How to develop a Veteran Employment Strategy

Developing a Veteran Employment Strategy involves several key steps. Thorough planning and consultation prior to drafting and implementing the Strategy will contribute to its strength and long-term viability.

How to use this guide:

This guide will take you through four key steps to help you develop a Veteran Employment Strategy for your organisation. It can be used alongside other resources on the Veteran Employment Program website.

1 Getting started	2 Planning and consultation	3 Writing your Strategy	4 Launching your Strategy
1.1. Consult with leadership	2.1. Form a team	3.1. Purpose statement	4.1. Accessibility
1.2. Consider the needs of your organisation	2.2. Prepare a business case	3.2. Goals	4.2. Communications
	2.3. Undertake consultations	3.3. Objectives	4.3. Host an event
		3.4. Activities plan	
		3.5. Strategy evaluation	

1 Getting started

Developing a Veteran Employment Strategy is not just about writing a document. It is about taking your organisation on a journey of purpose and commitment. For this reason, take the time to prepare and plan.

Think about the needs of your organisation and how a Veteran Employment Strategy will help meet those needs. When developing your Strategy ensure that the process involves both consultation and collaboration, so that those within your organisation have a sense of ownership over both the Strategy and its ultimate success.

1.1. Consult with leadership

Ensure that leadership within your organisation provides in-principle support before commencing the development of a your Strategy. It is also useful to identify an executive champion to help advocate for the benefits of this initiative.

1.2. Consider the needs of your organisation

A Strategy should not be developed in isolation from other activities being undertaken within your organisation. For example, your organisation will likely have a document outlining its overall strategic direction. Consider how a Veteran Employment Strategy would align with those broader objectives.

Your organisation may also have policies and procedures related to the development of strategic plans. These may outline requirements associated with governance permissions, timing and wording. Make sure you check when developing your Strategy.

Finally, determine who would be responsible for leading and implementing the Strategy.

2 Planning and consultation

Once you are confident that a Veteran Employment Strategy would likely complement the culture, needs and activities of your organisation, some additional planning and consultation is required before it can be written.

For example, you will need to consider:

- the rationale for implementing the Strategy
- the stakeholders who will help lead, write and implement the Strategy
- who you will need to consult with
- a timeline for developing and launching the Strategy.

Note: Depending on capability and capacity it may be useful to outsource the development process to an external party.

2.1. Form a team

Gather a team and select a veteran employment project lead to develop the Strategy. This should include people from different levels within the organisation and with different strengths. This group should meet regularly and be encouraged to share their views.

When allocating responsibilities to each member of the team, be mindful of not placing unfair or unreasonable expectations on team members. Consider how you might include a veteran perspective in the development process.

At this stage it is also useful to consider the resources required to develop the Strategy and the time required to complete it. A set of milestones should be established and agreed upon to support this.

2.1. Form a team (continued)

To support the strategy development team, you might also:

- identify an executive sponsor
- establish a veteran employee group.

To learn more visit: **Establishing a veteran employee group**.

2.2. Prepare a business case

Prepare a strong business case outlining the specific benefits employing veterans will bring to your organisation. Where possible, strengthen your business case by using real-world data, case studies and testimonials.

When preparing your business case, you might:

Analyse your organisation's current and future needs	**Undertake a SWOT analysis**	**Highlight how the skills veterans bring to the workplace align with your organisation's culture and needs**	**Outline the potential return on investment (ROI)**
Outline your current organisational strategic goals and workforce challenges. This could include business growth requirements, turnover, skill shortages, hiring trends and other anticipated changes in your current workforce.	Consider the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) related to the development of your Veteran Employment Strategy.	Veterans possess qualities that are highly valuable in a business setting. These include being resilient, team-oriented and having diverse and transferable skills. Indicate how these qualities align with your organisation.	Veterans' unique qualities can provide a measurable ROI. For example, veterans are loyal, disciplined, skilled and trainable. Outline how they can deliver reduced turnover and increased organisational performance.

