



Veterans

For All Employees

For Memorial Day, we are giving you a valuable tool to share with all your employees as you continue their education in cultural competence.

We are supplying a historic Timeline of military battles, legislation and events impacting veterans and their achievements in the United States; Facts & Figures demonstrating veteran demographics; and our cultural-competence series [“Things NOT to Say.”](#) focusing on coworkers who are veterans. This information should be distributed to your entire workforce and also should be used by your veterans employee resource group both internally and externally as a year-round educational tool. It also can be particularly valuable to your disability, women’s and LGBT employee resource groups.

1 HISTORIC TIMELINE

We recommend you start your employees' cultural-competence lesson on veterans by using this Timeline, which documents significant military operations, legislation and other historic events impacting veterans in the United States.

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Discussion Questions for Employees

» **Why—or why not—have veterans been valued in this country?**

Ask employees what contributions veterans have made to their country and why after certain military operations there was more or less support for them. How does treatment and reputation of veterans impact their role in the workplace?

» **Why have some barriers, such as women in combat and Don't Ask, Don't Tell, been so hard to end?**

How do the military, political and social climates in this country impact issues of civil rights in the armed services? How does this affect veterans and their spouses in the private sector?



2 FACTS & FIGURES

After discussion of the Timeline, the next step is to review available data and understand demographics of veterans (important for diversity recruiters) as well as benefits they bring the workplace, such as education, leadership training and ability to act in crisis.

The data we have chosen to present here represents information of relevance to corporate America, such as racial/ethnic, gender, age, education and business ownership (vital for supplier diversity). We also feature the [Top 10 Companies for Veterans](#) and the best practices they employ, such as an employee resource group for veterans, having recruitment efforts aimed at veterans, hiring practices aimed at spouses of veterans, and increased philanthropic endeavors and supplier diversity for veterans.

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Discussion Questions for Employees

» Does your company have an employee resource group for veterans?

If not, how would this group benefit your company in increased hiring, engagement and promotion rates? If so, does the group communicate regularly with other employee resource groups, such as groups for people with disabilities? Is the group tasked with improving recruitment, retention and leadership development, as well as community outreach?

Increasingly, veterans' employee-resource groups are being used to also help with on-boarding and ensure that veterans acclimate to corporate cultures. It's also vital to have their managers and other employees understand veterans to ensure a successful transition to corporate life.

» Does your company have a supplier-diversity program aimed at veterans and/or veterans with disabilities?

Veteran-owned businesses are a valuable part of your procurement chain and can bring important skills and criteria to your organization. Similarly, vendors owned by people with disabilities and especially veterans with disabilities are increasingly included (and targeted) as vital pieces of the procurement budget.

» Does your company publicly support veterans?

Strong support from CEOs, such as [Johnson & Johnson's Alex Gorsky](#) and [Prudential Financial's John Strangfeld](#), cements a company's reputation as a supporter for veterans. This helps with recruitment, engagement, leadership development and procurement.



3 THINGS NOT TO SAY TO VETERANS

Our popular “Things NOT to Say” series includes these interviews with three veterans about offensive phrases they’ve heard in the workplace and how best to respond to them to further cultural-competence education.

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Discussion Questions for Employees

» **What other phrases have you heard addressed to veterans and spouses of veterans?**

Discuss how these phrases and stereotypes impact office morale and productivity. Many people are the children of veterans and also may be offended by these statements.

» **Should you keep politics – or controversial subjects – out of the office?**

Whether the subject is military service or race, using employee resource groups and facilitated discussions to openly address issues is the best course of action.

» **How can our veterans’ group specifically help with this?**

Through efforts like these to educate the employee population about what service means, how it impacts individuals and their families, and how to maximize the value of veterans in the workplace.

» **What role do you think the company should play when offensive comments occur?**

Have the employees talk about under what circumstances they would report offensive comments and what they believe the company should do. See <http://www.DiversityInc.com/atwg-offensive-language>.

» **After today’s lesson, what would you do if you overheard a colleague make one of these comments?**

Continue the discussion with each employee having a plan of action on how to address offensive language.



**NEXT
MONTH**

Hispanic Heritage for all employees and DiversityInc Top 50 Best Practices for D&I staff, HR staff.