

THESIS PROJECT: BREACH POINT, LLC  
CONNECTING TRANSITIONING VETERANS WITH OPPORTUNITIES

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## Introduction

The complex and comprehensive dilemma with military veterans finding meaningful employment is prevalent today and represents a challenge for those transitioning out of the military and their families, communities, and potential employers. Diving into the statistics provided by the Department of Labor for Gulf War era II, military veterans between the ages of 18 to 24 have a 9.2 percent unemployment rate, with the next highest rate of unemployment being between the ages of 25 to 34 years at 6.4 percent, of which both are alarmingly higher than the national average (Bureau of Labor and Statistics). Despite examining the statistics produced by the Department of Labor that depict the total veteran unemployment rate at 5.1 percent in 2016 among the Gulf War-era II veterans, deeper issues exist that transcend the 50,000-foot view of reports and statistics and which warrant focused attention and research at the ground level (Bureau of Labor and Statistics). The unemployment statistics for veterans represents only one piece of the puzzle and there are other important factors and indicators that must be examined. Undoubtedly the 5.1 percent unemployment rate is a significant improvement from the 21.4 percent in 2013, but the statistic does not account for underemployment, labor force participation, and those military members who found jobs directly relating to their military specialty. The term “underemployment” or “underemployed” describes military members that are employed in a position that they may be overqualified for, directly correlating to pay, potential growth, and job satisfaction. Of critical note, the Department of Labor does not distinguish those that are “underemployed” in their statistics for veterans when reporting the 5.1

percent unemployment rate. Furthermore, using the consistent research and past history of several wars and trends, MacLean reports that, “Combat exposure increased rates of disability and unemployment among veterans, consistent with the view that combat exposure is a scarring experience. Veterans who saw combat started their work lives at a relative disadvantage that they were unable to overcome. Soldiers exposed to combat were more likely than non-combat veterans to be disabled and unemployed in their mid-20s and to remain so throughout their work life” (578). These are real challenges that veterans face which are difficult to address alone, especially without the experience or support network that facilitates veteran employment in the civilian world.

Currently, a myriad of programs and initiatives exist to help bridge the gap between transitioning military members and employment in the civilian world. At a Federal level, some programs include tax incentives and the relationships between the military and public – private entities. To show the level of attention regarding this matter, Congressman Mike Conaway (R-TX) and founder of The Congressional Wounded to Work Caucus –a bipartisan effort- stated, “We will continue to work through this public-private partnership so that wounded men and women can plug back into society...they have a great heart for this country and want to be productive, contributing citizens. Helping them transition from the military into meaningful employment is one way to do so” (Pace). The Federal Government also initiated several tax programs that incentivize organizations to hire veterans.

The Veterans with Services-Connected Disabilities: Maintains the existing Work Opportunity Tax Credit for veterans with service-connected disabilities hired

within one year of being discharged from the military. The credit is 40% of the first \$12,000 of wages (up to \$4,800). Additionally, Long-Term Unemployed Veterans with Services-Connected Disabilities: A new credit of 40% of the first \$24,000 of wages (up to \$9,600) for firms that hire veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been in receipt of unemployment compensation for longer than 6 months. The credit can be as high as \$9,600 per veteran for for-profit employers or up to \$6,240 for tax-exempt organizations. Certain tax-exempt organizations can take advantage of Warrior Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) by hiring eligible veterans and receiving a credit against the employer's share of Social Security taxes ("How to Get Tax Credits for Hiring Veterans").

Given the complexity of the problem and the variety of solutions through programs and incentives, the bottom line remains: Can military members find meaningful employment upon transition? And if so they are, for how long do they normally stay employed? This thesis project will utilize ethnographic research to examine real stories of transitioning military members to capture, analyze, and understand the real-world issues that veterans face. I will also propose a program and framework to address the issue that will involve bridging the cultural gap by implementing an analysis using Geert Hofstede's framework of culture, adapt a social entrepreneurship plan to create a sustainable action, and provide a holistic approach to community development as whole body of work.

