

## 2.3 Activity: Create Your SMART Goal

Take a few minutes to complete the following sentences. Be prepared to share your answers with others in the group.

**Step 1: Write down your initial career goal in the box below:**

**Step 2: Convert your initial career goal into a SMART goal by answering the following questions in each box.**

 S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Specific: How can you break your goal into smaller steps?</li></ul>
 M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Measureable: How will you verify that you are making progress?</li></ul>
 A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievable: Can you achieve this goal? Are there preliminary steps you need to take?</li></ul>
 R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Realistic: How can you commit to this goal?</li></ul>
 T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Timely: Do you have enough time to achieve your goal, or have you allowed so much time that you may procrastinate?</li></ul>

**Step 3: Review what you have written and craft a new SMART goal.**

## Section 4: Identifying Your Skills

Your skills and experience are valuable to employers. However, many employers and hiring managers are unfamiliar with military terminology and often struggle to understand how you and your skills fit with their organizations.



This section will focus on how you can articulate your skills to employers using the STAR method. You will also learn how to evaluate skills employers are seeking, further develop your skills, and translate military terminology to civilian terms employers can understand. This section will introduce you to the second principle of getting a job: Identify Your Skills.

### 4.1 Inventory Your Skills

It is important to know how to identify and translate your skills so employers can see they relate and could contribute to the success of their businesses. Employers look for skills in two categories: hard skills and soft skills.

Soft skills may include communication, critical thinking, relationship building, and teamwork, while hard skills may include technical knowledge such as skills in Microsoft Office, typing, mechanical ability, foreign language, and equipment operating.

To help you convey your skill set to an employer, you will need to inventory all your skills, including those you have learned and acquired from your military service, education, volunteer services, or other job-related experience.

### 4.2 Activity: Create a Skills Inventory

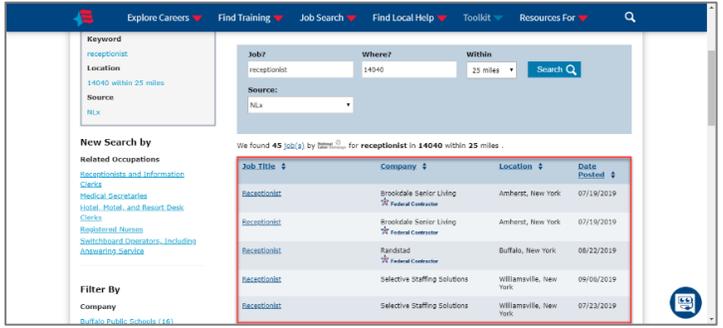
Review the list of skills below, and rank yourself on a scale of 1 to 4 for each one:

**1 = Not competent; 2 = Somewhat competent; 3 = Moderately competent; 4 = Very competent**

If you have skills that are not on the list, add them to the bottom.

Skill	Rating	Skill	Rating
Arranging meetings/events/training programs		Installing software/plumbing or electrical systems/parts	
Assembling equipment		Initiating production/changes/improvements	

Skill	Rating	Skill	Rating
Auditing financial records/accounts payable		Interpreting languages/new laws/schematics/codes	
Communicating with others/groups		Interviewing people/new employees	
Coaching team members		Investigating problems/violations/fraud	
Confronting people/difficult issues		Maintaining transportation fleet/aircraft/diesel engines	
Constructing buildings		Managing an organization/mail room/retail store	
Controlling costs		Marketing products/services/programs	
Counseling employees/colleagues		Negotiating contracts/sales/disputes	
Creating new programs/internet sites/data systems		Operating vehicles or equipment	
Delegating authority		Persuading others/customers	
Implementing registration systems/new programs		Planning agendas/conferences	
Directing administrative staff/projects		Preparing reports/meals/presentations	
Dispensing medication/information		Programing computers	
Establishing objectives/guidelines/policies		Protecting property/people	
Evaluating programs/solutions/instructors/peers/students		Purchasing equipment/supplies/services	
Illustrating storyboards/concepts		Repairing equipment/mechanical devices	
Handling detailed work/data/complaints		Setting goals/objectives	
Healing/Nursing/Nurturing/Curing		Supervising others	
Improving maintenance schedules/systems		Training others	
Improvising action		Writing or editing publications/proposals/technical documents/videos	
Auditing financial records/accounts payable		Interpreting languages/new laws/schematics/codes	
Communicating with others/groups		Interviewing people/new employees	

