively with individuals from different walks of life, fostering inclusivity and teamwork.

Transitioning to Civilian Life: Transitioning from military to civilian life, military veterans and Service leavers navigate a different set of challenges and expectations. They display resilience by adjusting to new routines, roles, and work environments while leveraging their military experiences to thrive in their civilian careers.

Continuous Learning and Growth: Military veterans and Service leavers understand the importance of continuous learning and personal growth. They are often proactive in seeking opportunities to acquire new skills, expand their knowledge, and stay updated with industry advancements.

3.3 Teamwork and Leadership

Military veterans and Service leavers possess valuable teamwork and leadership skills that they acquire through their experiences in military Service. Teamwork and leadership skills acquired in the military enable military veterans and Service leavers to excel in various professional settings. Their ability to work collaboratively, communicate effectively, and lead with integrity makes them valuable assets in teams and positions of responsibility in civilian careers.

Here are key aspects of teamwork and leadership skills commonly found among military veterans and Service leavers:



Teamwork Skills:

Building Cohesive Teams: Military veterans and Service leavers are skilled at building cohesive teams through effective communication, trust-building, and recognising individual strengths. They create an environment that encourages collaboration, diversity of thought, and shared goals.

Resilient Leadership: Military veterans and Service leavers demonstrate resilience in their leadership approach, staying focused and composed in challenging situations. They inspire resilience in their teams, guiding and supporting them through adversity and setbacks.

Collaboration: Military veterans and Service leavers understand the importance of collaboration and working effectively as part of a team. They have experience working in diverse teams and are skilled at fostering cooperation, resolving conflicts, and building strong relationships with teammates.

Communication: Effective communication is crucial in the military, military veterans and Service leavers excel in conveying information clearly, listening actively, and ensuring that team members understand objectives and tasks. They can adapt their communication style to different audiences and effectively coordinate efforts.

Trust and Dependability: Military veterans and Service leavers prioritise trust and reliability within their teams. They understand that their actions impact the overall mission and the trust placed in them by their teammates. They strive to build trust by fulfilling commitments, being accountable, and consistently delivering quality results.

Adaptability and Flexibility: Military veterans and Service leavers are accustomed to working in dynamic and rapidly changing environments. They can adapt to different roles, shifting priorities, and diverse team dynamics while maintaining a focus on the overall mission and supporting their teammates.

Giving and Receiving Feedback: Veterans and service leavers excel in giving and receiving feedback, a crucial leadership skill. Feedback fosters continuous improvement and team cohesion. In civilian workplaces, these skills enhance leadership development, performance, and organisational culture.

Leadership Skills:



Accountability: Military veterans and Service leavers embrace accountability and take ownership of their responsibilities. They understand the impact of their leadership decisions on their teams and are willing to take responsibility for outcomes, both positive and negative.

Mentoring and Developing Others: Military veterans and Service leavers recognise the importance of mentoring and developing their team members. They provide guidance, support, and opportunities for growth, fostering the professional development of their subordinates and promoting a culture of continuous learning developing resilient and capable team members, recognising that talent takes many forms.

Decision-Making: Military veterans and Service leavers develop strong decision-making skills, often under high-pressure situations. They are trained to analyse complex information, assess risks, and make timely and informed decisions. Veterans and Service leavers understand the importance of taking responsibility for their choices.

Leading by Example: Military veterans and Service leavers lead by setting a positive example through their actions, work ethic, and commitment. They inspire and motivate others to perform at their best by demonstrating integrity, professionalism, and dedication to the mission.

3.4 Problem-Solving and Decision-Making

Military veterans and Service leavers possess strong problem-solving and decision-making skills that are honed through their training and experiences in the military. Problem-solving and decision-making skills enable military veterans and Service leavers to approach complex situations with a systematic and logical mindset. Their ability to analyse information, evaluate options, and make decisive choices contributes to their effectiveness in a wide range of professional settings, making them valuable assets to organisations seeking effective problem solvers and decision makers.

Here are key aspects of problem-solving and decision-making skills commonly found among military veterans and Service leavers:

Adaptability: Veterans and Service leavers are adept at adapting their problem-solving approaches to fit evolving circumstances. They can quickly assess new situations, adjust their strategies, and find innovative solutions to emerging challenges.

Resolute Decision-Making: Veterans and Service leavers are trained to make decisions promptly and resolutely, even in high-pressure situations. They understand that indecision can have serious consequences, and they can weigh available information and make timely choices.

Analytical Thinking: Veterans and Service leavers are skilled at analysing complex situations and identifying the root causes of problems. They can break down complex issues into manageable components, facilitating effective problem-solving.

