

Army Civilian Brand Focus Groups Discussion Guide – Revision 2

Setup & disclosures

- Thank and welcome; moderator introduction
- Reading of OMB Control Number, expiration date, and Agency Disclosure Notice
- Purpose of group discussion; role of respondents
- Observers may be present in viewing room; microphone/audio recording to ensure the discussion fully and accurately captures, all questions asked, any issues noted for future refinements of discussion items.
- Assurance of confidentiality; no personal information will be used or shared; respondents are identified with first name only
- Ground rules: participate, speak one at a time, no wrong answers
- Oral Consent form and Agency Disclosure Notice distribution and consent

Topic I: Introductions & warm-up**5 minutes**

Respondent introduction:

- Name (first name only)
- Principal activity:
 - Student – full/part time, school attend, major,
 - Work – full/part time, position held, years in position

Topic II: Mind Map – employment goals/aspirations**10 minutes**

Adapted for student vs. professional respondents

- Everything that comes to mind about employment goals, expectations, aspirations in terms of tangible and intangible benefits and personal satisfaction/development
 - Probe any generalizations, organize as needed – tangibles/intangibles
 - Probe if not mentioned: compensation (pay and benefits), job security, geographic flexibility, possibility & speed of career advancement, opportunities for advancement and personal growth, opportunities for leadership positions, ability/need to travel, exposure to range of exciting challenges, flexibility to change positions/careers, retirement plan
 - Take hand count or 3 – 4 most important

Topic III: Current occupation & employer**15 minutes**

Specifically for professional groups

- How got current position; was it position of choice, employer of choice
- Degree to which current employer delivers/exceeds on expectations and benefits previously mentioned, focusing on top 3 – 4
- Likes and dislikes regarding current employer
- Likelihood of staying with current employer; reasons
- How would search for another job if was necessary
- Probes: networking (where and how), information sources, preparation; importance of specific employer

Topic IV: Awareness & perceptions of different employer types **10 minutes**
Discussion of different employer types come to mind: private companies, government agencies, own business.

- Expectations of which employer types will deliver best against personal goals. Reasons why.
- Which goals and expectations will each deliver best against? Differences across employer types.

Topic V: Exploration of current perceptions of US military/Army as an American Institution **5 minutes**

- Perceptions of US military and Army in particular; on a personal level, what do these institutions represent
- What thoughts come to mind about the US military/Army?
- What feelings do these institutions inspire? Probe: admiration, respect, aspiration, gratitude.
- Differences between perceptions/thoughts/feelings about US military vs. the Army in particular?

Topic VI: Awareness & knowledge of civilian employment in military/Army **20 minutes**

Awareness of civilian employment opportunities in the military/Army

- Immediate reactions to civilian Army employment
 - Probe: positive and negative aspects
 - Perceptions of Army as employer
- Knowledge of the types of jobs/occupations available
- Knowledge of job commitment requirements as a civilian vs. enlisted officer/active duty service member
- Comparison/expectations of Army civilian vs. private jobs/careers across goals/benefits
 - Probe list generated earlier: compensation (pay and benefits), job security, geographic flexibility, possibility & speed of career advancement, opportunities for advancement and personal growth, opportunities for leadership positions, ability/need to travel, exposure to range of exciting challenges, flexibility to change positions/careers, retirement plan
- Most important reasons to seek civilian employment in the Army; which would Army civilian employment deliver better than private employer/other govt. agency
 - Probe: compensation (pay and benefits), retirement, ability/need to travel, job security, geographic flexibility, possibility and speed of career advancement, exposure to range of exciting challenges, flexibility to change positions/careers
 - Probe separately: importance/relevance of sense of purpose, service to country/community, contributing to national defense
- Perceived negative aspects of Civilian Army Employment
 - Probe: need to sign contract, duration of contract, nature of employment contract, geographic transfers against will, transfers to dangerous locations

Topic VII: Reactions to facts about civilian Army employment **10 minutes**

Respondents will be presented with a list of facts about Army civilian employment followed by discussion on reactions to these facts.

- Probes: compensation relative to private sector, ability to refuse transfers to dangerous locations, exposure to exciting challenges, speed of career advancement

Topic VIII: Army civilian positioning messages & concepts **15 minutes**

Expose a few concepts and discuss

- What is the main message; what trying to communicate?
- Who is this message intended for? Who are they trying to reach? Are they talking to you (relevancy)?
- Does this idea succeed in making you more aware of civilian employment with the Army? In what ways; what does it tell you about Army civilian employment? What does it tell you about the benefits of Army civilian employment; does it say enough about this?
- What ideas do you connect with most? What ideas/messages are most relevant to your personal situation?
- Anything not relevant to you? Something in particular that you don't like about this concept?
- Anything confusing, difficult to understand, or difficult to believe? Why?
- Rank order the concepts in terms of their appeal to you

Wrap up