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## FROM BATTLEFIELDS TO LEADING SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

The military leaders have been increasingly drawn to the world of business, seeking to leverage their skills and experience in a new and different setting. This study examines the most valued traits and trend in hiring as per the age and qualification of retiring military officers by the corporates to establish the fact whether military leaders can be good corporate CEOs or not. The research paper explores through surveys and interviews- the key factors that influence their success in this role. The findings suggest that military leaders can be effective corporate CEOs, and highlight the importance of strong strategic thinking, leadership skills, and cultural sensitivity. It concludes by offering recommendations for military leaders who are considering a transition - though quite challenging- to the corporate world.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The military and the corporate world are two very different environments, each with its own unique set of challenges, expectations, and cultures. However, military leaders have been increasingly drawn to the world of business, seeking to leverage their skills and experience in a new and different setting. Given the unique qualities that military leaders bring to the table, it is not surprising that many are asking whether they can be successful as corporate CEOs. While the military and corporate sectors have different objectives, methods, and ways of operation, military leaders possess qualities and skills that can be valuable to corporate CEOs. (Efrain et al, 2014)

## 2.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Materials

The literature existing on the internet, new stories, News, databases of sites like Google Scholar, Proquest, Researchgate, published views and interviews of the veterans, inputs from resettlement department, and certain government sites were studied for the research.

### 2.2 Methods

To bring out the typical features imbibed in the military leaders owing to their ripening, six indicative valued traits were studied and an analysis was done on their re-employment opportunities in civil with respect to leaving the army in four stipulated brackets of lengths of service and age.

### 3.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objective of this research paper is to find out the qualities in the military leaders which are preferred by the corporate world, their right age of hiring and preferential qualifications which make them good corporate CEOs

## 4.0 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND CORPORATE SECTORS

The military and corporate sectors are two vastly different environments with distinct objectives, methods, and ways of operation. Understanding these differences (alam et al, 2021) is crucial for military leaders who are looking to transition into the corporate world.

**a). Objectives and Mission:** The primary objective of the military sector is to defend the nation and protect its interests. The mission of the military is clear-cut, and all actions are taken in service to that mission. In contrast, the objectives of the corporate world are much broader and can vary greatly depending on the company. Some corporations are focused on maximizing profits, while others may prioritize sustainability, social responsibility, or other goals. In the corporate world, mission and objectives are often more complex and less clear-cut than in the military.

**b). Hierarchy and Chain of Command:** The military operates with a clear hierarchy and chain of command, with each person having a defined role and responsibility. This structure allows for clear lines of communication, rapid decision-making, and efficient execution. In the corporate world, the hierarchy and chain of command are less formal, with a flatter organizational structure. The corporate world values collaboration and teamwork, and decisions are often made through a process of negotiation and consensus-building.

**c). Decision-Making:** The military is characterized by a top-down decision-making style, with decisions often made by senior leaders and communicated down the chain of command. In the military, leaders are expected to make decisions based on limited information and under conditions of extreme pressure. In the corporate world, decision-making is more collaborative, with input from multiple levels of the organization and more emphasis on data and analysis. Corporate leaders are expected to make well-informed decisions based on a more complete picture of the situation.

**d). Communication and Feedback:** In the military, communication is often direct and to the point, with a focus on clear and concise messaging. Feedback is typically provided directly from superiors, and is often immediate and actionable. In the corporate world, communication is more nuanced, with a focus on building relationships and maintaining diplomacy. Feedback is often more indirect and may involve multiple layers of communication.

**e). Risk-Taking and Innovation:** The military operates in a high-stakes environment where the consequences of failure can be severe. As a result, risk-taking is generally discouraged and leaders are expected to play it safe. In the corporate world, risk-taking is often seen as a necessary part of innovation and growth. Corporations are expected to be nimble and adapt to changing market conditions, and leaders who are not willing to take risks are often seen as insufficiently visionary.

Therefore, the military and corporate sectors have very different objectives, methods, and ways of operation. Military leaders who are looking to transition into the corporate world must be prepared to adapt their approach and develop an understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities of the corporate environment. By recognizing the differences between the two sectors, military leaders can position themselves for success in the corporate world.