### **Background**

When first starting the International Community Development (ICD) program, one of the first assignments required introspective thought and the

brainstorming of ideas on what we hoped to achieve while seeking this degree. My initial thoughts were to find some crossroads and connection between the paths God allowed me to travel and some present-day revelation in search of the great, “AH-HA” moment. At the beginning of the ICD program I provided a reply that described my call: “My mission is to utilize the talents, abilities, experiences, knowledge, hobbies, and who God made me to glorify Him. Specifically, using my background in education, the military, and project management, to bring glory to Him.” Throughout this journey, I developed a deeper understanding of community, spirituality, development, social justice, and social enterprise and gained a new perspective of applying some of my talents and skills within the context of who God made me to be. An article by McKay captures an inspiring definition of vocation as, “[the] work you do for its own sake; you almost feel like you’d do it even if you didn’t get paid. The rewards of wages and prestige are peripheral to getting to use one’s passion in a satisfying way. Those in a vocation feel that their work has an effect on the greater good and an impact beyond themselves. They believe that their work truly utilizes their unique gifts and talents. This is what they were *meant to do*” (McKay). Reflecting and meditating upon my calling and my purpose in life continues to be a journey of discovery that explores the paths of non-profit, international missions, international disaster relief, and business. It is not without the willingness of failure and the lack of peace that brought me to the focal point and purpose of an entrepreneurial concept of Breach Point which takes my talents, skills, and experiences, and applies them in an entrepreneurial and community focus by connecting transitioning military members with employment

opportunities. The focus of this paper will provide some background of what transitioning military members experience, observations, and explain how Breach Point serves as an entrepreneurial opportunity for community development, social enterprise, and to serve as a cultural broker.

### **Ethnographic Research**

A collective ethnographic study conducted for this thesis project examined seven military members who are actively transitioning or who experienced transition from active duty to civilian employment. Using a creative and consistent format of interviewing, I developed and implemented an individual mind-map for each person to emphasize a holistic approach and to deeply understand each person's specific situation, unique skills sets, and experiences. The intent for conducting ethnographic research is to understand the context of the situation from several different perspectives, especially as an *emic* –the perspective of an insider within the culture, which I have a uniformed military member who previously transitioned from the Army and into the construction industry as a civilian. Merriman highlights Geert's elaboration on the purpose and importance of ethnographic study and describes it as, "Thick description...Culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is, thickly –described" (Merriman 28). The specific categories for each mind map examined background, current situation, education, family, hobbies/interests, goals/objectives, geographic preferences, and expectations. Military members are asked open questions from these categories and are free to respond in any manner

and with whatever information they freely decide to provide. Summaries of their experiences from the interviews are captured below.

***Garrison –United States Marine Corps working for \$12.50 an hour***

Garrison is in his late twenties and is a prior service Marine Corps Corporal who entered the service after deciding that college was not for him and even admitted that he was not a good high school student to begin with. He grew up in Taft, the central valley of California's agricultural heartland, and describes himself as easy going and a hard worker, especially when it comes to manual labor. Harrison served in combat with the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division in Ar Ramadi, Iraq and was an infantry rifleman. Deciding that the service was not for him, he decided to separate, receiving an honorable discharge, and returned to Taft to find employment. Over the past five years, Garrison bounced around from job to job that includes employment as an oil well tester, a radiographer's assistant, oil well equipment assembler, and is currently working for a garlic company at \$12.50 an hour. He expressed frustration and difficulty in finding a job that paid well and one that he could maintain, especially within Taft. He also admitted to being laid off two times, directly attributing it to the ripple effects of having poor health within the oil industry. Garrison described his goals as finding a good career that had upward mobility and to work on his house, and to get married to his current girlfriend to whom he was engaged. Without solicitation, Garrison divulged that he was receiving some form of compensation from the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

