

ROUGHLY EDITED COPY

GETTING HIRED

REMOTE CART

September 17th, 2013

1:00 PM to 1:41 PM EST

WOUNDED WARRIORS PROJECT PRESENTATION

Services provided by:

Caption First, Inc.

P.O. Box 3066

Monument, CO 80132

1-877-825-5234

+001-719-481-9835

www.captionfirst.com

This text is being provided in a rough draft format.
Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in
order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be
totally verbatim record of the proceedings.

* * * * *

>>AMIRA FAHMY: Hello and Welcome to our 3rd quarterly session of the GettingHired Advisory Council. My name is Amira Fahmy and I am the Director of Community Development with GettingHired and host for today's Council. We are very excited about our presentations today, and I think you are going to find

them very useful. If at any time you have any questions please feel free to send them through the chat box located in the right corner of your screen.

During our last session we covered the topics of disability disclosure with our friends at Cornell University, and we talked about mitigating stigma around the invisible wounds of war. Today we are going to expand on that topic, and we have a special presenter from the Wounded Warrior Project who is going to be talking about best practices for hiring and retaining veterans that have service connected disabilities.

But first, we will start with a quick presentation of our new website, which launched this past Saturday. This has been a huge project for us and we are very excited to share it with you. For that, I am going to pass it over to our Director of Marketing – Adam Streets. Adam –
(Audio Difficulties)

>>ADAM STREETS: So the job seeker dashboard -- originally when a job seeker jumped into their dashboard to update a resume, they had to upload their resume and then they had to go through about 7 different pages to make sure each section was taken care of. In this case what we did we streamlined this. They upload a resume, all of their resume gets parsed right into a single page which looks just like a resume or they can go in and edit these things manually all in one location. The best part of this if they need to download a resume which will be something we're building in for employers to download they click a little download and they view a little PDF that they have on the screen. This now gives them a account settings. They'll be set up if they are a veteran, if they are part of -- of a specific disability -- a veteran -- a disabled veteran group such as wounded warrior project. So on and so forth and from here they can actually do their own job search, look for jobs of interest which we're pushing to them and they can get to any other part of this website. They'll also have to be logged in to view any of our blogs and soon to be forms which we're updating in the next couple weeks.

Some of the things we did update here also involves mobile. So, for example, from a mobile standpoint in the next couple of weeks we've been looking at updating to taking into account 10 different mobile platforms so the website itself will actually scale to become a mobile presence. So that people can go to the jobs directly on their mobile phones, any type, Android or IOS and they can click in here for a key word, do a job search for just about anything. And all of it will be mobile friendly going forward. So that is just the next couple of weeks away we're making some edits so some of the look and feel in some of these areas, but we're really excited of the fact that we're going to be able to take into account all mobile platforms and all tablets without having to have something completely separate 'cause this is all just one website for them.

Other than that, that's basically the majority of some of the big changes like we said over the next couple of weeks. We're going to be rolling out updates to our service provider sectioned, our career assessment tools, our forums, and all of the mobile attributes we'll be rolling out actually in the next couple days.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: Excellent, Adam. Thank you so much for that presentation. And like I said, we're all really, really excited about the new website and what it becomes. I want to encourage everyone on the call to take a look at the new site --

(Inaudible.)

>> AMIRA FAHMY: For those have you who are contractors and going to be increasing your outreach to this population over the next several years. OFCCP estimates that new regulations will result in the hiring of about 85,000 veterans with service connected disabilities so we're very excited about that because that's an excellent number. That is why we brought in our guest today the Brian Nichols from the wounded warrior project. He works with a special group of veterans which are gulf era 2 veterans or veterans that have served from September 2001 on, that have returned with a service connected disability. They're better known as wounded warriors. The latest data shows that about 30 percent of those that served in Iraq and Afghanistan return with a service connected disability, which is a huge number. Also, as of March about 40,000 wounded warriors were unemployed which means makes they make up half of the total number unemployed veterans with disabilities. To combat this, the wounded warrior project created the warriors to work program, which focuses employment opportunities and removing barriers for warriors that are returning to work. Over the last year, the program successfully helped 1,000 warriors enter the workforce.