## 5.0 BENEFITS OF MILITARY LEADERS AS CORPORATE CEOs

Military leaders are often highly disciplined, strategic thinkers who are skilled in decision-making, risk management, and leading teams under challenging circumstances. These skills can be highly relevant to the role of CEO, especially in organizations that operate in fast-paced, high-stakes environments. Ultimately, whether a military

leader will be successful as a corporate CEO will depend on a number of individual factors, including their personal strengths and weaknesses, their adaptability, and their ability to learn and grow in the new role. It's also worth noting that military leaders are not the only individuals with the skills and experience required to be effective CEOs, and that there are many successful corporate leaders who do not come from a military background. (Reed, 2019)

Military leaders are often known for their discipline, ability to manage risk, and experience in leading teams in challenging environments. These skills can be valuable in the corporate world, where effective leadership is critical for the success of any organization. In addition to the skills and methods of operation outlined in the previous section, there are several key benefits of having military leaders as corporate CEOs. These benefits include a focus on results, a commitment to ethics and values, and a focus on teamwork and collaboration.

**a). Focus on Results:** Military leaders are trained to focus on results and to measure their success based on the achievement of specific objectives. This focus on results can be valuable in the corporate world, where leaders must be able to articulate their vision and to drive their organizations towards the achievement of specific goals. Military leaders are also trained to be accountable for their decisions and to accept responsibility for their actions. This level of accountability can be valuable in the corporate world, where leaders must be able to demonstrate their commitment to results and to take responsibility for their decisions.

**b). Commitment to Ethics and Values:** Military leaders are trained to uphold a strict code of ethics and to act with integrity in all circumstances. This commitment to ethics and values can be valuable in the corporate world, where leaders must be able to build trust with their employees, customers, and other stakeholders.

**c). Focus on Teamwork and Collaboration:** In the military, success is often dependent on teamwork and collaboration. Military leaders are trained to work effectively with their subordinates and to leverage the strengths of their teams to achieve their objectives. This focus on teamwork and collaboration can be valuable in the corporate world, where leaders must be able to build strong, high-performing teams that are able to work together effectively.

**d). Strong Organizational Culture:** Military leaders are trained to build and maintain strong organizational cultures that are focused on results, teamwork, and ethics. This experience can be valuable in the corporate world, where leaders must be able to create a positive work environment that inspires and motivates their employees. Therefore, military leaders bring a unique set of benefits to the table that can be valuable in the corporate world. By leveraging these benefits, military leaders can position themselves for success as corporate CEOs and can make a positive impact on the organizations they lead.

6.0 FINDINGS

Three variables were studied in detail and a survey based on questionnaire and personal interviews was carried out . First thing asked were the most valued traits which a corporate world expects out of a military officer and the second was the right age of their hiring. How much does qualification of an officer effect his hiring was also researched. The data collected has been discussed as below.

Variable 1: Most Valued Traits

There are various traits which get developed in the military officers just because of their learnings and experiences in service. Though they depend upon individual's aptitude, it is up to the corporate to find out the most suited trait for their kind of business. A questionnaire was prepared and views were taken from the corporate world. As per the analysis carried out in the field, those personal traits which are most sought after, respected and valued by the corporate in military officers are shown in following figure 4. These six traits are not the only traits but most sought after as a military officer is synonymous to integrity loyalty and dedication. These traits are not absent in civilians but military officers are always more trusted due to their reputation being in service and commitment to duty in line with service of the nation.