Throughout the interview, I could tell of some unusual heavy breathing and sensed conflict within. It was as if he began to zone out, leaving silence to fill the



space of communication. Harrison was trained to be an infantryman in the U.S. Marine Corps, charged with the duty of executing some of the nation's most violent and aggressive missions during the war and based on his demeanor and difficulties engaging, I suspect that he suffers from a severe form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder also known as PTSD. Conducting an overall assessment, Garrison is a High School graduate with some college experience, but does not have the desire to complete further education. Currently working at or around minimum wage, Garrison will be taking on the added responsibility of a spouse, and mortgage payments of a home in Taft, CA. The only consistent form of income is from the Department of Veteran's Affairs. Given his journeyman work experience, gaps in employment, lack of recognized education, experience in a saturated and unstable oil industry, and combat skills, his future employment potential and future goals are in question.

***Terry –The Retiring Jack of All Trades finds Grapefruit Treasure***

I recall a multi-week conversation that occurred with one individual, brainstorming ideas and thoughts, sifting through his eclectic, but well-informed resume of experience. When I posed the question to Terry, "What do you want to do?" He came back at me with a list of his qualifications and distinguished performance of validation and support. I simply looked at him and said, "I'm not asking you what you could do, I'm asking you what you want to do –what you are really passionate about." Taking a thoughtful minute, he rose to say that he really enjoys his crops, and is passionate about harvesting water, and working outdoors. Realizing that he was the individual that brought in bags and bags of delicious

California raised grapefruits for our office to enjoy, I picked two of them up and told him, “somehow, some way, these grapefruits or some derivative thereof, are solutions to problems.” The conversation continued and he informed me that he has so many in both his and his neighbor’s orchard, that they are throwing them away and that he couldn’t give them away quick enough. Deep in thought, I told him of a microbrewery in my neighborhood that just opened up and that was into the fancy brewing of Belgian Brews and sours. I told him to take a sample of these delicious grapefruits over to the brew master to see what he thinks. Now, Terry and the microbrewery are in business together, making seasonal beers out of his delicious grapefruits. The combination and desire to connect individuals with opportunities is something that I am genuinely passionate about and points towards helping both individuals and communities.

***Bob –Modern Day Job in search of jobs***

Bob is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and is extremely gifted and talented with academic skill and prowess in both engineering and writing, earning his Engineering In Training Certification in Environmental Engineering. Serving as an Air Defense Officer, he deployed to Iraq in 2003 as a platoon leader. Departing the Army in 2008, Bob decided to pursue a construction career in the Southwest without fully understanding the demands of the construction industry. After two years, he left in search of his calling and found himself in full time seminary at Fuller. Upon graduation, he faced the difficulty of employment as a pastor without an affiliation and settled as an admissions and outreach staff member at Fuller Seminary in Arizona while volunteering for Louis

Palau Ministries. Facing the difficulties of cold calling to promote the academic program and reaching out to people—which is not a personality fit for his introverted nature- he decided to leave his job in search of full time ministry opportunities. After a year of searching, he faced the pressures of his wife advocating for him to get a job so he restarted the job search and ended up taking a job with Ulta Beauty supplies in the logistics department as a geographic bachelor in Pennsylvania. After a year of difficulty, Bob moved back to Arizona and faced several personal and employment trials and is currently looking to make another career move, but struggles with finding purpose in the corporate world. When brainstorming ideas with Bob, he often struggles with having employers find value in what he does and as an introvert, struggles with the political nature of the corporate environment. Working 5-6 days per week and most holidays, Bob's sixteen years of professional experience is undervalued at his current job and would be considered underemployed for all intents and purposes. Additionally, as an introvert, Bob never learned or was informed of the importance or value of negotiating his salary, something that the military does not teach or emphasize. Bob currently struggles with not only finding meaningful employment, but also meaningful community and companionship. He applied to several other companies to include REI, all of which replied with standard generated responses. Another aspect of the corporate world is the heavy politics, and Bob represents your forward, honest person that approaches things in a linear fashion, creating a cultural gap of understanding for the civilian world.

