

# Dear Coach

What are your career aspirations? How are you going to reach those goals? This column will guide you to a new career stage. //

## T+D WANTS YOUR STORY!

T+D is looking for workplace learning and performance professionals to contribute to this column. Are you anticipating a move into e-learning? Are you a recent graduate who wants to become a designer, presenter, or trainer? Are you a corporate trainer transitioning into a career as a consultant or entrepreneur?

We want to hear about your aspirations and help you with the challenges you face in your pursuit of those goals. Send your career path story to [mailbox@astd.org](mailto:mailbox@astd.org).

*Dear Coach,*

After more than 20 years in the military, I am a civilian again and facing the job market with anticipation, but also some uncertainty.

I have a master's degree in education and more than 20 years of management and leadership experience. During my time in the military, I spent many hours doing jobsite and safety training. I really enjoyed that work, and with my degree in education, I would like to find work in workplace training and development at the corporate level.

I'm able to perform under pressure and follow rules and procedures. I have strong listening skills and a strong understanding of how to increase efficiency and human performance. My extensive domestic and foreign travel gives me a keen understanding of different cultures and customs, and the ability to speak several languages, including Spanish, French, and German.

Before I left the Army, I had my résumé updated. It does not use any military jargon and highlights competencies—management and supervisory experience, project management skills, strategic planning, teamwork, and communication—experiences, and skills that would be relevant in the corporate world. As a leader, I also have done hundreds of performance appraisals.

I feel like I have some great management and leadership experience that would benefit any employer. My military training has given me excellent critical thinking skills and the ability to troubleshoot in many different situations.

My master's degree in education has also given me above-average presentation skills and the ability to understand the ins and outs of experiential learning, adult learning styles, and action learning. Additionally, I am confident that the technology I used in the military will enhance my creativity skills

when designing and delivering training. I can't wait to start my new career, but before I do, I need some help.

What industries are best suited for my talents and background? Some of my colleagues have mentioned that civilian employers tell them that their skills don't translate in the corporate world. How do I convince employers that I have the experience to work anywhere? Is there anything I can put in my résumé to convince employers that I have the qualities and skills they are looking for? Lastly, how do I go about getting a job in training and development that is not entry level? (I am willing to relocate.) Should I think about getting certified as a first step?

I haven't had a lot of time to network either, so where should I be looking? Any help you can give would be appreciated.

Tank Philips  
Denver, Colorado

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Dear Tank

Coming out of the finest training organization in the country—the U.S. Armed Forces—gives you experience you've identified as transferable and valuable to potential employers. There is *nothing* entry level about you or your abilities. Don't go there, don't look there, and don't sell yourself short. While your military income may not have equated to civilian levels, your skills probably exceed them. Now is the time to earn what you deserve!

If you have had or still have an active security clearance, you may want to look at the defense or security industries. In our post-9/11 world, this market segment has continued to expand and will do so, regardless of the presidential election outcome. Culturally, this may be an easier transition for you than going into the training industry in general. As a starting point, organizations that are government contractors may be a good fit. With experience in jobsite and safety training, plus your language abilities, you might also research manufacturing companies that may have multinational sites.

Highlight your language capabilities in the summary portion of your résumé. Particularly on the west coast, Spanish is a great calling card to get in the door. Use job posting sites like ASTD, SHRM, and 6FigureJobs.com to see what employers are looking for. Use this research to make your decision on whether or not to begin pursuing supplemental certification as CPLP or SHRM PHR/SPHR.

As you'll be tailoring your résumé for each position, this will help you assess what language to use and which accomplishments will give you the most leverage. Quantify results, demonstrate return-on-investment, and talk in business language within the body of your résumé. If someone other than you has updated your résumé, beware—are the competencies illustrated with your quantifiable accomplishment statements? Are you comfortable with every accomplishment? Have you got "accomplishment stories" to tell to expand upon each competency?

You are an expert at following rules and procedures. In a world where innovation, creativity, strategic planning, and critical thinking are hot commodities, you do not want to be perceived as someone who can only take orders, but as someone who is an active participant in the decision-making process as a strategic, critical thinker.

You didn't say if you were an officer; if you are, you may want to use the Military Officers Association of America, [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org) as a networking source. There are chapters throughout the United States. Your classmates and professors from your graduate program are additional potential networking sources. The job search is as much about what you know about yourself—your competencies and skills, the organizations or industries you are talking to—as who you know. "Networking versus not-working" is a great motto to follow. There is always time to network, no matter where you are or what you are doing. Have your 30-second "commercial" or elevator speech ready; that person next to you in line at the market might just be your future colleague!

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