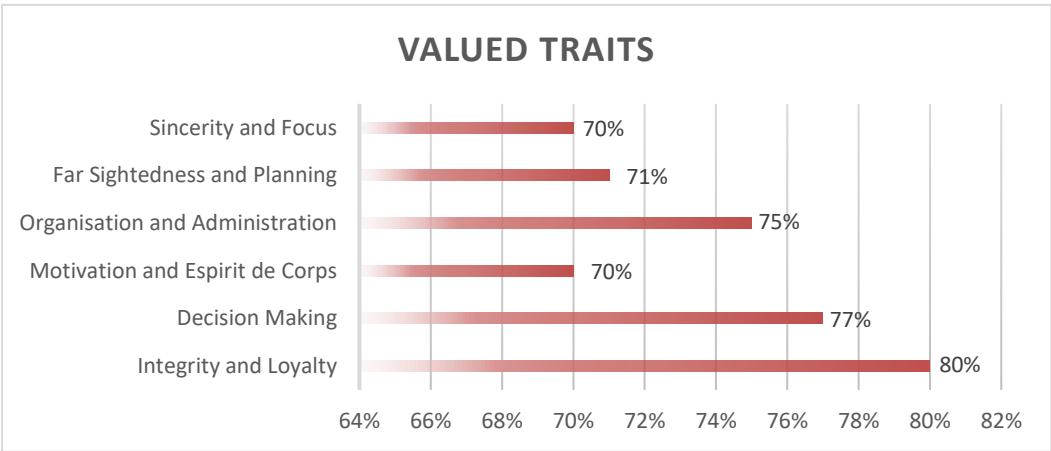


Figure 1. Valued

Variable 2: Right age of hiring

A survey was conducted along with personal interviews of the corporate recruiters, retiring military officers and out of the prolonged experience of the author in the field, it has been observed that military veterans are not always welcome. In fact there is a specific age with respect to rank and experience, which is given more weightage. The short service officers at a young age and service up to seven years are preferred the most due to their energy. The middle aged and middle rank officers up to the age of 45 years are also preferred due to their experience. The takers reduce after the age of 45 years, the liking again increases when the organisations are looking for very senior officers to become heads of the organisations. (Figure 2.)

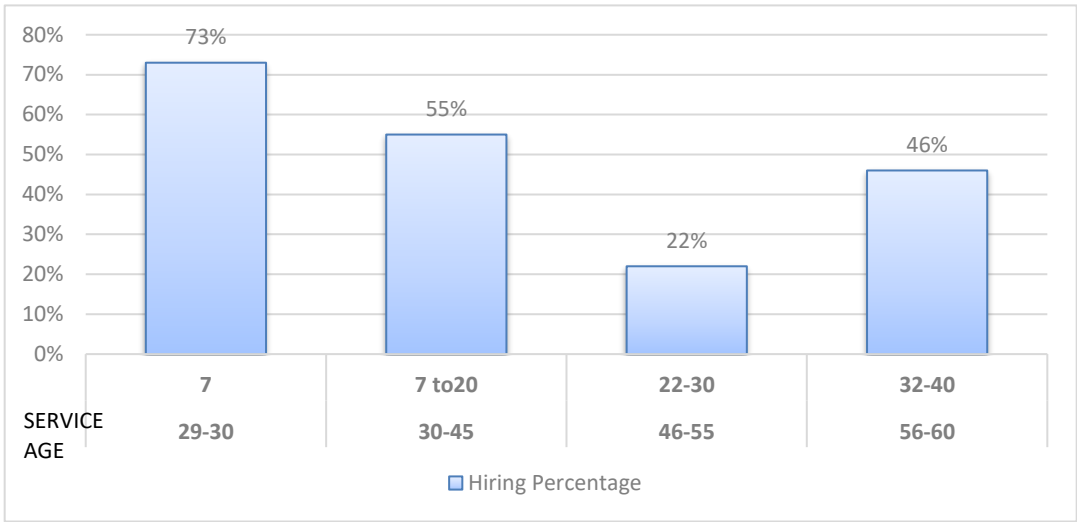


Figure 2. Hiring as per age and service

Variable 3: Qualification

As per Forbes, over 8% of CEOs of Fortune 500 companies in 2010 were military veterans. (Lee, 2021). Military Veterans are natural born CEOs (Elizabeth Olson, 2014) and it takes not much time for them to understand and execute things in the correct manner. The corporate is looking for a person with foresight, skill , motivation and sincerity . And what better can they expect , a talent , bundled in the form of a military officer. However, the age does plays a spoilsport sometimes and not all veterans are hired as per their choice of CTC packages. Qualification also plays an important part. The officers with technical qualification like MBA, B Tech,etc are hired faster than others .(Figure 3)