***Margaret –Trading Air Force Boots for Mathematics Degree***

Currently transitioning into the civilian world, Margaret served with the Air Force for six years within the construction specialty. Upon enlisting at the age of 18, she thought that construction seemed interesting so she received military training within that field of specialty. She is currently finishing up her associate's degree and hopes to look for employment and work on her bachelor's degree in mathematics. While interviewing Margaret, it was apparent that she was a novice at interviewing, not having answers prepared and not familiar with the format in which to answer questions that required experience based replies. At the end of the interview I asked her how many interviews she had and if she practiced or received any training. Her reply was that she had one interview and did not receive a call back and she also confirmed that she did not practice. She recently purchased a house in Tacoma and plans to go to school full time while trying to finish her mathematics degree. Margaret did not find the transition services helpful, and they apparently did not prepare her well enough for an immediate transition.

***Vincent -Left the military, worked for Lowe's, now I'm heading back to Korea***

Vincent recently left the Army Reserve as a full-time member transitioning to part time. His consecutive years of active duty service is 16, but left the Army Reserve in Korea, landing in Florida with his family. Not having experienced the private sector before, he took a job as a government contractor on a temporary contract, pending contract award. Without the full depth and knowledge of the industry or the other opportunities that existed, he moved his family from Korea to Florida. Unfortunately, the contractor did not win the contract and was forced to lay him off. Struggling to find immediate employment, Vince found himself working at

Lowe's in the garden supply, which would fit in the under-employed category.

Fortunately, Vince was able to find another government job that now requires him to move back to Korea with his family. When asking Vincent about his passions and desires, he said that one day he would like to be an entrepreneur and run his own business taking some concepts from Korea and bringing them state-side. He would also like to venture into his own restaurant and develop a Korean specialty cuisine from his experiences in Korea.

***Mac -Amazon-mania, that's why I left, I'm not a robot!***

Mac is a West Point graduate with a history degree who branched Air Defense Artillery. Mac served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Upon a successful eight years in service, he decided that it was time to leave the military. Not knowing exactly what to pursue, he attended a job conference and decided to pursue an opportunity as a distribution manager with Amazon. Not knowing what to fully expect, he jumped at the opportunity because it was Amazon. One year later, Mac was burned out having to deal with the constant demand of producing better and faster each day while trying to manage the human component and mechanical flaws within the system. Mac left Amazon without having a job and decided to work manual labor, exciting his interest in construction. Not having a construction background despite the eight years of professional leadership experience makes it difficult for him to land a significant opportunity. Mac would like to pursue construction opportunities, but without any trade experience or schooling, Mac is not left with many income worthy opportunities until he can build his level of experience on his resume through additional schooling or entry level jobs.

Additionally, Mac stated that he did not negotiate his salary with Amazon and was not trained to do so, leading to the acceptance of a low salary with a difficult schedule, this would also be considered to fall within the underemployed category.

***Mike –Hardcore Marine Corps with Infantry Training –No Degree***

Mike served in the Marine Corps for eleven faithful years with several tours overseas. He recently left the Marine Corps as a highly decorated and highly appreciated infantryman, without a degree, and with some disability from the effects of the war environment. Mike is married and has a family and did not receive effective transition training before his departure. When asking about his resume, he forwarded me a skeleton outline of some basic experiences with minimal information. This lack of understanding, effort, and training, sets soldiers up for failure as they attempt to transition into the civilian world. Over a two-month time period, Mike applied through various websites and frequently received what he calls “rejection letters.” The frustrating reality that Mike faced was being rejected after having years of professional experience and being rewarded and recognized for his efforts and achievements. Now he is greeted by these depressing and impersonal emails that fill his inbox. Mike conveyed to me that he did not realize how hard it was going to be after leaving the Marines. He already misses the camaraderie, and the culture that he spent so much time in, sacrificing for his family and in the name of duty, honor, and country. Currently Mike received some interest from an athletic gym in New Mexico and plans to move his family there.