Critical Thinking: Military Service emphasises critical thinking skills, enabling military veterans and Service leavers to evaluate information objectively, consider multiple perspectives, and make informed decisions. They are trained to weigh the pros and cons of different options and anticipate potential outcomes.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation: Veterans and Service leavers have experience in assessing risks and mitigating potential hazards. They are skilled at identifying potential risks associated with different courses of action and taking measures to minimise those risks.

Team Collaboration: Veterans and Service leavers understand the value of collaboration in problem-solving and decision-making processes. They can effectively engage with team members, solicit input, and leverage the diverse perspectives and expertise within their teams to arrive at optimal solutions.

Crisis Management: Veterans and Service leavers are trained to respond to crises and make critical decisions under stressful conditions. They can assess rapidly evolving situations, prioritise actions, and implement effective strategies to mitigate risks and achieve positive outcomes.

Lessons Learned: Veterans and Service leavers have experience in conducting post-action reviews and extracting lessons learned from past experiences. They understand the importance of continuous improvement and applying insights gained from previous challenges to enhance future problem-solving and decision-making.

Overall, veterans and Service leavers can bring a wide range of productivity skills to civilian workplaces, including: leadership, discipline, adaptability, attention to detail, strong work ethic, teamwork, problem-solving, and professionalism. These skills can make them valuable assets in a variety of roles and industries, contributing to a productive and successful work environment.



4.0 Productivity Skills

4.1 Key Productivity Skills

Military veterans and Service leavers often possess a wide range of valuable productivity skills that they can bring to a civilian workplace. Some of the key productivity skills that veterans may bring include:

Leadership: Veterans and Service leavers often have experience in leading teams and making decisions in high-pressure situations. They are trained to take charge, motivate others, and make tough choices, which can translate well into leadership roles in civilian workplaces.

Discipline and Time Management: Military training instils discipline and a strong work ethic in military veterans and Service leavers, which can help them manage their time effectively and stay focused on tasks. Military veterans and Service leavers are often accustomed to working in structured environments and meeting deadlines, which can enhance their productivity in civilian workplaces.

Adaptability and Resilience: Veterans and Service leavers are trained to adapt to changing situations and handle adversity with resilience. They can bring this ability to handle unexpected challenges and setbacks to civilian workplaces, where they can quickly adjust to new environments and find solutions to problems.

Attention to Detail: Military operations often require meticulous attention to detail, military veterans and Service leavers may carry this skill into civilian workplaces. They may have developed an eye for accuracy and precision, which can be beneficial in roles that require attention to detail, such as quality control, project management, or data analysis.

Strong Work Ethic: Veterans and Service leavers are known for their strong work ethic, often developed through their military training. They are accustomed to working long hours, taking ownership of their responsibilities, and striving for excellence. This work ethic can translate into high productivity and dedication to tasks in civilian workplaces.

Teamwork and Collaboration: Military Service emphasises teamwork and collaboration, as Service personnel work closely with their fellow Service members to achieve common goals. Military veterans and Service leavers are often skilled at working in diverse teams, communicating effectively, and collaborating with others to achieve objectives, which can foster a positive work environment and boost productivity in civilian workplaces. Service personnel also work increasingly with civil servants and contractors, thus increasing the diversity of the workforce and team of which they are part.

Problem-Solving and Decision-Making: Veterans and Service leavers are trained to think critically, analyse situations, and make decisions under pressure. These problem-solving and decision-making skills can be valuable in various civilian workplace scenarios, where veterans can apply their experience to find efficient and effective solutions.

Professionalism and Integrity: Veterans and Service leavers often possess a strong sense of professionalism and integrity, honed through their military Service. They understand the importance of accountability, and following procedures, which can contribute to a positive work culture and enhance productivity in civilian workplaces.

4.2 Literature Review

Paradoxically, the UK faces a profound skills gap, for which Service leavers are ideally suited to fill and yet perceptions of veterans' skills remain a persistent barrier.