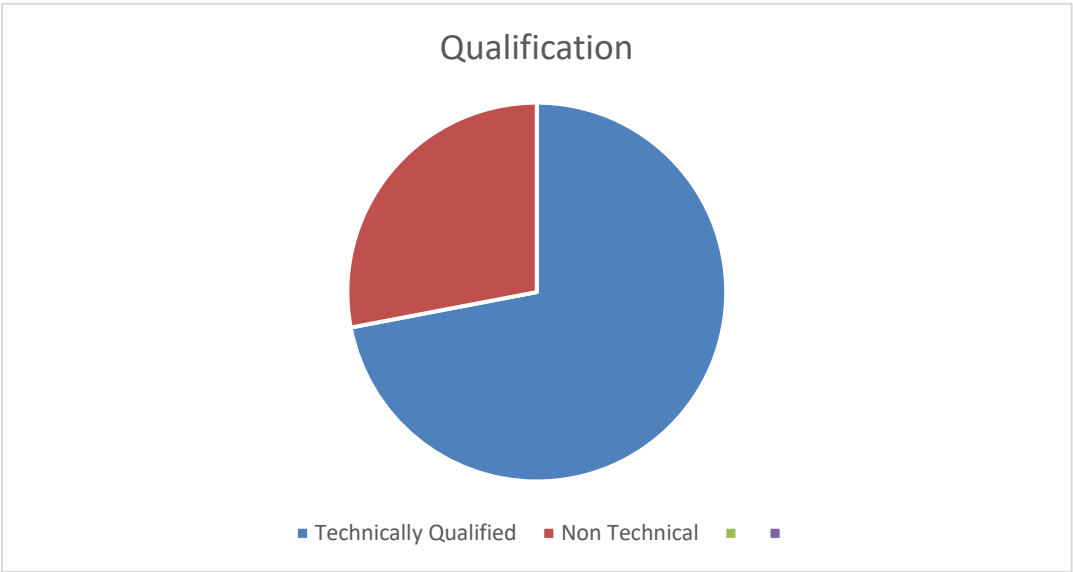


FIGURE3: HIRING AS PER QUALIFICATION

## 7.0 CHALLENGES OF THE TRANSITION FROM MILITARY TO CORPORATE LEADER

Despite the benefits outlined in the previous section, the transition from military to corporate leader can be challenging. Military leaders must overcome several key challenges in order to succeed in the corporate world. These challenges include adjusting to a new organizational culture, adapting to new management styles, and developing new business acumen. (Boris et al, 2010)

**a). Adjusting to a New Organizational Culture:** One of the biggest challenges that military leaders face in the transition to the corporate world is adjusting to a new organizational culture. Military organizations have a unique culture that is focused on results, teamwork, and ethics. This culture can be very different from the culture in the corporate world, where organizations are focused on profits and may have a more hierarchical structure. In order to succeed as corporate CEOs, military leaders must be able to adapt to the culture of the organization they are leading. They must be able to understand the values and priorities of their employees, customers, and other stakeholders, and they must be able to create a vision that aligns with those values and priorities.

**b). Adapting to New Management Styles:** Another challenge that military leaders face in the transition to the corporate world is adapting to new management styles. Military leaders are trained to lead by example and to inspire and motivate their subordinates. This style of leadership may not be effective in the corporate world, where leaders must be able to motivate and engage their employees through different methods, such as incentives and recognition programs. Also, military leaders may be used to giving orders and having them followed immediately, but in the corporate world, leaders must be able to work with employees and to build consensus around their ideas. They must also be able to communicate effectively and to build relationships with their employees, customers, and other stakeholders.

**c). Developing New Business Acumen:** Finally, military leaders must develop new business acumen in order to succeed as corporate CEOs. Military leaders may have limited experience in areas such as finance, marketing, and strategic planning, which are critical skills for success in the corporate world.

**d). Training:** In order to develop these skills, military leaders must be willing to invest time and energy in learning and training. They must be willing to seek out mentors and to seek feedback from their employees and other stakeholders. Additionally, they must be able to seek out and leverage resources, such as books, courses, and conferences, that can help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed as corporate leaders.

**e). Developing Skills and Knowledge:** The transition from military to corporate leader can be challenging, but military leaders can overcome these challenges by being proactive and by developing the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. By leveraging the benefits outlined in the previous section and by overcoming the challenges of the transition, military leaders can position themselves for success as corporate CEOs and can make a positive impact on the organizations they lead. However, the transition from military to corporate leadership can be challenging. Military leaders may be used to a hierarchical, command-and-control style of leadership that may not be effective in a corporate setting, where collaboration and consensus-building are often more important. Also, military leaders may need to develop new skills in areas such as financial management, marketing, and understanding complex regulatory environments.

**f). Limited Financial Experience:** Also, military leaders may have limited experience in financial management and other key areas of business operations, which can be critical for success as a CEO. Developing these skills, or surrounding themselves with a strong team with expertise in these areas, is crucial for any military leader looking to transition into a corporate CEO role.

**g). Understanding business environment:** However, being a successful CEO is about more than just possessing certain skills and qualities. It also requires an understanding of the business environment and the ability to effectively navigate complex organizational dynamics. For military leaders, this may involve developing new skills and learning to operate in a less hierarchical, more collaborative setting.