**Analysis**

Given the variety of experiences and different services and different levels of education, there is a common theme of strife, difficulty, and struggle. The trend also indicates a poor, government provided transition program, since all service members did not feel or were not adequately prepared by the transition services provided, which is a standard block of instruction that is required before departing the service. Having the opportunity to sit through several military transition classes, I observed that those who teach the classes are typically not the best instructors since they do not have the corporate experience or transitional experience that would benefit members who are seeking employment opportunities in the private sector. Basic skills and resume writing, and capturing impact and result appear to be a standard issue across the board. These members have not sought out additional mentorship opportunities to help advise them of critical aspects of the job search and the culture of the corporate world. Being in the Army, and reflecting on these observations, it is evident that the military creates a sense of dependency and entitlement. After putting in much effort and following the processes and procedures, it is only fair to progress in due form and reap the benefits or fruits of one's labor. Despite the professional experience obtained in the military, the civilian world is no respecter of persons or experiences that fail to correlate in a manner that civilian world expects.

After entering the service, everyone has a specific occupation known as a military occupational specialty (MOS). These designations have specific pipeline trainings at various levels that start at the beginner level (introductory) or apprentice, which progresses to journeyman (mid-level), and then to subject matter

expert, which prepares the members not only for their real job, but with growing levels of responsibility and leadership along the way. The challenge that many members face when transitioning is the translation of these skills into the context of a civilian position. Additionally, employers do not readily understand how to interpret the vast array of military jargon, acronyms, and military specific definitions that go along with a typical military member's job or duty description.

According to Murphy and Duke:

Less than one percent of Americans have served in the military, many business managers won't initially understand the values and hard skills veterans bring. They only know what they've heard or read, and that's often not accurate. You bear some of this responsibility in overcoming this gap... you need to understand how to navigate this new battlefield and communicate in a new vernacular so you can position yourself properly...you've got the background and the capabilities; you have to make sure your employers know it (2).

Furthermore, many military members do not know what type of job or vocation they would like to pursue and often members take the best paying job available, which may not align with their passions. Duke and Murphy support the concept of making the right decision by encouraging members to, "Make the right choice from the beginning. Incorporate your interests and passions into your plan. That vision will help you stay focused on a specific career path, and help prevent you from making a bad employment choice that will be difficult to recover from if it doesn't work out." (39). Taking the time to explore one's passions and interests is a critical



piece in finding and pursuing the right opportunities and Breach Point can serve as an advisor for the transitioning member. Developing a network spans a wide array of industries and professionals can help provide members with insight, ideas, and potential opportunities.

Military members transitioning into the civilian culture can also benefit from the services of a cultural broker which is another offering of Breach Point. Defined by the National Center for Cultural Competence, a cultural broker is one who serves in “bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds to effect change” (7). A cultural broker also provides critical communication to ensure that a mutual level of understanding is developed which continues to build mutual trust.

Geert Hofstede developed a theoretical framework that examines and compares cultures through dimensions. Cultural dimensions associate and facilitate the analysis of one comparative value of a culture to another and Hofstede uses six primary categories: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, long term orientation versus short term normative orientation, and indulgence versus restraint. There are similar concepts and principles that can be applied from Hofstede’s cultural dimensions to understand the organizational culture of the military that can help facilitate an accurate understanding for those external to the organization. Hofstede defines culture as the “collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of other people from others” (Hofstede). Applying Hofstede’s dimensions of American culture to that of China would be a similar

comparison between the American culture and the military culture of the US. For example, the US culture has a low power distance of 40, indicating that people within the US see each other as more equal and that, “hierarchy is established for convenience, superiors are accessible and managers rely on individual employees and teams for their expertise and where both managers and employees expect to be consulted and information is shared frequently. At the same time, communication is informal, direct and participative to a degree” (Hofstede). This description of power distance is opposite to that of the military, where hierarchy and rank are imperative and that members are expected to follow orders. The military’s power distance might be similar to that of China (80), since the military strictly functions within a structured chain of command. Individualism for the US is 91. Within the military, the emphasis is placed on teamwork over individualism, which would likely look like China (20) in this dimension as well. Masculinity would be high in the military and I would estimate that it would be higher than both the US and China. For Uncertainty Avoidance, the military would be low, especially compared to the US, since the military utilizes several risk mitigation strategies and implements an intense and detailed operations planning process. Similar to China (87), the military would have a long-term orientation to maintain its culture and rich traditions of service and would also parallel the same indulgence dimension as China (24) since the military operates, thrives, and takes pride in discipline and organization. By applying Hofstede’s tool, it is clear that a transition from a culture that has the same dimensions as China can be difficult to adapt to and thrive in, especially when placed in culture that provides orders and directions, to one that is more autonomous and

