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### 3 Soft Skills That Vets Have and Employers Want

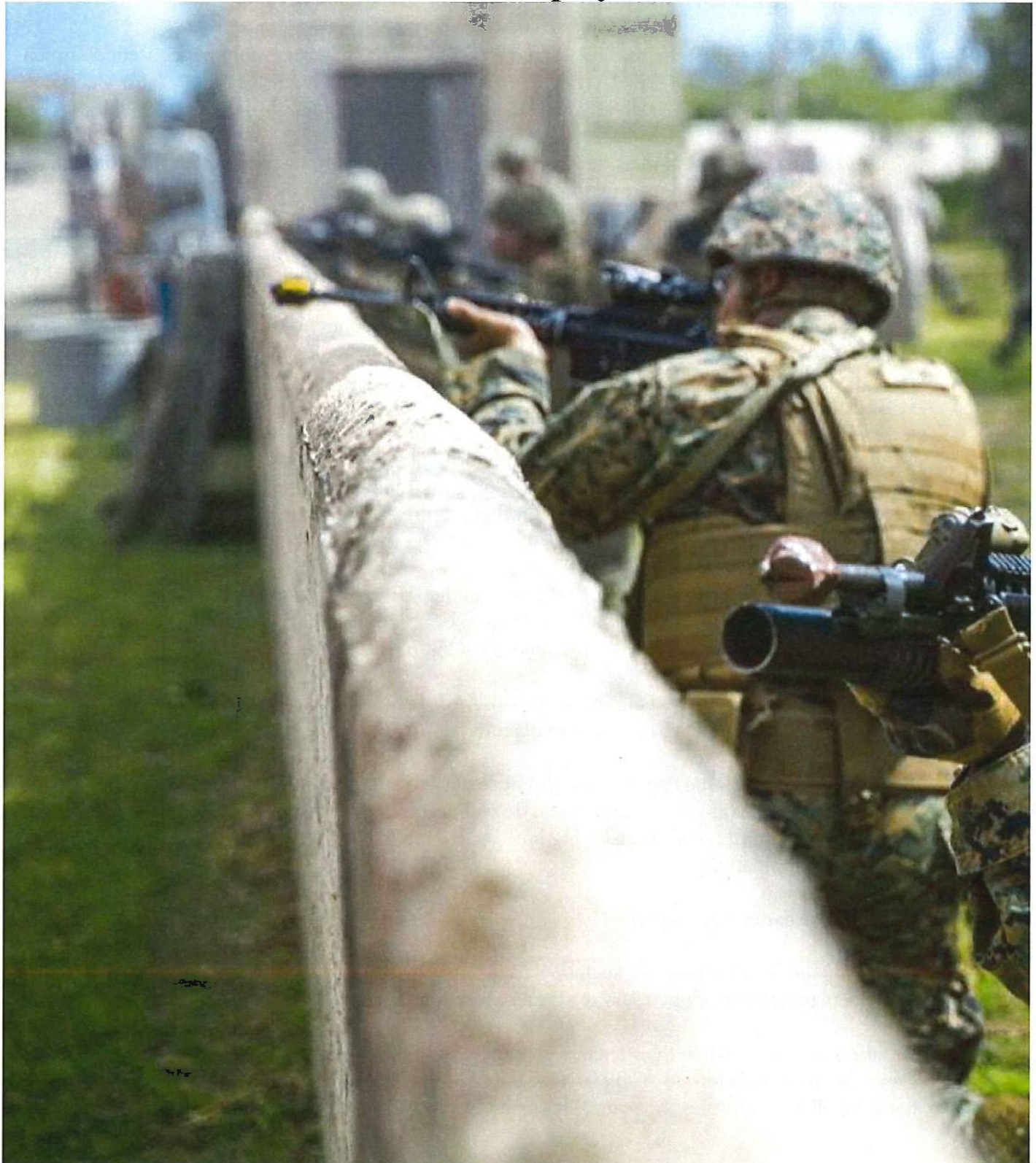


Photo by Lance Cpl. Jacob Wilson / Marine Corps

*This article by Sean Mclain Brown originally appeared on [Military.com](#), the premier resource for the military and veteran community.*

Veterans often undersell themselves. And they do this largely because they're focused too much on their hard skills -- what they learned in their military occupational specialty or job -- and not enough on their soft skills, such as social acumen and communication.

Many veterans believe that their training doesn't translate well to the civilian world. But while it's true that the nuts and bolts of working as a combat engineer or as an infantry squad leader might not translate directly to a civilian career, the soft skills involved translate perfectly.

Soft skills are exactly what the words imply; they are the skills troops needed to learn outside of the technical skills related to their MOS. The military invests a great deal of time in teaching soft skills in tandem with hard skills. Here are three of the most sought-after soft skills that veterans possess and employers want.

## **1. Grit**

Grit can most easily be defined by this simple formula: determination plus resiliency equals grit. There's a reason why the unofficial [Marine Corps](#) motto is *Improvise, Adapt, Overcome*. Veterans know the key to completing a mission requires a combination of critical thinking skills, creativity and refusal to accept defeat.

When faced with overwhelming enemy forces in the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, the Marine Corps legend Lt. Gen. Chesty Puller said "We've been looking for the enemy for some time now. We've finally found him. We're surrounded. That simplifies things."

Faced with their own overwhelming odds and limited resources, service members often find creative ways to complete their mission objectives.

Employers know veterans possess the grit necessary to complete a mission, or project, or company goal. Veteran job seekers would do well to highlight specific times when they used grit to accomplish their task, demonstrating how the examples they offer apply to the job at a prospective company.

## **2. Servant Leadership**

Top companies are looking for leaders. Service members are groomed from boot camp or early in officers training to adopt a servant-leader growth mindset.

"Soldiers can sense when their leaders genuinely care about them, and this builds trust," wrote Cameron Wesson, a retired [Army](#) first sergeant, in the [NCO Journal](#). "This trust forges a bond between all and solidifies the team. That bond is all-encompassing. Soldiers know the leader

genuinely cares about their needs and the leader trusts that the Soldiers will do what is required to complete the task and get the mission accomplished."

Companies value servant leadership, and it's a skill that veterans have in spades.

### **3. Communication**

The third soft skill that veterans have is one of the most important: effective communication. While communicating in the civilian workplace is different than the military (there are fewer acronyms, for one), veterans offer many valuable communication skills that employers want.

Communication and writing skills are in high demand by recruiters and employers. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, written communication is the number three most desired quality overall, behind leadership skills and ability to work as a team member.

Employers want to hire candidates who can write coherently, think creatively and analyze quantitative data. Veterans are hard-wired to create an action plan, and after execution, follow up with an after-action report to analyze what went right, what went wrong and how the process could be improved for next time. This is the same model that businesses use in the design and execution process, from the latest tech product to investment finance.