To learn more visit: **Benefits of hiring a veteran**

2.3.   # Undertake consultations

Consultations will enrich the quality of your Strategy and ensure greater buy-in from those involved. This includes consultations with:

Organisational leaders.

Successful implementation will require commitment and ownership from mid-level managers, human resources, hiring managers and supervisors. Discuss the business case for veteran employment with them and request feedback. It can also be useful to ask them to articulate their vision for veteran employment within your organisation. This may inform the further development of your business case or leadership commitment to the Strategy.

Veteran employees.

If you already have veterans working in your organisation, seek their involvement and input. Their knowledge and experience will be invaluable in developing an effective Strategy.

Other relevant stakeholders.

You may also seek input from partners or family members of veterans, businesses run by veterans that you work with, or other organisations with a reputation for employing veterans.

3 Writing your Strategy

When writing your organisations Veteran Employment Strategy document, you may consider including the following sections.

3.1. Purpose statement

A purpose statement is a summary of your organisation's long-term aspirations for veteran employment. Explain why the Strategy is important to your organisation. Remember to link this to your organisation's broader mission, vision and values.

3.2. Goals

Describe the goals you wish to ultimately achieve through the implementation of the Strategy. Having clear goals will help you to enact your purpose statement.

The Veteran Employment Program's (VEP) Veteran Employment Commitment (VEC) organises activities that support veteran employment around:
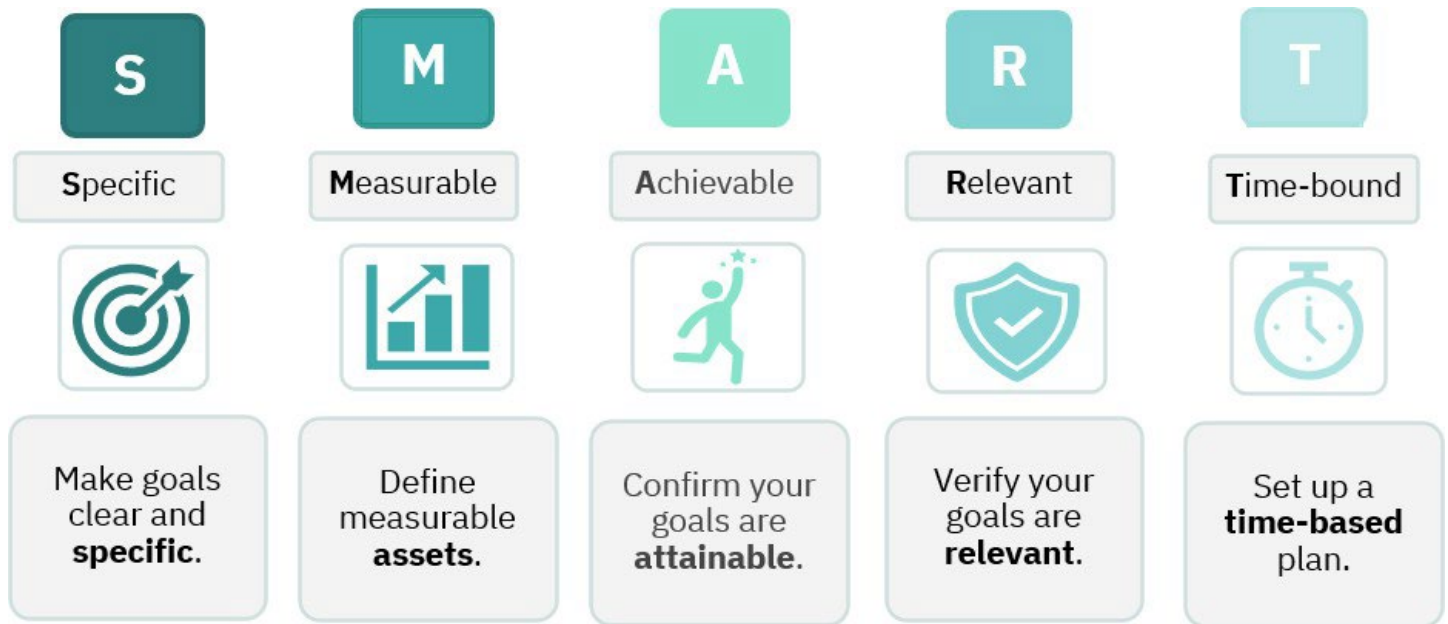
(1) Recruitment

(2) Support and Retention, and

(3) Leadership and Public Commitment.

