Recruiting from the Armed Forces community - BT case study

The challenge
In 2010, BT required a high volume of recruits for their Openreach division, which was installing superfast fibre broadband across the whole of the UK. Their current channels of recruitment would not have generated the volumes of people necessary.

What they did
BT worked closely with the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to recruit Armed Forces leavers and veterans in large volumes.

They also developed Transition Force, an employability mentoring programme that helps those leaving the service settle into civilian employment. Over 250 “Buddy” mentors, including veterans, serving reservists and family members, are matched online to Armed Forces mentees.

BT uses the programme to promote its support for the Armed Forces and to share activity via technology, events, and one-to-one volunteering relationships. BT also works with the military to align the skills and training for communications engineers, so qualifications can be recognised on both sides.

Key outcomes
Since 2010, Openreach has recruited over 2,500 veterans, who now make up approx. 10 per cent of its engineering workforce.

They measured performance of veteran employees and found that they:
• take 40 per cent less time off during periods of sickness absence.
• perform better on assessment days (68 per cent recruited compared to 58 per cent of civilians)
• have a higher likelihood of promotion.
• stay longer in the business.
• are less likely to leave due to performance or discipline reasons.

BT has also created the UK’s largest armed forces employee network, currently with over 1000 members and a strong regional footprint.

Why it worked
BT’s Armed Forces Programme is directly aligned to their business purpose, goals and strategy, and they have a strong business case that benefits the business, the Ministry of Defence and the individuals they support.

BT recognise Armed Forces personnel for their skills, qualifications and experiences which are directly transferable to civilian employment. They see the recruitment of ex-service personnel as a business-as-usual activity.

If you have any questions about this case study contact:
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BT’s relationship with the Armed Forces
BT has a long history with the Armed Forces, going back 160 years. They were one of the first organisations to sign the Armed Forces Covenant in 2013, and received the Gold Defence Employer Recognition Scheme award in 2014, which was renewed for a further three years in 2017.

Their vision is to use technology to mobilise the business community to provide a personalised employability support network for ex-service men and women on a nationwide scale.