

Best Practices in Manufacturing for Military Veteran Hiring

Recruiting Veterans at National Gypsum

National 
Gypsum®

› Company Overview

National Gypsum Company, headquartered in Charlotte, NC, is the exclusive service provider of reliable, high-performance building products manufactured by its affiliate companies and marketed under the Gold Bond®, ProForm®, and PermaBASE® brands. National Gypsum Company and affiliate companies are essential businesses and play a vital role in the North American economy, supporting healthcare infrastructure, homebuilding, commercial construction, and remodeling in all 50 states and Canada. It is part of their mission to provide quality building products, as well as jobs and career growth.

› Program Summary

The National Gypsum name – through its Gold Bond®, ProForm® and PermaBASE® product lines – has been synonymous with high-quality, innovative products since 1925. National Gypsum has a long-standing tradition of working with and supporting the military that started during World War II when several production facilities were used to support war efforts. Today, several members of the National Gypsum Company senior leadership team are military veterans and nearly 5% of the workforce are veterans, highlighting the importance of military service within the company and its affiliates. While no structured program exists, National Gypsum Company and its affiliates have hired veterans in three roles: entry-level production positions, electrical/maintenance, and into leadership roles, engaging with junior military officers.

For production level positions, National Gypsum Company has partnered with the Manufacturing Institute to recruit from the Heroes MAKE America training program. While this partnership is new for National Gypsum Company, two individuals have recently joined the team and National Gypsum Company hopes to link to more Heroes MAKE America graduates. National Gypsum affiliates have also had success in hiring veterans for electrical/maintenance positions. National Gypsum affiliates have participated in military hiring events and career conferences to find individuals to fill these positions. Military officers are often hired and placed into the manufacturing management development program (MMDP). This training program tailors training and leadership development to the veteran's personal goals and aspirations within the organization.

› Program Impact

Hiring veterans has allowed National Gypsum Company and its affiliates to recruit individuals who share the same work ethic and attitudes as their employers – loyalty and integrity are traits employers look for and veterans offer these characteristics. Hiring is driven by business needs/current openings and company leadership has found that various occupations within the military branch match well with the talent needs of the business. Military veterans typically have good retention rates and most become superstars within the business.

Title of Project



**Recruiting Veterans with
National Gypsum**

Tags



Recruitment, Hiring, Retention,
Training

Point of Contact



John Corsi
Vice President, Manufacturing,
Operations and Engineering



“We like to hire military veterans because their values align with those of National Gypsum – teamwork, work ethic, integrity and a positive attitude,” said John Corsi, vice president, manufacturing, operations and engineering.”

– **John Corsi**, Vice President, Manufacturing, Operations and Engineering

› Lessons Learned

- ✓ Challenge veterans when they join your team. Give them a project that they can perform and achieve – give them an opportunity to accomplish. Veterans are accustomed to being challenged and achieving goals. Give them the opportunity to accomplish set goals and achieve set standards and reward them accordingly.
- ✓ Listen to your new veteran hires and allow them to tell you what they have to offer and what they want from their new position. Find ways to match the veteran’s military experiences to the needs of the employer.
- ✓ Customize training and career pathway development to allow veterans to develop in ways that align with their military training and status. Offer training and a clear definition of advancement pathways.

› Veteran Profiles



David Gomez, Plant Engineer, Gold Bond Building Products, LLC, Richmond, CA

Branch of military: United States Marine Corps

Positions held in the military: Ground Radio Electronics Technician with Electronics Maintenance Company, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, and 1st Marine Division

What makes National Gypsum Company and its affiliate, Gold Bond Building Products, a good place for veterans to work?

National Gypsum Company and its manufacturing affiliates can offer veterans cross-functional knowledge and experience, which allows room to grow in multiple different directions as a career. Whether you start as an operator, learn each position and move up to a foreman, production manager, and even plant manager, or you go into quality control and engineering at the plant or at corporate headquarters, the possibilities are endless. There are always opportunities to excel and show the qualities within you that help both yourself and the company grow.

What challenge facing veterans today most concerns you?

I am most concerned about how veterans can transfer their skills into jobs/careers outside the military. Many people believe that the job they performed in the military can’t be used as a civilians, but whether they are a

truck driver, a sanitation specialist, or a radio electronics technician, job-related skills can always be modified and added to new skills outside the military. Not only that, but the self-perseverance and determination to accomplish something to the best of your ability with the highest quality possible while also looking out for the safety of those around you unconsciously puts veterans one step forward to succeeding in any career, especially here at Gold Bond Building Products, LLC.

Best advice and from whom?

Do something every day even if its small. Make a little change each day - one small step forward today and one small step forward tomorrow - and your whole world will change for the better before you even know it. We can make ourselves better, we can make our lives better, we can make the plant better one small step at a time. I learned this from my former plant manager, Kevin Bushman, who is now at our Baltimore plant.



Will Wedley, Department Manager, Gold Bond Building Products, LLC, Mount Holly, NC

Branch of military: US Army

Positions held in the military: Platoon Leader, Ammo Officer, Executive Officer, Assistant Operations Officer, Battalion Fire Support Officer, Operations Officer, Company Commander

What makes National Gypsum Company and its affiliate, Gold Bond Building Products a good place for veterans?

National Gypsum and Gold Bond provide you the opportunity to plan, develop, and implement various projects along with

allowing you to utilize your leadership skills to accomplish extremely needed and important tasks.

What challenge facing veterans today most concerns you?

I am most concerned with Veterans ability to learn how to adapt their leadership styles as they move from the military to the civilian world. Certain ways of enforcing rules and standards are not as effective in the civilian world like they are in the military.

Best advice and from whom?

I learned this from (now) Colonel Steven Carpenter:

“You have to try hard in all aspects of your life. You can be a great leader and be a terrible spouse or parent. Learn to raise your skill level of all things that you are involved in or have influence over.”



Meg Zehringer, Corporate Environmental Engineer, NG Corporate, LLC, Charlotte, NC

Branch of military: Coast Guard

Positions held in the military: Regimental Commander (Coast Guard Academy), Navigation/Training Officer (USCGC WAESCHE), Coast Guard Marine Inspector

What makes National Gypsum a good place for veterans?

Manufacturing in general provides veterans with a workplace that is very similar to the one that we experience while in the service, so it already an ideal place for veterans to land after

they transition. What I like about National Gypsum in particular, and what ultimately brought me to National Gypsum, was the company's recognition of what a military background can bring to the company as a whole beyond the skills listed on a veteran's resume. When you have senior leaders in the company that understand the unique benefits that a veteran brings to the workforce and work to help position veterans within the company in ways that will help foster their growth, it makes a huge difference.

What challenge facing veterans today most concerns you?

Getting out of the military is incredibly hard and not something that they prepare you adequately for, so a lot of veterans have a lot of trouble finding the support that they need to make a successful transition. I consider myself lucky to have landed so softly with a great company after my transition, but that's not always the case, and a lot of great candidates are having a hard time getting their footing in civilian careers. It's for this reason that I volunteered to help the Manufacturing Institute and the National Associations of Manufacturers Hiring Heroes program facilitate monthly sessions with female veterans/transitioning military members looking into careers in manufacturing. I try to never miss a session because I know how stressful the process is and want to make sure they get the support they need to be successful.

Best advice and from whom?

The best advice I've gotten was from my mom, and it's that "you are not alone." It seems simple, but it can feel quite lonely when you are transitioning out of the military, and there isn't a lot of guidance if you don't choose to seek it out. It is rare to have a successful transition on your own, so I did something extremely out of character for me and actually took my mom's advice.