

The top of the page features a blurred background image of a person's hands holding a large, stylized 'AP' logo. The 'A' is pink and the 'P' is blue. Below the logo, the words 'ASSERTIVE PROFESSIONALS' are written in a matching color scheme. On the left side, the text 'ASSERTIVE PROFESSIONALS' is written in red, followed by 'NEWSLETTER' in large, bold, black letters.

ASSERTIVE PROFESSIONALS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019 ISSUE

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT AP?

- After the long awaited delay from the last government shut-down, AP is finally expecting to get word on new DHS work very soon. Our fingers are crossed that we will get positive news along with several new positions in the very near future.
- SOCOM Core Support Proposal Work is in full swing! If you are interested in participating with AP trying to win work on this new effort, reach out to Tiffany Shaffery and she will find something for you to help with.
- In keeping with the Assertive Professionals culture of friendly, yet fierce, sports competition, we are kicking off this year's NCAA College Championship Bracket Challenge! Prizes this year include 1st-\$100, 2nd-\$50 and 3rd-\$25. Additionally, the competitor who successfully picks the most lopsided up-sets (determined by seeding differential) also wins a \$25 prize. *Winning (part two)* in the annual tournament is always a *Random Stroke of Luck*. You'll need plenty of your teams to hit *(Tom's) Three Pointers* if you think you'll be *Mopping the Court with Y'all*. If you're lucky or skilled in using *Smoke and Mirrors* you may shoot holes in the competition with a *Full Metal Bracket*, or you just may have a *Terrific* choice of upset wins. However, even if your *Road Leads to Zion* and you bust some brackets with a *Beer Show*, you may still be derailed by poor officiating from *Donaghy's Heroes*. No matter what, though, when we work hard together and play hard together, we all end up with a *Sensational Bracket*.
- Virtual Visits are included with your UnitedHealthcare plan. With Virtual Visits, you see and talk to a doctor online; they can give you a diagnosis and even write a prescription if needed. [Make sure to register online for Virtual Visits!](#)

SECURITY CORNER

- Tom Hoefs is AP's Facility Security Officer (FSO). For any security related questions or concerns, you can reach out directly to Tom at tom.hoefs@assertiveprofessionals.com or by cell at (757) 329-9780.
- You can also email AP's Ombudsman at ombudsman@assertiveprofessionals.com. Any questions or concerns voiced to this email address remain anonymous to AP leadership. Get questions answered without fear of reprisal.
- Social media security tip: Don't put personal data such as phone numbers, addresses or birthdays on social media pages. Your friends can reach out directly to you to get this information and those with nefarious intentions should have to work a little harder to get it!
- Any cleared employee planning to travel outside the US for either work or pleasure contact Tom with travel itinerary *prior to travel* to receive pre-travel brief and schedule post travel debrief.
- Another reporting mechanism is the DoD Hotline, which can be used for reporting leaks of classified information. 1-800-424-9098.

MENTORSHIP

“What I Wish I Knew Before Deciding on a Career in Contracting.”

Tiffany Shaffery, Founder and Managing Partner, Assertive Professionals

Deciding to transition from the military to civilian life was one of the most difficult decisions that I've had to make. Moving from a large enterprise of guaranteed pay, benefits, and growth to a complete new lifestyle of uncertainty, with a family in tow, felt like a huge risk. Fortunately, I had put myself in a good position to be more marketable as an employee and had the safety of extended family to fall back on if needed. However, I quickly realized that I could have done more to prepare myself.

There are a few things that the military did provide me that prepared me very well for the transition. First, the military forced me to be resilient. Finding opportunities was much easier for me, as I wasn't bound geographically and my family was unintimidated by moving to a new area. Second, I had great training in the military from job specific training in my field, to free exam testing and language school. Third, I had 6 years of operational experience dealing with project management, leadership, human resources, and all while working on diverse teams.

While all of those things allowed me to find great opportunities outside of the military, there were several things that are important when looking specifically at defense contracting. Defense contracting is different in that contracts are temporary. Most last from 1-5 years, and when you're looking for a role, you can land somewhere in the beginning or end of that cycle. New companies can take over existing work frequently and the government can decide not to move forward with a program at anytime. Additionally, with every transition, there are pricing differences, new cultures, and benefits within each company. I realized very quickly that if I wanted to really excel, there were some things that I needed to work on. These are the things that I wish I had known before diving into this new career:

1. Get a degree! Get the highest degree that you can, as soon as you can. Most contracts will allow a substitution of experience for degrees. If you want to be more marketable, you need to have at least a Bachelors, but having a Masters is even more alluring to hiring managers. The military allows you to take CLEP exams for free to earn credits towards a degree. Most colleges will even take your military training into consideration for credits towards a degree as well. Additionally, you can get free tuition assistance while you are in the military. Use all of these benefits before you get out so that you can apply your GI Bill to other certifications and graduate programs.
2. Get a few certifications in your field. One universal certification that I always recommend to transitioning veterans is obtaining a PMP. There are a ton of programs out there for active duty and transitioning veterans where you can take a prep class and the test for free. Do it! Everyone in the military has years of project management experience. Were you ever assigned a task to complete? What did it take for you to complete it? This is all project management.
3. Build a strong resume.
 - a. Your resume should have no page limit and include all of your experience to include everything you can possibly think of from your military/federal service. In defense contracting, all experience matters when contractually trying to fit a candidate into a position. This also includes babysitting in high school, or working at the local Taco Bell. Include it all.
 - b. I recommend formatting your resume in chronological order starting from your most current position on the first page.
 - c. Every time you complete a new school or change roles/responsibilities, update your resume. This will make transitioning much easier.
 - d. Format your resume for every single position that you are applying for. Look at the Job Requisition that you are applying to, make sure that you actually meet the minimum requirements, if any are listed, and use the same verbiage that they do for the requirements in your resume. Most positions get 100's of applicants. Recruiters not necessarily well-versed in the lingo of that particular job specialty have to decide which applicants get pushed forward to hiring managers. If they cannot draw a direct line from a requirement to your resume, you will not be considered.
 - e. Make sure to include every requirement listed somewhere easy to find in your resume for the position that you are applying to.
4. Make sure you understand the position that you are applying to. Read the requirements and the customer information in the Job Requisition. Reach out to the recruiter/company/hiring manager and always ask these questions up front:
 - a. What is the Period of Performance (PoP)? This will give you an idea on how reliable the position is. Once the PoP ends, the contract could end, a new company could take over and your benefits and salary could change without anything you can do.
 - b. What is the contract, contract number, Prime, and Program Manager? You can use google to look up more information on the contract and other companies that may be supporting it. Sometimes working for the Prime on the

MENTORSHIP CONT'D...

contract will allow for more growth and a higher salary, but larger companies are usually the worst at placement on other contracts when it comes to a contract and they are less flexible.

- c. What will my role actually be? Sometimes customers list a bunch of requirements and reuse old statements of work out of ease. A lot of times, the position you read online isn't the job you will actually be performing. This is where you will want to try to talk to the hiring manager directly before signing an offer letter.
 - d. What benefits are offered and what do they cost? Every company has their own leave policy, healthcare, dental, vision, 401k, STD/LTD, profit sharing, tuition reimbursement, and advancement opportunities. Make sure the company is a good fit for you, your family and your career goals. Another important thing to consider is the company culture. This is something people often don't consider until they find themselves in a company culture they do not like.
 - e. What is the salary for the position? Make sure that the salary they can offer you is something that you can realistically consider. There are opportunities out there for the same exact positions where the salaries can range over a \$50k difference depending on the contract pricing and company's costs with the benefits they provide. If they don't have a guaranteed salary amount prior to submitting you, always ask what the average or previous salary was for the person filling the position.
 - f. Is the position a proposed, pipeline, or open? Most companies do not post this information directly in the Job Requisition. If it is proposed, find out the anticipated award date and know that this position is not guaranteed with this company. If it is a pipeline position, that means the company is trying to backfill a currently filled position. If someone leaves, then an opening will happen. If it is an open and funded position, make sure you ask what the timeline is for hire. If you are transitioning in 8 months, but the position is open now, they will not likely hold the position open until you transition. A good time to look at open positions is when you are within 6 months of transitioning.
5. Lastly, communication and transparency are key. Your interactions with every member of the organization are important before you start work. Make sure they answer all of your questions. Remember that they need you! They aren't doing you any favors. The employer/employee relationship in defense contracting is based on both sides taking care of each other and it being mutually beneficial to both parties. Always be open and honest with your future employer about needs and expectations and demand the same from them.

KEY DATES

MARCH

- 28th: AP Power Hour

APRIL

- 2-4: Northrup Grumman Visit, Ft. Huachuca, AZ
- 22-24: AFCEA Homeland Security Conference, Washington, DC

MAY

- 23: AP Power Hour

JUNE

- 2-5: GEOINT Conference, San Antonio, TX
- 12: Key Executive Leadership Conference, Washington, DC
- 20: AP Power Hour

WORD ON THE STREET...



AP held the NOVA Winter Event at DC Top Golf on February 21st. A big congratulations to our medal winners Tom, Eliot and Mike! (From left to right: Chris Kintner, Tom Brown, Eliot Joyner, Mike Rapp, Tiffany Shaffery, and Steven Shaffery)



AP held a team-building event for the Indirect Team at Trapeze School New York in DC on February 22nd. AP is always looking out for your fallback plan (pun intended)! (From left to right: Steven Shaffery, Irene Nesterenko, and Nicole Savely)

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Do you have something newsworthy to share? Email Nicole at: Nicole.savely@assertiveprofessionals.com