not as clearly defined. Since a cultural gap exists between the US and the military culture, both entities would benefit from the services of a cultural broker.

Much of the military culture coincides with Hofstede's description of the different levels of culture that have core values, rituals, heroes, and symbols. Similarly, the Army along with every service has a list of core values that serve as the building blocks of the organization, such as duty, honor, loyalty, courage, and so on. Rituals within the military equate to military formations, marches, and the steeped traditions that date back to the birth of the organization such as the change of command and the observed salutations and salutes for officers. To further increase pride and camaraderie, heroes and symbols are used to create identity and pride in the organization. Further understanding the military culture, Breach Point realizes the principles of service and values of duty, honor, and country that are symbolized by the flag and Patriotic songs that reinforce nationalism and pride. This continues to be reinforced by our American culture and mainstream advertisements by the media and social agencies that often portray positive support of the troops and veterans and appreciation for their service. This simple, yet effective mentality not only reinforces the military members' purpose in their heart and mind, but also the public's general perception of the military.

The primary focus within the military construct is geared towards accomplishing the mission and taking care of people. With that reinforced mindset, members strive to become trained and qualified on tasks so they can execute their duties as proficiently and efficiently as possible. As members increase in rank and responsibility, they are often put in charge of other junior members, ensuring that a

holistic approach is taken to understand and motivate their subordinates towards accomplishing their specific mission. This correlates to and builds upon many small tasks that cumulatively group together in order for the unit to accomplish a bigger task. Having this understanding naturally develops a collectivist culture, where opinions and individual thoughts are not often used in a collaborative effort in order to execute the mission. Standard operating procedures and organizational doctrine, and the knowledge, application, and varied experience within this body is highly revered. I've observed first hand, many a times where the phrases, "don't re-invent the wheel," or "if the Army wanted you to have something, they would have issued it to you," or "we don't need any more good idea fairies to pop up," are often used to stymie what is perceived as creative thought. Having this mindset and cultural background and transitioning to the civilian world would be quite the shocking experience and reinforces the need for a cultural broker to help the transitioning member understand the realities of a civilian culture. King, who wrote a book on recruiting, managing, and retaining veterans, points out that the most common feedback she has received as a recruiter of military members who made the transition to the civilian sector is that, "I didn't know what I didn't know" (66) meaning that the transition from one work culture to another takes in-depth research, time, and a gained knowledge and understanding of the specific employment opportunity that is being examined. Cultural brokers like Breach Point have expertise and understanding of both the military and construction cultures and can therefore provide an accurate assessment and recommendation of both candidates and job opportunities. For example, one's wages in the civilian sector

can be negotiated based upon experience, skills, certifications, advanced training, or degrees while the military pay is based upon a scale that incorporates rank and time in service. In the civilian sector, bonuses and additional incentives and benefits may be available, however these are topics that military members do not have experience in.

In addition to serving as a cultural broker, Breach Point takes a social entrepreneurial perspective by identifying and addresses problems through viable solutions that impact social, cultural, or environmental change within the construct of military to civilian transitions. Breach Point examines the steps and process of a social entrepreneurial role by first asking a question posed by Bornstein and Davis, "How can individuals prepare themselves to participate in the field of social entrepreneurship?" Bornstein and Davis further describes social entrepreneurship as a "process that begins with self-knowledge and is focused on essentially being who God created you to be, using your strengths, to fill a specific role in the decentralized and de-institutionalized role of social entrepreneurship and community" (122). Undoubtedly self-awareness is the beginning from an individualistic approach, but ultimately a shift in ideology, away from capitalism is required. This shift in ideology must become internalized and part of the fiber that holds the organization and people together in order to affect systemic change" (122).