In 2023 around 16000 men and women left the UK Armed Forces (Kirk-Wade and Mansfield 2023, an annual outflow which has barely changed since the Institute of Leadership's report, *Tales of Transition* was published in 2018. That report was published at a time when there was intense interest in veterans' experiences of transition, so there was plenty of data and research around the topic. For example, Lord Ashcroft completed the *Veterans Transition Review* in 2014 (Ashcroft 2014) advocating improvements in the transition experience, while acknowledging the high quality of the resources already existing for Service leavers, and that most leavers experience successful transitions. While much of this sort of work focuses on mental health and reintegration of veterans, there has also been some analysis of the experience of veterans in getting fulfilling work. A good example is the respected and highly influential report *Veterans Work* by Deloitte (Deloitte 2016). Deloitte, supported by Forces In Mind Trust, also acknowledged that most transitions are successful, however they further pointed out that there is an encouraging overlap between veterans' skills and a growing skills gap in the UK. In 2023 that gap continues to widen and the breakthrough of technologies, such as large language models in Artificial Intelligence, suggest that military teamwork and personal skills will be even more in demand (Forces In Mind Trust 2020). Paradoxically, the UK faces a profound skills gap, for which Service leavers are ideally suited and yet perceptions of veterans' skills remain a persistent barrier. With 16000 Service leavers entering the job market each year, individuals with higher levels of investment and training than the average, there is clearly an opportunity to improve transition and positively impact UK society as a whole.

Academic research into Military to Civilian Transition (MCT) largely concerns mental health and negative outcomes such as homelessness, alcohol dependency and suicide. A smaller set of papers address the journey into new organisations such as the meta-analysis conducted for *Military Psychology Journal* this year (Sachdev and Dixit 2023). This review suggested six themes for understanding transition ranging from institutionalisation, identity, culture and technical issues around skills and resettlement support. In the US, Davenport et al. (2022) discovered that many veterans found work

on leaving the Armed Forces were significantly undervalued and underemployed. A repetitive issue is not military skills, but the perception of those skills. Also in the US, David Schulker publishing in *Armed Forces and Society* journal, found many successful transition stories where Service leavers targeted roles which had obvious similarities with their military Service. While a useful tactic for prospective Service leavers, this still represents a wasted opportunity for those industries which are not like military organisations, nevertheless, would benefit from the employment of veterans. While arguments are made for the overlap in veterans' technical and leadership skills, the culture-gap remains a pervasive barrier according to research in this field. Keeling et al. (2019) found this gap to be so significant that they recommend greater transitional preparation and support. A former Army doctor, Professor Beverly Bergman OBE conducted research in 2014, with colleagues which highlighted the problems of cultural transition both in and out of the military. Rather than conceptualise the problem as one of institutionalisation, the research team argued that Service personnel experienced culture shock on joining and 'reverse culture shock' on leaving the Armed Forces (Bergman et al. 2014). As with the later study, conducted by Keeling et al. (2019), Professor Bergman and colleagues pointed out that there is much more support for the shock of joining, compared with the shock of leaving the Services.

Policy and technical reviews echo the findings from academic research. Lord Ashcroft's report, *The Veterans Transition Review* begins with a justification for transition support. He argued that supporting Service men and women when they leave, is more than simply a duty, but leads to positive outcomes for both the military and society as a whole. Essentially, he argued that it makes sense to support veterans to find fulfilling work (Ashcroft 2014). Deloitte's *Veterans Work* report of 2016 made considerable impact on social media and with veterans' charities in the UK. Like the Ashcroft Report, Deloitte pointed out that there exists considerable support for military personnel who are leaving in search of new careers. The value of the Deloitte report, however, was its comprehensive review of the skills gap in the UK. The technical detail in the report made it



extremely clear that employers in the UK were facing a profound problem matching employees to the skills sets required in the 21st Century. The report also demonstrated that Service leavers have these skills in abundance. These were not just technical and data skills, but especially so-called soft-skills, leadership and management (Deloitte 2016). Deloitte supported the report with a dedicated Veterans Work videos using well-known actors to make a big splash. The Veterans Work report pointed out that Service leavers were in a perfect place to help with the skills gap. What were employers waiting for? The report also pointed out, however and in common with the academic research, that perceptions remained a sticking point. Seven years on from Veterans Work, it seems little has changed, except that the skills gap itself has become more profound, due to the impact of Covid and new technologies. The Forces In Mind Trust has recently commissioned further research to explore the evolving nature of the future of work in the UK. The research conducted by the Future Agenda project was comprehensive, taking in a number of economic and political factors to chart the future of work in 2030 (Forces In Mind Trust 2021). The message is largely positive, veterans will continue to have much to offer in the post-Covid UK. But the project emphasises the need for change,

especially around the dialogue between the Armed Forces and broader society. The focus is on better and more personal preparation for transition and de-mystifying military skill sets. Research, in every sense of the word, from academic to policy and business analysis suggests that transition remains a mostly successful venture for most veterans. There has been no change in the message communicated by Deloitte, the Institute of Leadership and Force In Mind Trust, that Service leavers are well suited to 21st Century careers. However, the persistent problem of communication, stereotyping and stigma around military leadership and soft skills remains as intractable as ever. As the Forces In Mind Trust so clearly articulates, there is a need for a more personalised, mental preparation for transition, which differs from the entirely skills-based approach Service leavers have experienced so far. And the need to talk to and explain to employers how military skill sets can match the skills gap becomes a more urgent venture. A good example of this sort of work is the Military Human project at York St John University, where potential managers of veterans are educated in military training, experience, and culture. Without this kind of engagement and a change in the resettlement process, the paradoxical underemployment of Service leavers may continue, and this is not just a problem for veterans.

