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Ask SCORE

FROM BOOTS TO BUSINESS *Veterans Excel As Entrepreneurs*

In the course of serving our nation, veterans learn valuable skills and self-discipline that they can carry through to their post-military careers. One professional path that some veterans take is entrepreneurship. According to the most recent U.S. Census data in 2012, the number of veteran-owned businesses was 2,521,682 (nine percent of all companies in the U.S.). Those businesses employed over five million people.

What Traits Do Veterans Have That Make Them Successful Business Owners?

Some of the characteristics that many veterans and successful entrepreneurs have in common include:

- Leadership skills
- Proficiency in assessing risks
- The drive to rise to the challenge
- Adept at strategic thinking
- Ability to adapt to the situation at hand

Veterans' military training and experiences in their tour of duty lay a foundation of responsibility and accountability. That can be a tremendous advantage when navigating the challenging of entrepreneurship.

Of course, starting and growing a business also requires additional learning. Fortunately, some excellent resources exist to help veterans as they embrace their dreams of business ownership.

Business Startup Resources for Veterans

• Boots 2 Business Reboot

This entrepreneurship-training program through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) helps veterans and their spouses learn what is involved in starting a business. Classes are held throughout the U.S. and are available online, as well. Learn more about this program at <https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/ovbd/resources/160511>.

• Office of Veterans Business Development

The OVBD facilitates the use of all SBA programs by veterans, active military personnel, and their spouses and children. Services and resources include funding for veteran-owned small businesses, entrepreneurship training programs and veteran contracting. Learn more about these services and resources at <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/grow/veteran-owned-businesses-programs#section-header-0>.

• Veteran Entrepreneur Portal

VEP provides veterans with direct online access to resources that can help guide them through the steps of starting and running a business. Learn more about these resources at <https://www.va.gov/OSDBU/entrepreneur/>.

• Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship

V-WISE helps women veterans and female military partners learn the skills necessary to develop their ideas and start their businesses. The training program involves an online course, a three-day training event, and ongoing mentoring and training. Learn more about this program at <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/veteran-and-family-resources/starting-growing-a-business/v-wise/>.

• Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities

The EBV program helps post-9/11 veterans with service-related disabilities develop their business knowledge and entrepreneurial skills. Since it was founded at Syracuse University in 2007, it has expanded to other universities throughout America, too. Learn more about this program at <https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/veteran-and-family-resources/starting-growing-a-business/ebv/>.

• Resources for Veteran Entrepreneurs from SCORE

SCORE website has numerous links to additional resources useful to Veterans in starting a business at <https://www.score.org/resources-veteran-entrepreneurs>.

In addition to these resources, veterans can also gain valuable guidance and insight by meeting with a SCORE mentor. SCORE volunteers understand the many challenges facing small business owners, and they have experience in all aspects of starting and growing a company. Mentoring provided by SCORE is free and available through in-person sessions, email, phone calls, and Skype and Google Hangout video meetings.

Since 1964, SCORE "Mentors to America's Small Business" has helped more than 10 million aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners through mentoring and business workshops. More than 11,000 volunteer business mentors in over 320 chapters serve their communities through entrepreneur education dedicated to the formation, growth and success of small businesses. For more information about starting or operating a small business, contact SCORE TriCounty. You can call 610.327.2673, email tricity@scorevolunteer.org or visit the website at www.tricity.score.org.

(More Ask SCORE on page 55).