For the last two years, Brian has served as manager for the warriors to work program where he helped wounded warriors in multiple states connect with the support and resources they need to build a career in the civilian workforce. Prior to that, he served as a recruiter with U.S. Navy for 9 years and he received multiple honors and awards. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Brian for his presentation.

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: My name is Brian Nichols. And I do work through the wounded warrior project. Today we're going to talk a little bit about what you as employers can do to help support the employment success of our wounded warriors. Just sit back for a minute and imagine a world where we could live in where our generation of wounded warriors are not unemployed and they're not underemployed either. You know, they have for education, a meaningful career or own their own business, whatever they're passionate about. They post skills to make informed and educated decisions about their future, but most of

all they are economically empowered.

Today we're going to talk a little bit about how to identify this field which wounded warriors and discover how these fields and trades go into the civilian workforce and how we eliminate the most common barriers that our warriors have to be in the employment arena and we'll get a better understanding of some of the service connected injuries that we've seen coming back and then we're also going to take a little bit of time -- that being said we're going to start off with probably is generally the most common barrier we see in mass communication, there's a communication breakdown. I like to call it the hooah. Is it a noun, an adverb, an adjective, a verb, conjunction, interjection, exclamation? The answer is yes, it's all of the above. Hooah is actually defined as a referring to a meaning or anything and everything except no. So it's a lot of times what our military members will say when they're at a loss for words such as good copy, Roger, solid copy, good, great, message received, understood, acknowledged, glad to meet you, welcome, all right, you've got to be kidding me, you've taken the corrective action. I don't know the answer but I'll check on it or having the foggiest idea, you know, yes, thank you, go to the next slide. I don't know what that means but I'm feeling taking clarification, amen, he's pretty hooah so there's a lot of different meanings there but at the same time hooah isn't really used in a civilian term.

By virtue of having served in the military, pretty much every service leader is going to acquire certain traits and skills, some are loyalty, selfness, respect for procedures and authority, discipline, leadership training at a very young age and an accelerated learning curve, training in the new latest and greatest technology, working in teams in diverse environments, the ability to perform under pressure and most of all, they're going to come back with the ability to overcome adversity.

As we talked before, we're going to talk some of the common barriers to successful transition, transition of military skills, knowledge gap which is a lack of employer education, awareness on the things that our warriors are coming back but it's also a lack of education on our warriors' part of learning their civilian counterparts and then stigma.

So the translation of military skills is human resources personnel is a difficult time. We often see our military members bring the exact skill-sets that the civilian companies are looking for but oftentimes they have trouble translating it and getting their resumes to the top of the pile.

Some of the ditches of civilian and military culture, military culture it's always emphasis on unit cohesion, completion of the mission, devotion to duty and there's always a

distinct and definitive chain of command. The military is often team driven as opposed to individual driven. Whereas in the civilian culture there's an emphasis on individuality, individual achievement, personal freedom and forward social relationships.

11 bravo is one of the military specialties in the Army. Generally it's your infantry and operate operation. Oftentimes those duties will include operating and maintaining weapons such as rifles, machine guns, mortars, hand grenades, locating constructing chemical infantry position and equipment. Evaluating training and recording topographical operation, operating and maintaining field communications equipment, assessing need for and directly supporting fire, placing explosives and performing mines on land. Participating in basic reconnaissance operations. So that would be a typical resume that a lot of our military folks are coming out with, saying this is what I did in the military. So you ask yourself what do you do in your company? Well, again we talked about some of the military strengths and the team driven highly structured which can translate into trust and faith in the leadership which can for a organizational purposes lead to increased organizational cohesion, morale and performance. Military strength is also focused on contingency planning which means flexible, adaptive problem solver and then organizationally for your company adaptation changing priorities, goals and tasks. Another military strength would be your requiring of real world travel, cultural sensitivity to work in changing environments and teams can create demographic changes. One of the things too that we can do to combat that gap is to have effective descriptions for an overall contribution. You can look does the description clearly describe the purpose and overall contribution to the company? So again military is focused on the overall completion of the mission so if you're not really putting in what that position does for the mission of the organization, oftentimes there will be a disconnect with the military members who read that description.