Community development is a loaded term, especially when placed within the secular and spiritual contexts that Myers best captures by stating, "I describe a process of change that affirms the joint roles of God and human beings, the need to

focus on restoring relationships in all dimensions, and the need to keep the end in mind and to recognize that there is an adversary who actively works to defeat any genuine transformation” (17). The holistic effort within the context of transitioning military members includes showing genuine care and concern for the member and their family that is rooted in sincere love and the identity of Christ. In efforts to do this, Myers further elaborates that “We need to understand that helping people in this way means taking actions that are inherently political, economic, and social” (179). Understanding the many paths in which community development can take hold, it can also be a bi-product of being an effective and intentional cultural broker that encourages opportunities for support, reaffirmation, and interaction. Facilitating opportunities to give back and serve the local community is also a bi-product of a social entrepreneurial endeavor that builds upon genuine intent and action.

All military members must be prepared to separate from the service eventually. When I first entered active duty service with the Army, I recall one senior Army officer sitting me down and telling me that “sooner or later you are going to have to take that uniform off, and what you have left is dependent upon what you choose to cling to tightly in your hand, like family.” From my observation, many military members who have transitioned often feel as if they lost a sense of purpose or belonging when they leave the military culture. For the average member, there may be feelings that equate to not having a higher, reinforced purpose for life, or a missing sense of community and belonging to what the military created and reinforced. Members that stay long enough are almost dependent on

that type of environment to thrive and excel. Having to transition often leaves feelings of depression and a loss of identity.

**Recommendation: Breach Point, getting to the “How” of a Cultural Broker,  
Social Entrepreneurship & Community Development**

“To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan” as stated by Abraham Lincoln in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural Address captures a deep sense of compassion, responsibility, reconciliation, peace, care, and hope for a war-torn country as recaptured by McKinnon in his blog linked to the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (McKinnon). Having understood the sacrifices and consequences, President Lincoln made public the weight and burden of such sacrifices is inherently a community responsibility. Today, that effort is realized by some, but it is with deep concern that the culture today must be excessively stimulated by programs and finances to take mass action and provide an over-arching impact in service for those who took the oath freely to serve our country. With that said, there is a silver lining of opportunity to impact people and community through a combined effort that connects the function of a cultural broker, community development, and social enterprise.

The ethnographic research and analysis conducted indicates a trend that drives the need for informed action. The need for understanding a military member’s profession and unique set of skills demonstrates the importance and the necessity of a cultural broker, especially for someone who has experiences with both cultures and who speaks from first-hand experience, previously conducting a successful transition. Functioning on this core concept provides opportunity for

sustainable social entrepreneurship and the development of community through relationships that birth partnerships. Utilizing the three pillars of cultural understanding, social entrepreneurship, and community development, a framework can be established in efforts to reach a holistic solution in the form Breach Point, which functions as a sustainable, entrepreneurial venture that connects transitioning military members with employment opportunities.

Operating within the three-pillar construct by serving as a cultural broker, implementing social entrepreneurship, and conducting community development, Breach Point serves as a sustainable organization for transitioning military members and communities. Breach Point is a for-profit organization that pledges 10% of its earnings to support a community focused effort, which naturally grows partnerships with individuals, organizations, and companies thus increasing the overall impact beyond the basic function of serving as a job placement agency or recruiting service. The social entrepreneurial aspect of Breach Point focuses on serving as a cultural broker for military members who are transitioning into the civilian sector and who desire to be productive in another capacity. This may seem like a simple task, especially within the American Culture, but from first-hand experience being in the military culture from any amount of time lends itself into institutionalization. Many members transitioning from the military to the civilian sector often experience a sense of lost purpose, lost focus, and lost satisfaction that was oriented around service as described by the ethnographic research. Having this understanding, I fully recognize the vital need, purpose, and effectiveness of a cultural broker.