Consider setting your own goals around these three key areas.

3.3. Objectives

Objectives describe the steps required to achieve the goals. Effective objectives should be **SMART**.

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time-bound
Make goals clear and **specific**.	Define measurable **assets**.	Confirm your goals are **attainable**.	Verify your goals are **relevant**.	Set up a **time-based** plan.

They should also clearly link to specific goals. This will support the implementation of your Strategy.

To learn more visit: **Evaluating your veteran employment activities**.

3.4. Activities plan

A well-crafted activities plan will pave the way for implementing your Strategy.

This plan will outline key actions, determine responsibilities, set realistic timelines and allocate necessary resources. It will serve as a blueprint for action in the implementation phase.

At this stage, you may also like to **revisit the VEC** for ideas on the types of activities you might undertake to achieve these objectives.

The activities plan should include:

Activities

Determine activities to achieve the set goals and objectives.

Responsibilities

Outline specific positions and teams responsible for undertaking any planned activities.

Resources

Staff responsible for meeting the objectives will require time allocation, training and a budget to complete their tasks.

Timeline

State when the set objectives will be completed.

Depending on the scale of your commitment, it may help to divide the implementation into phases. This can help to keep the initiative manageable as well as to prioritise activities appropriately.

Milestones are also important to keep the project on schedule.

3.5. Strategy evaluation

Evaluation involves monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Strategy to ensure it is achieving the set goals and objectives. It also involves making any necessary adjustments to the Strategy in response to insights from implementation.

Evaluation is an ongoing process that provides information about how the activities detailed in the implementation section are meeting the stated objectives.

To do this you may consider establishing:

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which include both a measure and time period

- methods of data collection and analysis

- reporting frequency

- a process for reviewing the Strategy regularly.

Some of your objectives may only require a single performance indicator, while others may benefit from multiple indicators. The number and quality of indicators you choose will determine your ability to monitor progress towards your objectives, identify areas for improvement and evaluate your Strategy's overall success.

To learn more visit: **Evaluating your veteran employment activities**.

Writing your Strategy: Additional sections

To further enhance your Strategy document, you might consider including the following sections:

- a **foreword** from your organisation's Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- a **message** from an Executive Sponsor or Veteran Employee Champion
- a **summary** of your organisations business case.

4 Launching your Strategy

Once your Veteran Employment Strategy has been written and approved, it is important to determine where the Strategy will be stored and to let staff and stakeholders know that it is being implemented.

4.1. Accessibility

Consider where your organisation's Veteran Employment Strategy will be housed, whether it will be publicly accessible or restricted to internal use only. While the Strategy itself can be shared with the public, you may wish to have the accompanying Activities Plan remain confidential for internal staff only.

> **Tip!**
>
> Having your Veteran Employment Strategy available to the public not only demonstrates leadership and commitment to veteran employment but also promotes transparency and accountability.
>
> By sharing your Strategy, you highlight your organisation's dedication to inclusive employment practices, set a positive example for others, and strengthen your role as a leader in veteran employment.

4.2. Communications

Create a detailed communications plan for how your Strategy will be shared with your stakeholders. This may be via emails, presentations, staff meetings or social media.

4.3. Host an event

Hosting an event is also a great way to launch your Strategy, particularly if you are a larger organisation. You could invite employees, as well as external entities who may help you deliver the Strategy. This could include ex-service organisations, veteran groups and recruitment agencies that specialise in veteran employment.