What are the essential and nonessential functions?

Oftentimes our military members are very diverse in what they do and often don't stick exactly to what their job description is. And when including nonessential more general duties consider physical skills what required or physical abilities. What learned skills are needed, what some of those job duties may be and some of those behavioral skills or nontangible skills leadership, time management.

Identify the working conditions so that they get a good understanding of what they're going to be doing. What level of education and experience to successfully accomplish those essential job functions can also look at how military experience

might equate to eliminate some of those necessary experience or educational requirements. What do other employees, teammates require on a day-to-day basis? Include expectations relating to deadlines, customer service, really whatever that end point mission of what your company is looking to gain from that position. And then again the responsibilities to those company goals to give that military member reading that description the big picture into how he or she is going to fit in to your company.

Another barrier is lack of employer and awareness. 73% of the employers either agree or don't know that USERRA is not the main law governing veterans and disabilities in the workplace. USERRA is the law that covers guardian and reservists and being able to maintain their position when they return. More than half of the employers don't know where to find information about accommodations and believe it's -- it's very costly to accommodate workers with disability such as PTSD and PBI and we'll get into a little more of that as we progress through our presentation here.

And then almost two-thirds of employers surveyed believe that workers with PTSD are more likely to commit act of violence in the workplace than others. We'll touch on that in few minutes as well.

And then the last barrier that we're going to talk about is stigma. So when the society of human resource management surveyed its members in June of 2010, 46% said they believed post-traumatic stress and other mental health issues pose a hiring challenge. And just 22% said combat related physical disability. So the difference there being the wounds that you can see is only 22% of the challenge where the wounds you can't see will be 46% of your challenge.

And although the media attention has helped making diagnosis and treatment of PTSD and traumatic brain injury or TBI a priority it's contributed to a lot of the stigma we see associated with veterans today.

And what we know about some of our injured returning service members which I believe Amira touched on in the beginning. There's over 36,000 service members to return with significant physical injuries such as amputations, burn injuries but the signature injuries we're seeing are going to be your unseen injuries.

According to the 2008 Rand study, at that time, 546,000 military service members have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and have reported a PTSD, TBI or post concussion syndrome. 1 in 4 report having the possible traumatic brain injury and 1 in 5 currently live in with depression or a stress disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Medications that may help also have a lot of side effects.

So that's another accommodation that we'll get into as well. And a lot of times our warriors don't want to say anything because they're afraid it could hurt their career or they could get their security clearance denied or revoked. And then friends and family would be more helpful in a mental health professional so they feel they can get more out of talking to friends and families than they can actually who's going to be able to provide professional help to them. And then coworkers would have less confidence if they found out that they're suffering from a mental illness.

Traumatic brain injury is the blow or jolt to the head or a head injury that disrupts the function of the brain. It's similar to the concussion or the effects just last a little bit longer, and then not all blows or jolts to the head will result in traumatic brain injury.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is defined as a psychological health injury that's been developed in response with exposure to an extreme event. What that really breaks down is the body's reaction to an unnatural reaction. And experience by another person involves acts of death or physical integrity.

Anyone who has gone through a life-threatening event can develop PTSD. It is not military-specific. More oftentimes it's referred to with all the media coverage as being a combat or military exposure. It can be suffered from child sexual or physical abuse. Witnessing terrorist attacks, sexual or physical assault, you know, serious acts and then such as a car accident. Natural disasters such as fire, tornado, hurricane, flood, outbreak, really any traumatic event that you live through you can develop post-traumatic stress disorders.

PTSD is a prolonged reaction to stress. You have your sensory input whatever that trigger is, is going to trigger your memory which is going to increase your response to avoidance, anxiety emotional response it's not often severe. Sometimes it's very, very minor. It's really unique to the individual and the situation.

