

Online Personal Branding

CHECKLIST FOR TROOPS

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Before anyone meets you in person nowadays, they meet you online—so make that first impression count!

- Determine your “value” statement.** What is unique about you and the skills you have? What do people compliment you on most?
- Join LinkedIn and upload a clear professional photo of yourself for the profile pic.** A suit or your best military photo is fine. A suit or professional dress is better only because it shows you are ready for the civilian life and next steps.
- Determine your profile summary using your value statement for the first line.** The second two lines of the summary should focus on the kind of job you want or kind of company where you want to work.
- Be authentic.** Authenticity does not equal oversharing—no political or religious posts unless you are planning to work exclusively in politics, advocacy, or religious organizations. Authenticity means being true to your style and personality.
- Network as much as possible.** Join LinkedIn groups like Hiring Our Heroes and other veteran hiring initiatives online. Go to local veteran-focused meetups and events. Check out local groups like Team Red, White & Blue, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Military Officers Association of America. Sign up for veteran community events on Eventbrite or Bunker Labs.

- Expand your network beyond military connections.** Join outside community and interest groups like Toastmasters, writing groups, adventure clubs, or the Rotary Club. All connections are a chance to expand your career development.
- Interact and engage.** Post your thoughts on articles within the field where you hope to be hired, follow and like other industry leaders and local people’s posts, and leave comments.

- If you like writing, it doesn’t hurt to blog about your chosen field.** You can target specific companies you want to work for by blogging about them with thoughtful, insights supported by data and experience. Remember a picture is worth a thousand words, so use compelling graphics in your posts when you can.

Blogging Platforms

- Blogger
- WordPress
- Medium
- LinkedIn

Free Photo Sites

- Pixabay
- Flickr*
- Unsplash
- Pexels

- Eliminate military speak and acronyms** in your writing and on your LinkedIn page as best you can. Assume you are writing for readers who have never been in or known anything about the military.
- Keep it short**—wherever you write, be as succinct as possible. Do not include work you did 20 years ago—unless it was award-winning.

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