



# Hiring Veterans

Could Be Your Best Business Decision Ever

*THE UNDENIABLE BENEFITS OF TRAINING, TESTING, AND DISCIPLINE*

*By*

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## THE UNDENIABLE BENEFITS OF TRAINING, TESTING, AND DISCIPLINE

Twenty minutes after an uneventful departure from New York’s LaGuardia Airport and a climb to 32,000 feet en route to Dallas, Southwest Airlines flight 1380 experienced a catastrophic failure in the port engine. The malfunction had thrown a turbine fan blade into the side of the aircraft, shattering a window and causing explosive decompression in the cabin. One passenger had been mortally wounded.\*



Capt. Tammie Jo Shults

On the flight deck, unaware immediately of the scope of the damage, retired Air Force AWACS pilot and first officer Darren Ellisor instinctively disengaged the autopilot and took the controls. The engine loss had caused the aircraft to yaw and roll sharply to the left and lose altitude at an alarming rate. Recovery from the resultant unnatural flight attitude would put excessive structural stress on the normally robust Boeing 737. Survival would require an experienced, light touch on the controls.

As Ellisor righted the aircraft, the flight’s captain, retired U. S. Navy fighter pilot Tammie Jo Shults, with remarkable, Zen-like calm, informed air traffic control of the emergency and requested priority clearance into Philadelphia International, “[This is] Southwest 1380, we’re single engine. We have part of the aircraft missing. We’ve got injured passengers. We’ll need a long final.”

As a direct consequence of selfless teamwork, a calm demeanor forged under pressure, laser-like focus on the mission, a bias to action, and thousands of hours of best-in-the-world flight training, chaos turned to order and Captain Shults landed her crippled airliner just 22 minutes after the incident, saving the lives of 148 passengers and crew.

On that day, somewhere in the glass-on-steel canyons of Dallas, Southwest Airlines executives considered themselves blessed to have hired those two military veterans.

## HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT

The Navy motto of *Honor, Courage, Commitment* highlights the cardinal virtues instilled in every military veteran: *Honor* in keeping with the core values of the country itself; *Courage* to leave family and friends and deploy into harm’s way in the defense of liberty; *Commitment* to see the mission through, regardless of the cost. The military code of ethics, with its focus on missions *bigger than oneself*, translates well into any business.

At both the top and the bottom of the managerial hierarchy, military veterans are well acquainted with the qualities necessary to the formation of effective teams in organizations large and small. They

understand how to lead as well as how to take direction. They can manage, motivate, delegate, and take initiative as necessary. They are team players at their very core and take pride in achievement.

It may be possible to say that no organization on the planet is more diverse or more challenging than the branches of the United States military. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines come from all walks of life. They work long hours together, seven days a week with a sense of pride, respect, and loyalty. They honor their commitments to each other and to those outside the organization. They live to hear the words *mission accomplished* and desire to leave a positive legacy to the team even after they have moved on.



Hard deadlines and solid performance under pressure are the hallmark of veterans. They understand and respect the chain of command and value accountability. When you hire a veteran, you're getting a person of proven integrity with positive values that will diffuse throughout your entire organization.

## WHAT SMART MANAGERS ALREADY KNOW

The value of Captain Tammie Jo Shults's aviation training is estimated to be somewhere in excess of \$10 million. The direct cost to Southwest Airlines was zero. But, your organization may not require Top-Gun flight personnel. Military veterans can still prove to be one of your greatest assets.

The military produces some of the best-trained electricians, welders, administrators, and plumbers available. In fact, the military offers over 150 career paths, some of which may not be obvious but all of which come with *honor and commitment* built in.

Some of the main categories include:

- Administrative support
- Information technology
- Construction and engineering
- Transportation and logistics
- Electronics
- Mechanics
- Media
- Aviation and aviation support
- Intelligence and analytics
- Legal services and security
- Medical and emergency services



A naval program little-known to civilians is the DON COOL (Department of the Navy, Credentialing Opportunities On-Line) program. It is designed to give active military the certifications needed to transfer their skills to civilian jobs after they leave the service.

## SOME TOP COMPANIES ALREADY ONBOARD

From Goldman Sachs and McKinsey & Company to GE and Southwest Airlines, many top firms are systematically pursuing veterans because of their proven value.

The workforce at Southwest Airlines is comprised of over ten percent veterans. Southwest chairman Gary C. Kelly, appearing on CNBC's Squawk Box just after the Flight 1380 incident remarked, "I love Tammie Jo and all of our 6,500 warriors at Southwest Airlines." Southwest has, over its 45-year history, never posted an unprofitable year and is in the *Top Ten* of the *Fortune* magazine *World's Most Admired Companies*.

Southwest is not alone in its recognition of the exceptional value of hiring veterans. There are at present a number of Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans with MBAs who are moving toward the top of firms like Amazon, Google, Cisco, The Boston Consulting Group, Cerberus, Bridgewater, and many others.

Veterans are known for their ability to set long-term goals and work tirelessly to completion. They have demonstrated loyalty, leadership, and an affinity for hard work. You can be sure that the veteran you hire will not find your job to be the hardest one he or she has ever had.

## HONOR NEVER GOES OUT OF STYLE

The mission goes on long after the battlefield or the fire base. Whether your company manufactures aluminum pie tins, sells financial services, or builds prosthetic limbs to enable wounded warriors to walk again, your hiring of a veteran will get you a team player who will fight for your mission.

We live in an age of constantly changing technology – from blockchain to social media we are in a state of continual disruption. But, despite the innovation and rapid change there's one constant that we veterans can guarantee: ***Honor Never Goes Out of Style.***



## HOW YOU CAN GET YOUR SHARE OF THE BENEFITS IN HIRING VETERANS

While the following is not an exhaustive list of sites facilitating the recruitment of veterans, it will serve as a starting point for business owners, entrepreneurs, and managers who understand the value in hiring veterans. These sites include:

- Hire Heroes USA <https://www.hireheroesusa.org>
- Hire Veterans <https://hireveterans.com>
- Glassdoor <https://www.glassdoor.com>

- Bradley-Morris, Inc. <https://www.bradley-morris.com/>

With a little over 200,000 well-trained and motivated veterans entering the workforce each year, it's likely that you will encounter someone with the aptitude, training, and personality to fit in to your organization and expect immediate productivity.

There are two good articles here that deal with veterans hiring practices and even advantages like tax credits available for hiring eligible veterans

- How to Hire Veterans <https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/how-to-hire-veterans/>
- Hiring Veterans: The Best-Kept Secret in Business <https://inmilitary.com/hiring-veterans-best-kept-secret-business/>

*\* Jennifer Riordan was a wife and mother of two children. Her job as a banking executive had her traveling that fateful day. We at Coltala Holdings extend our heartfelt condolences to the Riordan family.*



The author is a Navy Intelligence Officer who served in Latin America and the Middle East as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. Upon his return in 2013, he became a Co-Captain of veteran recruiting for the IMD division of Goldman Sachs and worked to hire veterans transitioning from military to civilian life.

As a Naval Reservist, Crawford is actively engaged in serving his country along with the demands of performing at his various roles in business. Like many returning veterans, he has struggled to find balance in a life between two worlds but feels he has ultimately become a stronger leader and more authentic person for having served. "My time around the warriors, heroes, and patriots of the U.S. Navy, Airforce, Army and Marines has helped push me to be a better man each day," he reflects.



Edward J. Crawford

Mr. Crawford served in Uruzgan, Afghanistan as the Tribal and Political Engagement Officer for a Special Operations Task Force where he earned the Bronze Star Medal.