Please reference this report as follows:

The Institute of Leadership (2024) "Veteran Productivity Skills", available from <https://leadership.global/what-we-do/research.html>

4.3 Benefits of Veteran Productivity Skills

It's important to note that productivity can vary among individuals, and not all military veterans and Service leavers may possess the same level of productivity skills. Factors such as education, experience, and individual characteristics also play a role in determining an individual's productivity in the workplace. However, overall, research suggests that veterans can bring valuable productivity skills to civilian workplaces, which can contribute to their success and the success of their employers.

Productivity in the workplace: This is often considered a key factor that can be linked to business success. Productivity refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which tasks and activities are performed in a workplace, resulting in the accomplishment of organisational goals. When employees are productive, they can complete their work efficiently, meet deadlines, and achieve their targets, which can positively impact the overall performance and success of a business.

Increased Output: Higher productivity often leads to increased output, which can contribute to increased revenue and profitability for a business. When employees are productive and able to complete their tasks efficiently, it can result in higher production levels, faster delivery of products or Services, and increased customer satisfaction, all of which can positively impact a business's bottom line.

Cost Savings: Improved productivity can lead to cost savings for a business. When employees are efficient in their work and able to complete tasks with minimal waste of time and resources, it can result in reduced labour costs, optimised operational processes, and lower overhead expenses. This can contribute to improved profitability and financial performance for a business.

Innovation and Growth: Productive employees are often better positioned to engage in innovative thinking and contribute to the growth and success of a business. When employees are not bogged down by inefficiencies and time-wasting activities, they have more time and energy to focus on creative problem-solving, idea generation, and strategic planning, which can lead to innovation and growth opportunities for a business.

Employee Engagement and Retention: Productivity is closely linked to employee engagement and job satisfaction. When employees can complete their work efficiently and feel a sense of accomplishment, it can contribute to their overall job satisfaction and engagement. Engaged employees tend to be more loyal, motivated, and committed to their work, which can result in improved employee retention and reduced turnover costs for a business.

Reputation and Competitiveness: Productivity can impact a business's reputation and competitiveness in the market. When a business consistently delivers products or services efficiently and effectively, it can build a positive reputation for reliability, quality, and customer satisfaction. This can result in increased customer loyalty, repeat business, and a competitive edge over competitors.

Operational Excellence: High productivity can contribute to achieving operational excellence within a business. When employees are productive and efficient, it can lead to streamlined processes, optimised workflows, and improved overall performance. This can result in a well-organised and effective operation that is better positioned to achieve its strategic objectives and succeed in a competitive business environment.



5.0 The Institute of Leadership Research

5.1 Our Own Research

During 2022 and 2023 The Institute of Leadership carried out research aimed at establishing what valuable and transferable productivity skills military veterans and Service leavers brought to the civilian organisations.

This research was initially carried out via a virtual survey. The survey was broken down into two different audiences. The first audience were military veterans and Service leavers; the second audience were employers of military veterans and Service leavers.

5.1.1 The Survey

We issued 2 surveys, one for military veterans and Service leavers to indicate what skills they found most useful to a civilian employer, the second was for employers of veterans to indicate what productivity skills they thought were most valuable to them.

825 people responded to the **first survey (S1)** aimed at Service leavers and military veterans: Military Productivity Skills - What are the most impactful to a civilian employer? We wanted to understand what they felt were the most important productivity skills they brought to a civilian employer.

213 people responded to the **second survey (S2)** aimed at those who are employing military veterans and Service leavers: Military Productivity Skills - What are the most impactful to employers? We wanted to understand what they as the employers felt were the most important productivity skills they looked for.

First Survey (S1):

Military Productivity Skills – What are the most impactful to a civilian employer?

Of the 825 responders...

95.39% (787) had served or are serving in the **Armed forces**. The survey had a wide distribution of industry representation. **Education and training** had the greatest number of responders with 12.97% (107). Individual responses to other industries show:




Consultancy, Healthcare, engineering, and defence appear the most.

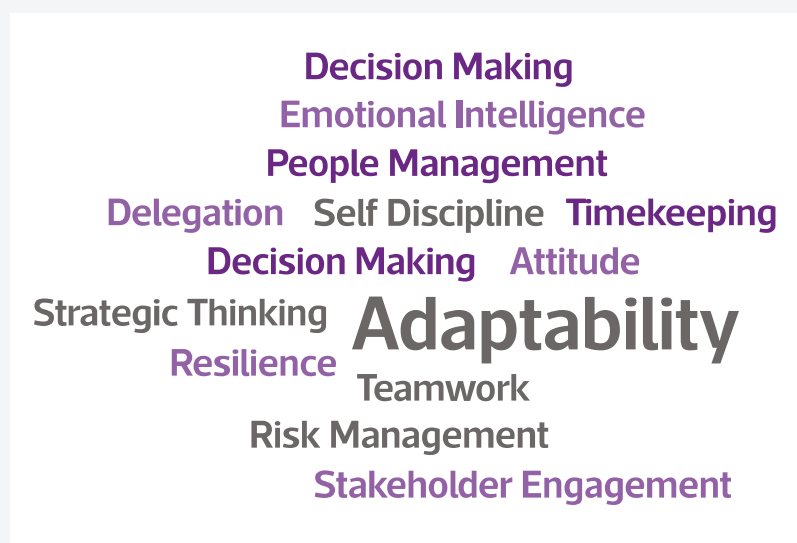
- Job role for the survey showed the largest representation was from the **Senior Manager position** with 26.42% (218) of the responders, closely followed by **managers**.
- Gender for S1 we saw **male** responders with 86.91% (717) and 12.36% (102) being **female**. This is quite representative of the current gender balance in the Armed Forces.
- We had a good spread across all the age range with those in the **51-60 bracket** taking up 42.18% (348) of responders. And only 2.30% (19) fitting in the **16-30 bracket**.

Results Showed...

Productivity skills ranked in order of importance within a **Military environment** saw **Time Management** coming out on top, and this was very closely followed by **Problem Solving**:


1. Time Management
 2. Problem Solving
 3. Embracing Change
 4. Prioritising Change
 5. Consistency
 6. Good Communication
 7. Adaptive Thinking
 8. Effective use of Timelines and Limits
- 

When asked for additional productivity skills we saw:



Decision making, leadership, delegation and teamwork appear heavily.

When asked to rank the productivity skills in order of importance within a **civilian environment** we see **Problem Solving** hitting the top and **Time Management** a close second.

1. Problem Solving
 2. Time Management
 3. Consistency
 4. Embracing Change
 5. Good Communication
 6. Prioritising Change
 7. Adaptive Thinking
 8. Effective use of Timelines and Limits
- 

When asked for additional productivity skills we saw:



Leadership, ability, decision-making and patience stand out.

5.1.2 Survey Interpretations

The result from our survey shows that there is not a vast void between veterans and Service leavers and the organisations that employ them.

When we asked veterans, Service leavers, and employers, what productivity skills were most important, both groups scored Time Management as the top skill and Problem Solving as the second most important.

Employers of veterans reported that when looking for productivity skills they sought Time Management as the number one skill followed by Embracing Change.

Veteran and Service leavers when asked what productivity skills they thought employers would be looking for, placed Problem Solving at the top followed by Time Management and Embracing Change.



Second survey (S2):

Military Productivity Skills – What are the most impactful to you as an employer?

Of the 213 Responders...

61.97% (132) had **not served in the Armed Forces**. When asked if they currently **employ veterans** 72.77% (155) said yes. The S2 survey had a wide distribution of industry representation. **Finance** had the largest representation with 19.72% (42) of the responders with **Education and training** responders with 12.21% (26). Individual responses to other industries shows:

Real Estate Energy Sector
 Business Management Information Technology
 Project Management Tourism Public Sector
 Nuclear Decommissioning NHS Risk
Cyber Security Social Care
 Pharmaceuticals Healthcare Legal Sector
Site Management Telecoms
 Financial Services Technology
Public Transport Local Government
 Consultancy Coaching & Training HR
 Engineering Company Secretary
 Facilities Building **Veterinary Hospital**

As we can see **Healthcare** and **Technology** are our biggest group indicated above of the options offered.

- Job role for S2 showed the largest representation was from the **Senior Manager** position with 28.64% (61) of the responders, closely followed by **managers** with 25.35% (54).
- Gender for S2 was more equally balanced. 59.62% (127) were **male** and 40.38% (86) **female**. This is clearly a good reflection of civilian industry (this will require an official figure).

Results Showed...

When asked when **employing a veteran** what productivity skills, they look for our responders chose Time Management as the most sought-after skill, closely followed by Embracing Change.

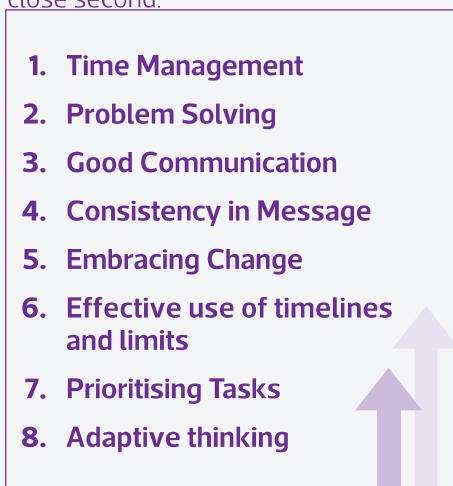


When asked if there were other productivity skills, they saw being used by veterans within their business, we saw this:



Resilience, Ability, Teamwork and Bigger picture all appear as valuable skills employers feel veterans bring to their businesses

When asked to rate the productivity skills that a **veteran brings to a business**, we see Time Management as the top skill, with Problem Solving skills coming a close second.



When we asked the employers of veterans if there were other productivity skills they saw being used by veterans within their business, we saw the following:



Project Management and Team Leadership are topping the skills being witnessed in use by veterans in civilian businesses.

5.2 Round Table

During 2023, we followed up on the survey questions with a round table. This incorporated active veteran employers, veterans, and some current serving military employees.

We assigned just 2 questions for discussion during the round table.

5.2.1 Round Table Questions

Question 1:

How can we describe the value of veteran's competencies in terms persuasive for a civilian workplace community?

Question 2:

Other than HR, who else needs to be persuaded of the value that veterans can bring to organisational performance?

5.2.2 Round Table Results

The outputs from the round table group for **question 1** were comprehensive and covered lots of areas, the following is a summary:



Corporate Suggestions

- a. Hiring managers need to be able to identify the productivity skills and utilise them.
- b. The whole business needs to understand what productivity skills veterans bring.
- c. Create appropriate job adverts that encourage inclusivity.
- d. Engagement when employing veterans needs to include the C-Suite.



Working Together

- a. A strategy to explore how we encourage employers to look at productivity skills when employing veterans.
- b. We need to be able to explain to employers why the identified productivity skills are useful.
- c. Produce a directory of military / corporate speak.
- d. How do businesses measure the ROI when employing a veteran. Being able to do this will support veteran recruitment across the board.



What can The Institute do to support?

- a. Build a veteran community to support and guide.
- b. Highlight our current support structure and what it is we offer.
- c. As an Institute, we can start to verify military skills and how they match corporate skills.
- d. Can The Institute support the two-year transition phase for Service leavers?

The outputs from the round table group for **question 2** were comprehensive and covered lots of areas, the following is a summary:



Corporate Suggestions

- a. Engagement with line managers of organisations employing veterans, ensuring they understand what military transition looks like.
- b. Do employers of military veterans and Service leavers understand the Reservist commitments?
- c. Start at the top. Chairperson, CEO, Networking groups, line managers all need to be aware of the value.
- d. Recruitment consultants – educate them on job titles and the associated skills.
- e. Provide a soft landing for military veterans and Service leavers when joining large organisations.



Working Together

- a. Forget the rank, it's the productivity skill that is important.
- b. Managing expectations both at employer level and with military veteran and Service leavers.
- c. Career Transition Partnership (CTP) could still do more to effectively support transition. It isn't all about rank.
- d. The experience of working with CTP is very mixed across employers and Service leavers. Consistency is needed.
- e. Provide interview training for those new to employing military veterans and Service leavers.
- f. It is often more difficult for a small organisation to employ a military veteran or Service leaver if they have Reservist commitments.
- g. Government incentives to encourage organisations to employ military veterans and Service leavers.



What can The Institute do to support?

- a. Better understanding of why the hiring manager wants to employ veterans.
- b. Engage directly with Veterans UK.
- c. Create / support a current Service leaver mentoring programme.



