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## **Transitioning to Civilian Life**

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We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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**Abstract**

Every military personnel will eventually leave the service for civilian life. Their success is largely attributed to preparation. In order to be prepared a service member needs to be well informed about the services offered to them. My capstone project aims to provide service members with this information in a clear and concise manner. Utilizing research and military experience I will compile a booklet that will allow transitioning service members to be better informed. A survey will be used to obtain quantifiable data to better understand the capstones impact on my intended audience.

*Keywords: Veteran, Military, VA website*

## **Section 1: Introduction to My Capstone Project**

Every service member will eventually need to leave their life of service. It can be an uncertain time filled with varying emotions. But with the right preparation it can be a smooth transition. This transition period is what inspired me to undertake my capstone project. I plan on solving the following problem: how might I make the transition to civilian life easier for service members? The solution I propose utilizes information. The VA provides a wealth of information regarding services related to separation and retirement. My project aims to use this information and condense it into a booklet. The research will focus on four core areas: education, employment, housing assistance, and healthcare. A successful transition to civilian life requires being informed. By compiling this information my intent is to create excitement for veterans as they pursue this new chapter in their lives.

## **Section 2: Elements coming together**

### **Innovative Approach**

Bringing together perspectives was an important part of my project. To do this, I considered my stakeholders. These were the veteran community and myself. I utilized my veteran friends to represent this community. Together, we brought years of military experience. But we also have one other thing in common. The decision to transition to civilian life. We all experienced being bombarded with information throughout the process. What we felt we needed was a condensed version of the information given to us. My aim was to produce an item that was innovative. To me simplicity was the key to this innovation. After much consideration, I decided to produce an electronic booklet. This would solve the problem I originally proposed. It would cater information to the reader that's easy to understand and reference.

## **Emotional Intelligence**

The reason why I chose my project was because I am currently transitioning to civilian life. Even though I plan on helping others with my project I also plan to help myself in the process. I see myself in them because I am going through the same transition. When performing my research I put myself in their shoes. I often pondered, “what would they want to know?” Throughout the project I felt an awareness of self and others. My project considered the emotional intelligence of my audience. People will go through a myriad of emotions when moving on to a new career path. A service member transitioning to civilian life may have feelings of anxiety, nervousness or even excitement. My intent for my project is to ease any anxiety a transitioning service member may feel. For me, the way the booklet was presented was extremely important. I placed value in how I assembled my booklet. Throughout each chapter there is a quote of encouragement for the reader. A small gesture, but it provides an uplifting moment for the reader.

## **Creative Thinking**

My creative framework played a significant role in my project. This framework followed three stages. These were defining, ideating, and compiling. I needed to define the problem. This presented itself in the form of information. The VA website supplies this information, but it’s presented in an overwhelming manner. I wanted to condense all that information into a simple form factor. After deciding on the topic for my project and the problem I needed to look for solutions. At this point I started to ideate possible solutions. Due to the length of the course I decided to look for a simple solution. This was why I gravitated toward the booklet. It would encompass an abbreviated amount of information from what was offered on the VA website. After deciding what form my project would take, I decided to start compiling information. I

focused on four key topics: education, employment, health services, and housing assistance. By utilizing these three stages I was able to establish a framework that has become the backbone for my project.

My approach is unique due to my methodology. It led to a three-stage approach which reduced my overall workload. The defining stage allowed me to explore issues that I was interested in. Ideating solutions showed me that there were many ways to solve this problem. From creating a website to developing a course teaching the services offered at the VA. Ultimately, I decided on the booklet approach. The compiling stage emphasized gathering as much information as possible. Collecting any relevant information that would further my final project was paramount.

### **Your Innovative Solution**

The accomplishment of my capstone project is that it presents information clearly and concisely. With its minimalistic approach, it's easy to read and brings with it portability. As a pdf file it can be disseminated on any portable device. It takes the information the VA site provides and condenses it into a "straight to the point" form factor. The simplicity of this approach is the reason why it's innovative.

### **Section 3: Results**

For my project I decided to utilize a survey to measure its impact. It was administered after my stakeholders read the booklet. The survey itself consisted of two questions. The first question rated the reader's outlook on the helpfulness of the booklet. The second question asked for improvements the reader would recommend. The benefits provided to them came in the form of information. The stakeholders noted that they learned various things about the VA that was

new to them. One individual found insight on the housing assistance program provided by the VA. They were interested in buying a home so that information was very insightful. Another individual was interested in going back to school. They gravitated toward the information in the education section. Overall, many of my readers found some benefit from my work. The capstone project left a positive impact on my stakeholders. Out of the 10 readers I surveyed 90% of them found my booklet useful. This quantitative survey allowed me to see that my project indeed had a positive impact on the stakeholders.

#### **Section 4: Conclusion**

When it comes to results I anticipated a warm reception. But it felt quite difficult to tell. The survey at the end of the booklet helped solidify my initial sentiment. Although the booklet offered a summarized version of what is offered on the VA site, my readers felt quite informed. The survey allowed me to see that 90% of my readers found the booklet useful. This survey also allowed readers to provide recommendations on improving the booklet. The consensus was that the booklet would have benefitted from more information. If there was anything I could have done differently it would be expanding the booklet. It would have included more information regarding the topics covered but also adding additional topics as well.

**Section 5: Appendix**

Attach a link to your actual project (pictures, training documents, etc.)

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vGvUmGtqJTEl6Hdr70QXFEI9bCO8\\_LiT/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vGvUmGtqJTEl6Hdr70QXFEI9bCO8_LiT/view?usp=sharing)



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