

## Veterans: Transitioning to a Civilian Career

First of all, THANK YOU for your service.

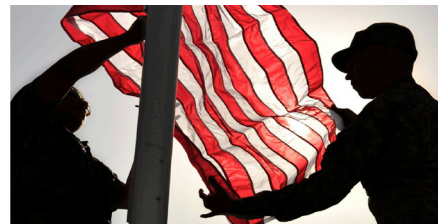
As you transition to your next career, particularly if you are targeting a job in the civilian sector, you will soon realize the importance of presenting a powerful personal brand. Your personal brand is your reputation, your legacy and your most valuable asset. In today's global economy, it is critical that you direct and manage your reputation in person and online and live your core values (walk the talk).

The value people assign to you is directly tied to how they feel about you – and perception is often created by your behavior, image and positioning. Start taking control of your reputation today.

### Direct your reputation

How others feel about you directly impacts their desire to: promote you, hire you, include you in critical projects, and help advance your career. Here are some tips to manage and direct your reputation:

1. **Be clear about your desired personal brand.** Your military career is how you expressed your values and commitment. You worked hard, focused on the mission and served dutifully. How do your values and skills translate to a civilian job? How do you want people to feel about you at work?
2. **Be consistent.** Pay attention to how consistent your image, tone, language, online profile and body language are in promoting you the way YOU want. Are you dressing the part? Are you using technical military jargon that civilians don't understand?
3. **Be intentional.** Don't leave it to chance that others will appreciate your value. Make it your job to focus your experience to align with your personal brand. What are the skills, traits and aspects of your character that make you successful, relatable and intriguing to a prospective employer?
4. **Pay attention to relationships.** Who you hang out with professionally sends a message about who you are and creates your reputation. Be mindful of your associations and friendships and the impression they send.
5. **Earn credibility.** Demonstrate consistent actions aligned with your values and earn the credibility for those values. Show prospective employers that they can trust when you say something and can hold you accountable for specific values. Highlight examples (from your service) where you built trust and earned respect.
6. **Network.** Form relationships with key contacts in person and online. Learn about these contacts and find common areas of interest. Networking is a two-way dialog; be sure to give as much as you ask for. Join groups in social networking forums to learn, share and build visibility with key contacts.
7. **Pay attention to image.** The way you dress says a lot about your self-respect and confidence. Always dress appropriately for the company, and always strive to be respectful in your image. When in doubt, look around. Get clues from the way people you would work with dress. Invest in quality wardrobe items, then build quantity.



### Social media basics

Social networking is a social conversation online, just like networking, and just like networking in person, it is about a dialog, not a monolog. Always strive for interaction, participation and sharing.

Social networking sites to pay attention to: **LinkedIn** (the premier business tool, provides connections to professionals, leaders, discussions and information in your current industry and beyond); **Facebook** (a more social platform for connecting with people, causes, businesses and brands that you want to engage with, buy from and share insights about your life with); **Twitter** (micro-blogging site, provides real-time news streams, information flow and global connections); and **YouTube** (the ideal platform for showing your expertise and personality through the use of video).

**Nothing you post online is ever private!** Watch your online presence. Be careful about the conversations you engage in online. Casual discussions, rants and arguments on Facebook or Twitter can prove hurtful to a job search. Your online reputation is key to building credibility in person.

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For more information on building your brand – online and in person – pick up a copy of:

*Reputation 360: Creating power through personal branding* (Book) and *Stand Apart from the Competition!* (DVD)

**Reputation360Book.com**

An accomplished speaker, author and advisor to CEOs, executives and businesses, Lida Citroën captivates audiences with her empowering message about intentionally managing your brand and reputation to attract opportunities. For more than 20 years, Lida has brought her unique, engaging and actionable techniques to clients, earning her international acclaim as an expert in reputation management and personal branding.