<p>7</p>	<p>In the list of vacant positions in the area, click the posting that interests you the most.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You will be directed to the job posting on the company's hiring page.</p>	 <p>The screenshot shows a job search interface with the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Search Filters:</b> Keyword: receptionist; Location: 14040 within 25 miles; Source: NLx.</li> <li><b>Search Results:</b> 45 jobs found for 'receptionist' in '14040' within 25 miles.</li> <li><b>Job Listings:</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Job Title</th> <th>Company</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Date Posted</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Receptionist</td> <td>Brookdale Senior Living Federal Contractor</td> <td>Amherst, New York</td> <td>07/19/2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receptionist</td> <td>Brookdale Senior Living Federal Contractor</td> <td>Amherst, New York</td> <td>07/19/2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receptionist</td> <td>Fantasia Federal Contractor</td> <td>Buffalo, New York</td> <td>08/22/2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receptionist</td> <td>Selective Staffing Solutions</td> <td>Williamsville, New York</td> <td>09/10/2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receptionist</td> <td>Selective Staffing Solutions</td> <td>Williamsville, New York</td> <td>07/23/2019</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </li> </ul>	Job Title	Company	Location	Date Posted	Receptionist	Brookdale Senior Living Federal Contractor	Amherst, New York	07/19/2019	Receptionist	Brookdale Senior Living Federal Contractor	Amherst, New York	07/19/2019	Receptionist	Fantasia Federal Contractor	Buffalo, New York	08/22/2019	Receptionist	Selective Staffing Solutions	Williamsville, New York	09/10/2019	Receptionist	Selective Staffing Solutions	Williamsville, New York	07/23/2019
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<p>8</p>	<p>Review the job posting to identify the hard and soft skills the employer is seeking.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You will use this job posting to help you draft your targeted resume in the next section.</p>																									

Now that you have identified the hard and soft skills from the job posting, categorize and list them in the table below:

Hard Skills	Soft Skills

Look at these skills and compare them with your own. Would you be qualified for this position?

### 4.8 Activity: Use the STAR Method to Create a Skill Statement



Take one job responsibility (use the VMET) or task in your position and write it down in the box provided below.



Review the job responsibility and think of a situation when you used the skill. Then ask yourself the following questions:

- Did I implement any new processes to improve things?
- What did I do that went above and beyond my normal responsibilities?
- What problems did I solve and what skills did I use to solve them?



Use the STAR method to create your achievement statement.

<b>The STAR Method</b>	
<b>S – Situation</b>	Think of a specific time or circumstance when you used this skill; define the general context of that situation.
<b>T – Task</b>	Name the key objective you were responsible for in that situation or the challenges/obstacles you had to overcome.

<b>A – Action</b>	Describe what you did to complete the assigned task; emphasize the skills you used, and the resources involved.
<b>R – Result</b>	Summarize the outcome and how you specifically contributed; describe the improvements and/or benefits.



Take the information from the Action and Result areas to create your achievement statement below. Start with a powerful action verb and use numbers to quantify your achievements, if applicable.

**STAR Achievement Statement**

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### Tips on How to Deliver Your Professional Introduction

- **Take your time.**  
A professional introduction is a quick conversation by nature. Keep it short but try not to speak too fast.
- **Practice. Practice. Practice.**  
Memorize a general outline or key points to keep the introduction conversational without sounding too rehearsed in your delivery. The more you practice, the better you will be.
- **Avoid niche words and phrases.**  
Using military acronyms can confuse or alienate your audience. Try to translate the military acronyms into civilian terms.
- **Express confidence.**  
Even the best professional introduction can lose its effectiveness if your delivery lacks confidence. Keep your chest high, shoulders back, and smile.

## 5.6 Activity: Draft Your Professional Introduction Statement

Below are sample statements to help guide you in prepping your professional introduction.

Steps	Sample Statements	Your Statement
Introduce yourself with a warm greeting and provide your full name.	<p><b>“Hi, my name is...”</b></p> <p><b>“It’s so nice to meet you...”</b></p>	
Provide a summary of what you do by including your job title, education, and/or some key specialties or strengths.	<p><b>“In my position, I had to get really good at...”</b></p> <p><b>“I was fortunate to have many opportunities to acquire/develop the skill/ to...”</b></p> <p><b>“Thanks to a number of challenging experiences, I learned how to...”</b></p>	

<p>Explain what you want.</p>	<p><b>“I am interested in working as a...”</b></p> <p><b>“I would like to explore a career in...”</b></p> <p><b>“I’ve always been passionate about _____ and would like the opportunity to bring my skills to this position.”</b></p> <p><b>“I would like the opportunity to put my _____ skills to work for your company.”</b></p>	
<p>Finish with a call to action by asking for a meeting, expressing interest in a job, or requesting someone to be your mentor.</p>	<p><b>“I would like to keep in touch to learn more about...”</b></p> <p><b>“I would love to talk more about a potential mentorship with you.”</b></p> <p><b>“Would you mind if I set up a quick call next week for us to talk about...”</b></p>	
<p>Use this box to draft your professional introduction.</p>		

## 5.7 Resumes

In the employment process, you must have a resume. A resume is a document that quickly shows an employer your relevant skills and experience. It is often the first line of contact that you have with a potential employer and is the employer’s first impression of you.

The goal of a resume is to effectively summarize and highlight your qualifications in a way that will make the employer want to reach out and schedule an interview with you.

Before you begin drafting your targeted resume, let’s see how much you know about resumes.



Read each statement and indicate whether it is true or false	True	False
1. The number one rule for writing a good resume is “more is better.”		
2. Regardless of your age, your resume work history should list all jobs going back to high school.		
3. Your resume should not be longer than two pages.		
4. A good resume is flexible enough to cover various job options within your professional field of interest.		
5. A good resume paints a clear picture of you, including your height, weight, race, age, gender, marital status, and your number of children.		
6. Employers like to see that you are interested in things other than just your job, so include volunteer work, continued education, and association involvements.		
7. All resumes should contain the complete names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your references.		
8. To help your resume stand out, you should make it as unusual as possible by printing it on brightly colored paper or including a picture of yourself.		
9. It may take much hard work, but a well-written resume will, in isolation, get you the job you want.		
10. It is always better to spend money getting a professional resume writing service to write your resume for you as opposed to doing it yourself.		

## 5.8 Activity: Job Posting Cheat Sheet

This activity will provide you with an outline to draft your targeted resume. Review the job posting you selected in the “Identifying Skills Employers are Seeking” and use it to complete the sections below.

<b>Objective:</b> What job am I applying for?	
<b>Summary:</b> What skills/experience are preferred or required for this position?	
<b>Experience:</b> What roles, responsibilities, or duties is the employer asking me to perform?	
<b>Education:</b> What type of education or training is desired/required by the employer?	

Question	Explanation	Example Response
<p><b>“How would you approach a task you’ve never done before?”</b></p>	<p>Your employer wants to assess whether you have problem-solving skills and whether you can approach new tasks intelligently.</p>	<p>“In my previous position as Project Support Officer, I was often challenged with new projects requiring me to step outside of my comfort zone. Because of these opportunities, I developed a systematic approach to each new challenge. The first thing I do is try to collect as much information I can about the tasks to ensure I understand what is needed from me. Then I break the tasks down into manageable steps. I would also undertake internet research and consultations with colleagues who had previous experience with the task. After I had completed each piece of work, I would always double-check the tasks with my manager to ensure I’m on the right track and to get feedback.”</p>

### 9.5 Activity: Practice Answering Questions

You can improve your chances for success if you practice answering questions. Read the following questions and the coaching guidelines in parentheses. Write down your own personal answers using the STAR method as much as possible. Then practice answering these questions with a partner.

1. **Tell me about yourself.** (Your interviewers will likely start out with a question about yourself and your background to get to know you. Start out by giving them an overview of your current position or activities, then provide the most important and relevant highlights from your background that make you most qualified for the role.)

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2. **What are your greatest strengths?** (This question gives you an opportunity to talk about both your technical and soft skills. To answer, share qualities and personal attributes and then relate them back to the role for which you're interviewing.)

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3. **What do you consider your most significant challenge?** (It can feel awkward to discuss your weaknesses in an environment where you're expected to focus on your accomplishments. However, when answered correctly, sharing your weaknesses can show that you are self-aware and want to continuously get better at your job—traits that are extremely attractive to many employers. Remember to start with the weakness and then discuss the measures you've taken to improve. This way, you're finishing your answer on a positive note.)

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4. **Why do you believe you are qualified for this position?** (Pick two or three main factors about the job and about you that are most relevant. Discuss with specific details. Select a technical skill, a specific management skill [organizing, staffing, planning] and a personal success story.)

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5. **Have you ever accomplished something you did not think you could?** (Show you are goal-oriented and have a strong work ethic. Provide a good example of when you overcame difficulties to succeed.)

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6. **What do you like or dislike about your current position?** (Interviewer may be trying to determine your compatibility with the open position. Avoid complaining about your dislikes and keep the answer positive.)

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7. **How do you handle pressure? Do you like or dislike these situations?** (High achievers tend to perform well in high pressure situations. Conversely, this question also could imply that the position is pressure packed. If you perform well under stress, provide a good example with details that give an overview of the stress situation. Try to relay the situation as a challenge rather than focusing on your ability to handle pressure. The interviewer will see you turn a negative into a positive situation.)

