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"New Web site links veterans, employers"

By John McCarthy

In this age of the high-tech military, veterans and those about to leave the service have a high-tech way of searching for a job.

Since VetJobs.com was launched on Veterans Day 1999 - with the mission of bringing veterans and employers together through the Internet, more than 500 veterans have found jobs through the Web site, says company spokesman Stephen G. Tompkins.

"It's a great resource," says Richard Contreras, a Navy Reservist from Melbourne who left active duty in 1989. "I wish I had it when I separated from active duty."

VetJobs.com is the brainchild of Ted Daywalt, a retired Navy captain who ran a recruiting firm in Atlanta. When budget cuts forced the Defense Department to scale back the "transitioning" services it offered to the 180,000 military people who leave the service each year, Daywalt saw an opening. "We jumped in, because the vets had no where else to go," Daywalt said.

Eight of the company's 10 employees are themselves veterans.

Like most such sites, VetJobs.com has a database of resumes - 13,000 so far - as well as job postings from 400 companies. What's different is the way VetJobs.com makes an effort to show corporations how military experience can translate into civilian job skills, as well as teaching veterans how to navigate through a corporate world that is often very different from the military.

For instance, job listings are broken down by Military Occupational Specialty. So if an aircraft maintenance firm is looking for somebody with avionics experience, that job will be listed under the MOS for avionics.

VetJobs.com also works to educate employers on how military experience can translate into civilian job skills. And it has an "Employment Assistance" area designed specifically for military personnel. That area offers tips on such things as resume writing and interview techniques, things veterans might not have had to deal with during their military career.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, the nation's largest veterans organization, liked VetJobs.com so much it invested in the company.

VFW spokesman Steve Van Buskirk says the No. 1 request from members is for help in finding a job. When VetJobs.com approached the VFW for an endorsement, the organization decided to take a 10 percent stake in the company.

"We felt so strongly about what they are doing that we wanted to do more than an endorsement," Van Buskirk says.

Veterans don't pay anything to post their resumes or use the site's other services. Employers pay \$5,000 a year for unlimited access to the site. Tompkins says the site has been profitable since March.

Chip Hanson, who left the Marine Corps in 1969, thinks the site will be a great deal for his son Mathew, who just got out of the Air Force. "I think that's an outstanding deal. . . . I'm going to have (him) check it out."



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