**h). Emotional Intelligence:** Success as a corporate CEO also requires emotional intelligence and an ability to effectively communicate with a diverse range of stakeholders. Military leaders may be used to giving orders and having them followed without question, but in the corporate world, it is important to build relationships and influence people through effective communication and collaboration. VI. Some successful Corporate CEOs who were in Military

## 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MILITARY LEADERS JOINING CORPORATES

**a). Build a strong network:** Connect with professionals in your desired industry and attend events to make new connections. This will give you an understanding of the current business environment and help you identify potential opportunities. Knowing more people in corporate shall also enhance their vision and outlook.

**b). Brush up on business skills:** Study up on financial analysis, marketing, and other business-related skills to demonstrate your competence in the corporate world. An additional qualification shall go a long way in improving the Resume, which becomes the basic document for hiring.

**c). Highlight transferable skills:** Emphasize the skills you gained in the military that are applicable to the corporate sector, such as leadership, problem-solving, and project management. Sometimes, the officers don't value the kind of work done by themselves while in service due to self-underestimation. They need to tell the world what all they had done and what is their actual capability.

**d). Consider further education:** Consider enrolling in a program or obtaining a degree in business to enhance your credentials and increase your competitiveness in the job market. If required for the new job, it is not wrong to gain information on the subject by undergoing a special course specific to the job .

**e). Seek out mentorship:** Find a mentor in the corporate world who can provide guidance and advice as you navigate this new career path. A good intelligent person from the corporate itself can become a good leading light who can teach the nuances of the working culture of the corporates.

**f). Be flexible:** Be open to learning new ways of working and be prepared to adapt to the corporate culture. Though flexibility is shown while on duty but it has been seen in past that they behave little stubborn and want the things to be done as they direct, something like following orders in forces. This needs to be taken care of.

**g). Promote your military service:** Highlight your military experience and the values you gained from your service, such as loyalty, dedication, and teamwork, which can be assets in the corporate world. The kind of cross-sectional experience gained in the service must be utilised to the fullest.

**h). Research companies and industries:** Research potential employers and industries to understand their culture, values, and what they are looking for in employees. This is must as one should join the field of his liking where he can contribute more and not just to make living by earning the salary.

**i). Network with veterans:** Join organizations for veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce, as these can provide support and opportunities for networking. This can expand the horizons of mind and work so that the officers have wider choice to choose upon the corporate of their liking.

**j). Seek out informational interviews:** Reach out to professionals in your desired industry for informational interviews to gain insight into their experiences and the industry as a whole. Gaining knowledge makes you more wiser and never lets you down.

**k). Stay updated on industry trends:** Stay informed about trends and developments in your desired industry to demonstrate your knowledge and commitment. The things around the world are changing at very high speed and the officer needs to be abreast of all these to survive in the corporates, else he shall be discarded sooner or later.

**l). Offer to volunteer or intern:** Offer to volunteer or intern with a company in your desired industry to gain experience and demonstrate your commitment to the field. One should not shy away from gaining knowledge and experience and infact, shall offer for internship himself. It shall not only enhance learning but shall also increase the chance of hiring if correct skills are learnt and displayed.(Joe, 2023)

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the question of whether military leaders can be good corporate CEOs is a complex one with many different factors to consider. On one hand, military leaders bring a wealth of experience, skills, and qualities that can be valuable assets in the corporate world. For example, they are often well-trained in leadership, strategic thinking, and decision making, and they have a track record of success in high-pressure, high-stakes situations. (Efrain et al, 2014)

On the other hand, the transition from military to corporate leader can be challenging, and military leaders must be able to overcome several key challenges in order to succeed. For example, they must be able to adapt to a new organizational culture, to new management styles, and to develop new business acumen.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of having military leaders as corporate CEOs cannot be ignored. Military leaders can bring a unique perspective and set of skills to the table, and they can help organizations achieve their goals and succeed in a highly competitive business environment. ( Jim Carmer, 2017)

In order to make the most of the benefits of military leaders as corporate CEOs, it is important for organizations to invest in training and support for these leaders as they make the transition. This may include providing mentorship opportunities, offering training and development programs, and helping military leaders build relationships with employees and other stakeholders.

Therefore, military leaders can indeed be good corporate CEOs, but the transition from military to corporate leader requires time, effort, and investment from both the individual and the organization. With the right support and resources, military leaders can leverage their unique skills and experiences to make a positive impact on the organizations they lead and to help drive business success.

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