



## Step 1: Establish Your Post-Uniform Priorities

You know your time in the military will eventually come to a close. It might be only a matter of days, weeks, or months, or it could still be a year or more away. No matter when it is, you can bet it will be here before you realize it, and you want to be as well prepared for that moment as possible.

To be ready to roll out of your military life and into your civilian one, you must think about what you want your future to hold and how you are going to gain those things. If you have a spouse, a significant other, or children, you'll need to factor in their thoughts, needs, and wants as well. Establishing your post-uniform priorities will help you to focus on what is most important to you as you conduct your civilian job search.

### Answer Three Simple Questions

To help you establish your initial post-uniform priorities, all you have to do is answer three simple questions:

1. What kind of civilian job do you want?
2. Where do you want to work?
3. How much of a salary do you need or want to earn?



---

*Ask your spouse or significant other to answer these same three questions and then compare your answers. You might be in for a big surprise. The point is to make a real effort to include those who matter the most to you in the transition decision-making process as well.*

---

Let's take a look at each of these three questions in more detail.

### **What Kind of Civilian Job Do You Want?**

Now there's the million-dollar question. It seems like it would be an easy one to answer, but it can be difficult because there can be so many potential responses to it. Perhaps you don't want to choose an answer that you think might be the wrong one, so you avoid answering the question altogether. That is a definite *no-go*.

First of all, there is no wrong answer. There is only your answer. It may be a good one or not, but you need to have one to work with here. Consider these options:

- **You get a civilian job doing what you did while in uniform.** If what you did in uniform can also be done outside of it, this choice can be an easy one. Those who work in the following areas have a potentially smoother transition to civilian employment:

Aviation	Information technology (IT)
Acquisitions	Law
Engineering	Maintenance
Finance	Medicine/healthcare

If you served in the infantry, drove a tank, or lived on a ship for months at a time, finding a similar job as a civilian can be more of a challenge.

- **You get a civilian job totally unlike what you did in the military.** Maybe you've had enough of whatever Uncle Sam paid you to do and you just don't want to do it anymore. Good for you. Just be sure you are marketable in this new career direction. Step 2 discusses how to do that.
- **You make school your job instead and go to college on a full-time basis.** You have enviable education benefits ready to use and now may be the time to focus on retraining or obtaining a degree.
- **You change your mind and stay in the military if you are able to do so.** It might not be such a crazy thought in the end. At the risk of sounding like a recruiter, there are benefits.

Whatever decision you make regarding your future, keep in mind that *it is your decision to make*. Don't let the benchmark set by others influence you. Set your own goal and go for it.

## YOUR WORK PREFERENCES AND VALUES

To help you shape an even clearer picture in your mind, assess your work-related preferences and values as well by answering the following questions:

1. What size company would you prefer to work with (big, medium, or small)? Why? What advantages do you think working for a company that size would bring to your work life?
2. Do you want to work more with people, with information, or with your hands?
3. Where do you want to work? In a sprawling metro area, a small town, or somewhere in between? Does it matter to you? Why or why not?

(continued)

(continued)

4. Do you want a job that will involve extensive business travel or not?
5. Do you want a full-time, part-time, or temporary job?
6. Do you want a job with lots of responsibility and advancement potential? Or do you want one where you can collect a paycheck and have a life after putting in an honest day's work?
7. If you could pick your dream job, what would it be? Never mind whether you have the necessary qualifications. What is it about that dream job that seems to attract you to it?
8. What type of work do you want to avoid in your next job? Why?

Think about the various qualities you seek in this next job. Put a check mark by the following items that are most important to you:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging work             | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with coworkers    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easy work                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Job title                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Off time                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialization                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility in work schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Generalization                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variety of duties            | <input type="checkbox"/> Job security                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive pay              | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear organizational structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefits                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Control over your day          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advancement possibilities    | <input type="checkbox"/> Influence over others          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition                  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with boss       |   |

## ***Where Do You Want to Work?***

For as long as you can remember, the DoD has told you where your next home would be and sent you there. As a civilian, you get to pick where you work and the place you will call home.

You might find that it was easier when someone else told you what to do. There is a lot to carefully consider as you make this big decision:

- Do you want to go back “home,” wherever that may be, and get a job?
- Is it important for you to physically reside near one place for whatever reasons draw you there?
- What are the job opportunities like in those places?