Please reference this report as follows:

The Institute of Leadership (2024) "Veteran Productivity Skills", available from <https://leadership.global/what-we-do/research.html>

5.3 Case Studies



Case Study 1

Jack Darley Joint Operations Centre Group Chief Security Officer, Barclays

Jack attended an open event at Barclays where he learned about the Military Talent Scheme. He already knew that finance was a proven career route after the military, and Barclays stood out for him as an organisation that would do what it said it was going to do – unlike other organisations that offered similar opportunities however did not deliver. And then there was the culture: Jack joined the Military Talent Scheme in a Human Resources role, working on projects aimed at streamlining the bank's ability to run itself. His line manager was ex-military and had been through the scheme himself, so was able to give Jack lots of great advice. Jack started on small projects, Barclays noticed his talents and he quickly progressed to much bigger ones. Soon, it was time to apply for a permanent role.

Jack says that his time in the Army has prepared him well for the kind of situations he faces at Barclays. In the Army, no two days are the same and his ability to react quickly to a changing environment translates well into his current role. And that's not the only way his military career has provided him

with transferrable skills: Jack says that Barclays is clearly a good place for ex-military people to begin a new career. He points out that a large number of people join the Military Talent Scheme and stay on at the bank, often for many years. And his advice for those who are considering a similar move. Jack Darley "One of the great things about the scheme is that you get access to the internal jobs board. I spotted a role that was a good match for the operational experience I'd gained in the military, and I applied after three weeks on the scheme. I'm now working in Security Incident Management, tackling any security attacks the bank might face and quickly making sure the bank can operate as normal." Jack has only good things to say about the Military Talent Scheme and his subsequent career at Barclays. He is particularly enthusiastic about the opportunities the bank provides for career mobility.

Case Study 2

Janine Granger, Talent Coach Programmatic – Talent Acquisition, Barclays

On the advice of a neighbour who worked at Barclays, Janine joined the Military Talent Scheme in 2020 and secured a permanent role the following year as a People Advisory Partner, where she could use all the HR skills, she'd gained during her Navy career to advise on complex people queries and support consistency across the HR function. Janine joined Barclays during the pandemic and experienced a huge learning curve due to having to work from home – she was used to working with people face to face. In addition, she needed to absorb a whole new corporate language. She found her new colleagues to be more than helpful. Janine found the transition to a full-time role easy because of the supportive colleagues around her, and she is now in a position to do the same for others. Janine is delighted with her new role as Talent Coach, because it aligns so strongly with what she used to love doing in the Royal Navy. She loves helping people and is looking forward to developing a long career at Barclays.

“I attended a Military Talent Day, where I learned how highly Barclays values the transferable skills military people can bring with them. I'd never heard this said in the military, and I thought it was amazing. I also got a great feeling from the Barclays colleagues, who all seemed to love their work. They told me how Barclays changes all the time, and I love change, so it seemed the perfect next step for me. I thought my husband would also love it and booked him on to the next Talent Day. He's now working at Barclays too!”

“I have recently been promoted to the role of Assistant Vice President Talent Coach. I wanted to work with graduates and apprentices, and I can do that in this role. I supported junior sailors when I was in the Navy, so this was a natural progression for me. Barclays gives you the opportunity to do anything you want to do, and although my manager was sad when I left her team, she gave me all the support and encouragement I needed. That's what is so great about Barclays.”

“Barclays was great. I was placed in a team that aligned with where I wanted to be, and my line manager gave me all the tools I needed to help me learn. I was assigned buddies and had check in calls with all the Military Talent Scheme leads, as well as with other ex-military personnel on the scheme. Networking was key for me, and I built up a circle of contacts who were all generous with their time and information.”

Janine is very positive about what ex-military personnel can bring to Barclays. She believes that the skills learned in a military career are extremely transferable into the fast-paced banking environment, where good people skills and the ability to make decisions are highly valued.

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When three ex-military technical experts put their heads together, the result was one extraordinary security business.

Case Study 3

Punk Security – Barclays Eagle Labs

When three ex-military technical experts put their heads together, the result was one extraordinary security business. Simon Gurney served in the Royal Air Force as an IT expert. Daniel Oates-Lee has many years of experience in commercial IT and a focus on cyber security. Simon and Daniel met in the Reserves, where together they work part-time in the Joint Cyber Unit – a niche division specialising in defensive IT operations. They had a vision: to form their own cyber security business and put their vast range of skills to work for themselves – and for the benefit of their clients. In a short time, their business, Punk Security, had grown so much that they could bring Melissa on board – also an ex-Royal Air Force technical expert – as Technical Projects Manager. She is in no doubt about the advantage their ex-military and Reserves background has given this new business. Punk Security was formed only two years ago, and the transition from the military to running their own business was 'quite scary', as they put it. Simon and Melissa had been talking for years about the possibility of starting their own business; The original plan for Punk Security was for Daniel to initially set the business up on his own, with Simon joining later. But, as Simon says: Punk Security provides cyber security services of all kinds, with an emphasis on working faster and better with modern cloud-based businesses than traditional security

companies can. They also provide consultancy and incident response services, identifying risks and providing solutions. Simon believes this gives them a unique proposition: Simon says they have no trouble communicating what they do to technical people, who are very receptive. But when it comes to explaining the benefits of their niche business to less-technical people, such as those who control budgets, they need help in articulating their message. As Melissa explains, that's where Barclays comes in: Barclays Eagle Labs work closely with C4DI and have helped Punk Security connect with other businesses. They've also asked Melissa and Simon to take part in an Eagle Labs Veteran Founders event, helping other veterans to get their new business ideas off the ground. Melissa says that had Veteran Founders been around when they started their business, they would surely have joined the programme. Now they are keen to play their part in helping others.

*Melissa Gurney,
Simon Gurney & Daniel Oates-Lee,
Punk Security*



6.0 Strategies for Enhancing Productivity

6.1 Productivity Skills Assessment Development

During the resettlement phase, Service leavers need to be given the guidance on what type of productivity skills are needed and sought after by potential employers. Where they have an identifiable gap with productivity skills there should be training made available that capitalises on their experience and clarifies how this translates to the productivity skills identified in this report.

6.2 Mentoring and Networking

Military veterans and Service leavers benefit from having mentoring and coaching provided by either those who have been on a similar journey or the people who employ them. Through this coaching and mentoring they will get to understand first-hand the type of productivity skills needed and how they support civilian organisations to operate effectively. The old analogy of 'knowledge is power' can't be truer in this phase of transition.

6.3 Leveraging Military Experience in Resumés and Interviews

Service leavers especially need support with articulating their experiences into a viable and unique resumé. Many Service leavers are offered a generic resumé rather than one that has been specifically designed to articulate their individual skills and experience. There are many different organisations that offer this support to clearly indicate the productivity skills that Service leavers have acquired in the military.



7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

We can report our findings from the two surveys and the following round tables that productivity skills are essential to any employer. What we have concluded is that there are several productivity skills that military veterans and Service leavers possess and are sought after by civilian employers. This is good news for any Service leaver or military veteran. Now we need to support military veterans and Service leavers to understand which of the productivity skills they have are the most important and how they capitalise upon them when applying for civilian employment.

From our discussion with military veterans, Service leavers and the employers of both, there is a clear message that the success of veteran employment within a business is reliant upon a full top to bottom understanding of why they are employing military veterans and Service leavers and what that strategy looks like. This involves HR, who need to understand the resumés that they will be receiving, the environment the applicant is coming from, and how that is sometimes very different from the one the applicant is entering, and the additional support that may be needed during the interview stage, to ensure the applicant has the right opportunity to highlight their productivity skills and how they have been utilised in the Armed Forces. Line managers need to be aware of the productivity skills veterans can offer; the Board needs to be bought into the recruitment of military veterans and Service leavers as this will give the whole organisation the remit to engage in the military veteran and Service leaver recruitment drive.

7.2 Recommendations for Action

We recommend the following actions:

The Institute of Leadership cannot act in isolation; there are many different parties that need to come together to focus on the main productivity skills needed by the civilian employers.

Our military veterans and Service leavers deserve support and need a consolidated approach to this golden opportunity that highlights the extensive range of productivity skills they possess and how those skills make them competitive in a competitive job market.

Recommendation 1:

Resettlement for Service leavers needs a focus on productivity skills; what skills they have that are productivity-related, what skills their potential employer is looking for and the impact upon civilian employment these skills have e.g, how embracing change and time management supports organisations with productivity and growth, which are the cornerstones of success.

Recommendation 2:

Workshops for committed employers that cover resumé interpretation, how the productivity skills veterans possess have been utilised and how those skills can be invaluable to them. Employers demonstrate they are hiring people with great productivity skills that have been used and developed, often on a daily basis, and that can be easily integrated into their organisations.

Recommendation 3:

Make employers of veterans and Service leavers aware of the ongoing training of the most valuable of productivity skills that Reservist commitments offer. This is a two-way street; the Armed Forces benefit from individuals who bring to the military environment productivity skills from a civilian environment and their civilian employers benefit from individuals who are gaining experience of using their productivity skills, often in high-intensity situations, while deployed on their military Reservist commitment.

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