Now, we're going to talk about traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress. Two people will have all the symptoms but a lot of times you've have one or two of the symptoms and a lot of times they can be very severe and oftentimes debilitating for the point of time that they're going on. Some of those physical things that can happen are severe headaches, feeling dizzy, being tired, oftentimes having trouble sleeping at night. Having vision problems and sometimes even being bothered by noise and light. Some of the cognitive or mental things that can go on with traumatic brain injury are having short-term or long-term problems. Trouble staying focused and sometimes poor judging and impulsivity, being slowed down and even having trouble putting some of your thoughts and worries in a timely

manner. On the emotional side there can be things as depression, outbursts, sometimes just having your finding one thing and two seconds it's almost like a light switch went off. Having anxiety, you know, fear worry, you know, sometimes being nervous or even a personality changes.

But, again, TBI doesn't initially have to be permanent. Oftentimes within three months a lot of times our warriors will be back to normal and they won't have any more symptoms of TBI. Here's some of the examples of reasonable accommodations that can be made to often limit those -- those things that go on with TBI that will prevent you from being successful in the workplace. So sometimes allowing flexible scheduling, longer more frequent work breaks can help because if they're having issues focusing sometimes taking a break will help our warriors. Provide additional time to learn their responsibilities. Allow for use of supportive employment and job employees, provide job sharing opportunities, encourage the employee to do the daily to-do list so making smaller lists rather than giving them a big picture end goal saying I need this done by 5:00. Break this down I need you to have you do this then this then this to get to that point. Provide a special calendar to mark meetings and deadlines on. Assign a mentor to assist the employee in determining goals and providing daily guidance and provide written as well as verbal instructions. Sometimes with memory loss and there are issues you can tell somebody and they're all about it and then 5 minutes later they have absolutely no recollection of their conversation.

And PTSD is a prolonged reaction to stress so with your sensory input and your trigger memories increase a response. So here are some of your symptoms of stressors, anger, anxiety, grief, hyper alertness, irritability, sadness, memories, feeling lonely or abandoned, frustration, feeling out of control or vulnerable, often having a racing heartbeat and accompanying pain or muscle tension. And some of those potential stressors and triggers can be an argument, seeing a news article that reminds you of your traumatic event, you know, watching a movie or television show that will remind you of the same television event, seeing a car accident, certain smells oftentimes smell is often your strongest sense. The end of a relationship or an anniversary, holidays or sometimes, going to a specific place or seeing someone reminds you or was connected to your traumatic event.

And here's some of those accommodations that we can use to make our warriors with PTSD, you know, better employers. Use a daily or weekly task list, oftentimes reduce the distractions in your work environment can help as well. Sometimes allowing the employee to play soothing music or even -- you know, divide large assignments into a smaller goals or steps as we discussed

earlier, assign a supervisor, manager or mentor to answer questions. Use stress management techniques to deal with frustrations in the workplace, allow telephone calls during work hours to doctors or others for support if needed, allow for a flexible start time or end time or even work from home on days where maybe they have problems sleeping at night before. And then allow time off for counseling and medical appointments at the end of the day they'll get treatment they will get better and they will be better employees.

So we've talked a little about traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress but, you know, what does it look like and will know it if I see it those are questions we get. One of our warriors Staff Sergeant Krause allowed us to use her image. You see her in-country down range. That's what we think of traumatic injury, or post-traumatic stress dressed like this. It's not oftentimes that it looks like it does here, you know, she's at home with her family because that's where she's actually dealing with everything.

And one of the quotes that we like to use as well, you know, given a choice between work and idleness people will almost always choose work. Just sometimes giving somebody the opportunity is going to allow them to be more successful. So regardless of our station in life, the conditions of our bodies and minds and the amount of money in our bank accounts, the work needs to be one of our strongest drives work is essential to our lives and gives a large structure to our day, commonsense we feel better about ourselves when we're working regularly.

So I'd like to end with a couple of thoughts here that workplace supports and accommodations as well as good management create welcoming and productive environments not only for warriors but for all employees. And you don't have to have all the answers. Sometimes trial and error is often the best practice 'cause what works for one person and what works for another company isn't going to work for anybody. It's oftentimes better to figure out what's going to work best for you. And people living with traumatic brain injuries and/or post-traumatic stress disorder can and do often have very, very successful careers and I also like to go to the power of one, one employer, one warrior, one opportunity to succeed. One at a time and we'll get there eventually. So I'd like to thank you for your time. Here is a link to our website that you can get some more information and there's my direct contact information, please do feel free to reach out to me directly. And other than that, you know, I'd like to open it up for any questions if anybody has any.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: All right. Well, we have received a few questions already. If anyone has any more please feel free to send them into the Q & A box that's in the bottom right hand of

your screen so right now Brian will go ahead and start asking you some of the questions that we already received. So first of all, there was some questions around military recruitment departments and organizations. So someone said my company and I'm sure many others on this call have set up dedicated military recruiters who can better connect to the veteran community. Do you have an opinion on this trend and do you generally recommend veterans do this to show their commitment.

>> ADAM STREETS: Just to make sure I understand the question. The question is that companies have set military and veteran recruiters and do I feel that's a good practice?

>> AMIRA FAHMY: Yes.

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Yeah, I think that it's definitely good practice because giving our warriors a point of contact, somebody they know that they can reach out to because again they're familiar with the distinct chain of command and they distinctly like to know where they have to go so giving somebody a distinct point of contact oftentimes you'll have better success to lead them go wide on the hooah contact I called and I didn't know to who call because they didn't know where to go.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: Excellent. And I'm not sure if you guys have a big focus on this. But with the regulations that recently came out from OFCCP do you have an opinion of the new beaver regulations calling for an 8% benchmark for hiring veterans?

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: I wouldn't say that as an organization wounded warrior project has a stance on that but personally I always say -- I go back to my pour of one. Let's have one warrior, you know, with one employer at one time with one opportunity. If we set a goal at hiring a certain number of people, then sometimes my thoughts would be, okay, let's say you want to hire 100 veterans by the end of the year. If you only get 90 applicants, did you fall short because you only hired 90 or if you don't have 100 qualified applicants at the end of the day if you're not hiring a qualified person for a qualified person then you're not doing them justice anyway. My thoughts one warrior one at a time.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: Excellent. And then what about stigma so the June 2012 survey from SHRM very frequently when you're talking about stigma given how much awareness and education has taken place do you still believe 46% of employers believe PTSD and other mental health issues pose a hiring challenge?

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: I don't say that I necessarily agree it's that same percentage. But I haven't seen any new studies that come out since then and that's I talk to employers every day and oftentimes I'm still providing the same education I was providing two years ago.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: That's shocking. It's a little sad but

hopefully we can change that moving forward.

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Absolutely.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: All right. And then another question about the study for veterans barriers to treatment. How do you feel that the perceptions are changing among veterans are they making any progress and moving those commonly cited concerns?

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: I think they're making progress because it's become more mainstream. They're getting a lot of senior military leaders saying that they're suffering from the same issue but I still think that a lot of our warriors are still under the old belief from the stigma, okay, well, the military thought it was great but now I'm trying to get on and get a civilian job so I'm going to run into the same issue that we were having 10 years ago in the military and I don't necessarily feel that's 100% true but at the same time, you know, if that is what their belief is, then I would work with them to work on eliminating their barrier but at this point it may not be the employer, it may be the warrior.

>> ADAM STREETS: We just got one in that said I've seen on your website about volunteer activities with the wounded warrior project around the country can you give us some information about how these work and if organizations can become involved?