Currently a flood of organizations and programs support the hiring of veterans, especially given the amount of media attention and government funds that continue to stimulate corporate support, however, gaps still exist that are opportunities for social entrepreneurial engagement. According to First name of author Loughran “the unemployment rate of young military veterans ages 18-24 reached 29 percent in 2011” (7). The timing of significant veteran unemployment occurred during a time of economic stagnation and implies that veterans transitioning from the military during a time of slow economic growth will have difficulty finding employment, especially when competing with professionals or peers who might have recent education or industry experience. Additionally, Loughran also mentions that, “younger veterans (ages 18-24) were on average 3.4 percentage points more likely to be unemployed than younger non-veterans” (7). This evidence provides more justification to support the gap in access and opportunity that exists between transitioning military members and civilians, suggesting that military members are in need of more support during periods of slow economic growth.

***Breach Point: The How of Getting to “Why”***

Given the depth and breadth of understanding between the military and construction, Breach Point serves as a cultural broker for members and their families to empower, equip, and re-instill confidence in transitioning members and to show value to potential employers. In the same spirit, social entrepreneurship must be founded in a truth that sincerely desires to empower and equip people with ideas and tools. Such empowerment will allow them to actively engage in the

solutions so they can say that ‘they have done it themselves,’ taking ownership. When diving into a comprehensive understanding of who people are, I utilize a mind map that explores and captures the range of ideas that military members communicate of during their exploration of thoughts and ideas while discussing life’s journey, their passions, and their desired future. As the map of ideas becomes populated, I begin to utilize hi-lighters and colors to group similar thoughts and concepts together. Seeing the group of thoughts, connections between various groups are examined and each concept is drilled down into detailed specifics that become a “to-do list” or “action items.” This exercise causes us to go from the big picture perspective to explore the minutia and detail of thoughts and ideas. Essentially, this is the practice I used with Terry to understand what he was really passionate about. This approach is not found in any of the transitioning services that I’ve experienced and gives individuals, especially visual learners, an opportunity to see themselves in a different light that might help clarify potential opportunities. It allows military members a venue to creatively explore and dream of opportunities that might exist and that may or may not make sense. Drilling down on concepts and ideas flushes out potential points of contact and businesses and organizations that might lead to the creation of new relationships and networks.

***Breach Point: The How of Administration and Preparation***

After understanding a military member’s background and the areas of interest, the next step is to connect transitioning members with employment and to work with them in preparation for potential opportunities. Given my specific niche

within the construction and engineering sector, I focus on crafting and revising resumes and cover letters that hi-light specific military positions and experiences that are valued within the industry. Having experience in both sectors allows me to serve as a translator of skills and talents that specifically communicate potential, experience, and exemplary qualities that are transferrable and desirable within the construction and engineering industry. Once the resumes are refined, the next step is to prepare for the interview. Much like the approach in getting to know people, I begin where candidates are, and they often span the spectrum of preparedness and skill. Ultimately, candidates go through a series of interviews that start with standard questions and formats and progress further into a candidate led interview, where much of what they say is used to generate follow-on questions to reinforce their communication and clarity of answers. During this process, I serve as a cultural broker, translating the skills and experiences from the military and placing them into the context of relatable skills and functions within the construction and engineering industry. I also serve as a mentor and advisor, coaching and critiquing military members on their answers in preparation for their interview.

***Breach Point: The How of Building Community***

Breach Point serves as an integral guide to help prepare transitioning members for the upcoming challenges and changes, building community through re-integration. Breach Point also looks to strengthen ties within the civilian communities through partnerships and active engagement. A combination of these cumulative efforts represents the desires and goals of a long term, sustainable, for-profit organization. From this perspective, Breach Point seeks to live out thoughts

and ideas that I captured in a community development course where I stated,

“In pursuing demonstrating the spirit of development, I would pull from several of the theologies that include Holism and lifestyle evangelism that would reinforce the lessons learned. Living the abundant life, which meant living a life that moved towards self –actualization and sustainable development. