

[Military Spouse Career Acceleration from MOAA](#)

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In our career management consulting work, we often assist military spouses who are looking for ideas, inspiration and an action plan to help them enter or re-enter the paid workforce or to prepare for the next step in their careers.

As a predicate to this discussion, it's important to remember Sheryl Sandberg's thoughtful advice from her experience in government and later as the number two executive at Facebook: "A lot of getting ahead in the workplace has to do with being willing to raise your hand."

Whether you're contemplating paid work or a volunteer commitment, begin by asking yourself several questions:

- Do you see yourself as a solo contributor or do you work best as part of a team?
- How much flexibility do you need during the business day? If it's more than an occasional afternoon off, then you should consider a non-traditional type of work arrangement such as tele-commuting, job sharing, temp agencies or part-time work.
- Do you prefer the fast-paced world of a start-up, where employees are expected to wear many hats, or the more predictable routine of an established organization?
- Why would an employer value you? Is your greatest strength people skills and customer service, developing new concepts and content or executing an existing process?
- What type of work best aligns with your passions? If you think you may have an entrepreneurial interest, consider starting your own business. Social media and web site design templates make it easier than ever to promote your value proposition and find new customers.

Next, focus on these action steps to get started:

- Determine your priorities. Are you seeking to maximize income, maintain work/life balance, achieve community impact or maintain schedule flexibility? You can structure your job search to optimize for one of these factors.
- It is possible to find a job or a volunteer role without a resume. However, for most of us, the resume is the preferred way to introduce yourself to potential employers. It should summarize your skills, experience, passion and education, with a particular emphasis on the last ten to 12 years of your work and volunteer experience. The strongest resumes emphasize achievements rather than position descriptions. Excellent resume samples are available in *Keeping a Career on the Move: A Guide for Military Spouses* (www.moaa.org/publications) and the *Knock 'em Dead* job search guide, updated annually.
- LinkedIn is the essential tool for researching and executing a successful job search. Start by connecting with friends and colleagues working in a range of industries and study their profiles to understand the variety of work history and volunteer experience that can be conveyed through a well-developed LinkedIn profile. An excellent resource is *I'm On LinkedIn Now What* by Jason Alba. The basic (free) account is a good way to get started. Additionally, make sure you understand how to use job search, people search and company search to maximize your LinkedIn experience. Spouses of MOAA Premium and Life members can reach out to one of our career management consultants for assistance with LinkedIn profile and resume development by e-mailing transition@moaa.org.
- Finally, grow your professional network. Start with people you know and trust and ask to meet them over coffee to discuss where they work, what they like most and least about their job and ask for referrals to others in their professional network. Devote the time and commitment required to build mutually supporting relationships, not just an iPhone filled with casual contacts.

MOAA has additional tools for you. Start with <http://moaablogs.org/spouse/> and <http://www.moaa.org/spouse/> for tips to accelerate the process. Officers in transition should also investigate MOAA's one-day executive transition seminar offered on February 9th in Arlington, Virginia. Details at www.moaa.org/met.