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Absolutely. Currently we do what we call an outpost method so around every one of our offices we create a volunteer outpost so you can sign onto that outpost to register as a volunteer and then anytime we have any events or volunteer opportunities in that area, and you know it goes out to everybody on the list with all the opportunities that are available and they're allowed to sign up, based on what they want to do and it's usually kind of first come first served as far as what opportunities they want to do. Now, on a side note if the company wants to do something individually and something different than what's out there, by all means, yeah, I'm open to the conversation to figure out what it is and how we can make it happen.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: Great. Excellent. And we also got a comment from our friends at the job accommodation network or JAN, we spent a lot of time focusing on the accommodations that can be made and JAN wants you to know if there's an employer or consultation or coaching to find an accommodation solution, they are always there to assist and their phone number is 800-526-7234 or you can find them at askJAN.org they are also Liz on our website so you can link they mean as well.

And then we have one more -- actually we have a couple more so Adam do you want to take this one.

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Sure, our biggest problem with -- a combat vet placement is that these folks are front line door to door operators and our company as I'm sure like many others on this

call obviously do not employ these types. So with no degree and no skills other than the 11BH, it cuts off there, unfortunately, our guest --

>> AMIRA FAHMY: It's someone with --

>> Yeah, how do we employ them. There you go. There's the end of it. So the question is, basically, how do they employ them?

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Really it's going to be based on what position just because our warriors were doing that at one point in time doesn't mean that's something they can still do now. Oftentimes they're dealing with what they have going on so a lot of times their goals and their -- what they're looking to do has changed so while they may have been on that front line, you know, door to door and a combat operator may not be where they are or may not be moving forward to be healthy and be themselves. So oftentimes it's really taking what they're interested in doing and what they've acquired skill-set wise oftentimes they do a lot of the internships while they're going through rehabilitation to try to figure out a new career path. Just because you don't have what they used to do doesn't have what they want to do in what they're able to do now. It's a matter of us properly translating their skills and teaching them to market themselves and search for the jobs they want to do.

>> ADAM STREETS: Great.

(Laughing.)

>> AMIRA FAHMY: We got a comment, hooah!

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Exactly.

(Laughing.)

>> ADAM STREETS: All right. For our last question, someone like to know you mentioned that trial and error is often the best practice to accommodating veterans with disabilities. Can you set any examples of how you've seen this work with some employers?

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Absolutely, so oftentimes we with come in and kind of say, hey, here's what we've seen work in the past so I can come in and say, you know, it's great to put a mentor with, you know, a warrior as they move through that process so that they can understand what's going on. But that doesn't always work out well. Sometimes you need to figure out well, mentors are going to work for us we're a small organization. So oftentimes it's better just to bring the warrior in and let them see what's going on and do job shadowing instead of mentoring for the hiring process. It's what will work best for you and wharf you're comfortable doing as a company. There's no right or wrong answer. In whatever what is going to work best for you moving forward. If you're trying to find a warrior be in bravo and doesn't have that position, bringing them in and kind of letting them see what you're doing and what positions you have,

they may be able to say, well, that position right there is exactly what I wanted to do but they didn't know what it was called whatever you happen to call it in your company because again they live in bravo infantry that's all they know and what they've done in the past years since they were 17 years old.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: Excellent. All right. Well, I think that's it for all the questions today. Brian, I want to say thank you so much for being here with us today in your presentation and all the work that you're doing with wound warriors it's really amazing and most importantly thank you so much for your service. It's pretty amazing.

>> BRIAN NICHOLS: Thank you very much. I appreciate it. I appreciate you having me on. It's something near and dear to me I'm glad to get our message out any way we can.

>> AMIRA FAHMY: Excellent. Well, as you can all tell from the presentation Brian is a wealth of resources he's been an amazing ally for us. I highly encourage you to work in the warriors work program and see how you might be able to work with them. And a lot of people ask questions about getting the information from today's presentation specifically the slide they will all be posted on the advisory council site and there's a link to that in the invite for today's session. So you should all be able to access that later this afternoon. I guess that is it for this advisory council session. Please join us for our next one on Tuesday December 10th. We're going to be featuring Pete from Serota Corporation. He will talk about people with disabilities in the workplace. So thank you all very much for joining us. Again, Brian, thank you for being here and we look forward to talking to you in December. Thank you all.