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<b>401(K) or Retirement Contributions</b>	Employers contribute to employees’ retirement plans. The amount of compensation the employer will contribute to an individual’s account varies greatly. Most of the companies will require a vesting period, which means those dollars contributed to the individual retirement accounts are not immediately available to the individual. Once the worker is vested, those contributions transfer ownership to the individual.
<b>Stock or Equity</b>	Some companies offer stocks or, in some cases, a percentage of ownership in the company for many small businesses in start-up mode. Often, any stock or equity opportunity typically carries a caveat that outlines a vesting period.
<b>Profit Sharing</b>	There are some companies that have set aside a predetermined percentage of profits for distribution to employees who qualify under the terms of the benefit. Each of these terms varies from employer to employer.
<b>Transportation Allowance</b>	Some employers subsidize transportation expenses. This compensation can take the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A monthly car allowance.</li> <li>• A vehicle leased for the individual by the employer.</li> <li>• Contributions for public transportation, parking, and/or other fees associated with travel or commute to work.</li> </ul>

## 10.2 Evaluating Job Offers

There are several ways to evaluate job offers. The simplest is to make a checklist of what is acceptable and unacceptable. As you evaluate the offer, keep in mind the aspects that are important to you. Compare how well the job matches your preferences and values. Keep in mind that your family is affected by job decisions, so include them in the decision-making process.

When you do get a job offer, here are factors to consider using the evaluation checklist:

Factors	Job Evaluation Checklist	Acceptable	Unacceptable
The Industry	Interest in the industry <i>Is this a field where I would like to build a career?</i>		
	Potential for long-term growth <i>Is this an industry that is growing?</i>		
The Position	Work duties <i>Do the duties of the job interest me and use my skills?</i>		
	Potential for advancement <i>What opportunities are available?</i>		
	Position level <i>Where is the job in the organization? To whom do I report?</i>		

Factors	Job Evaluation Checklist	Acceptable	Unacceptable
	Wages/benefits <i>Do they meet my needs?</i>		
	Hours <i>Do I consider them reasonable?</i>		
	Working conditions <i>What are the company's expectations and work style?</i>		
	Job quality <i>How long has the position been open and why is it open?</i>		
	Travel requirements <i>How often would I have to travel?</i>		
The Company	Growth potential <i>How has the company performed over the last several years?</i>		
	Planned expansion <i>What plans exist and how do they fit with the economy?</i>		
	Success <i>What are the company's debt/profit ratios and other indicators of success?</i>		
	Reputation <i>What is the company's reputation in the industry and with its employees?</i>		
	Management team <i>What is the tenure, growth, and origin of the management team?</i>		
Your Supervisors	Skills <i>What is the supervisor's training and previous work experience?</i>		
	Organizational position <i>Who do the supervisors report to and how long have they been in their jobs?</i>		
	Interaction/expectation <i>How well do I think I can work with the supervisor?</i>		
The Environment	Geographic location <i>Is the job someplace I would like to live?</i>		
	Area factors <i>Am I comfortable with the traffic, growth, cost of living, crime rate, etc.?</i>		

Factors	Job Evaluation Checklist	Acceptable	Unacceptable
	Housing <i>Is affordable housing available and to my liking?</i>		
	Recreation <i>Are recreational opportunities available and within reason?</i>		
	Schools <i>Are good schools available for my children, spouse, and self?</i>		
The PTO	Paid vacations <i>Am I eligible? How many days do I receive? How many days after a year of employment? After five years of employment?</i>		
The Insurance	<i>Fully or partially paid by employer?                      Dependent coverage fully or partially paid by employer?                      Does coverage include:                      Vision care? Dental care?                      Alcoholism and/or drug abuse treatment?</i>		
Paid Sick Time	<i>Provided? Carry-over of unused days permitted?</i>		
Paid Life Insurance	<i>At least two times annual salary (for coverage based on earnings)?                      At least \$15,000 (for coverage based on flat dollar amount)?</i>		
Savings & Profit Sharing	<i>Savings/thrift plans? Cash profit sharing? Deferred profit sharing?</i>		
Qualified Plans	<i>Pension plan (defined benefit) provided? 401K, 403B, or other tax-deferred retirement savings plans? Association, professional, or union plans? Mutual fund retirement plans?</i>		
Other Benefits	<i>Full or partial relocation allowance?</i>		
	<i>Full or partial reimbursement for educational expenses?</i>		
	<i>Financial or legal counseling plan?</i>		
	<i>Childcare?</i>		
	<i>Long-term incentive plans (stock options or other types of performance award)?</i>		
	<i>Cars or transportation allowance provided for executives, salespeople, or managers who must travel?</i>		

1. Whom do I need to call, write, or visit?	Deadline:
2. What do I need more information about? What am I unclear about?	Deadline:
3. What are some specific questions I need to ask to get clarification?	Deadline:
4. What things must I do next?	Deadline:
5. Other	Deadline:

Keep on practicing your professional introduction, updating your resume, and networking. Start identifying and collecting your professional references as well as practicing your responses to interview questions.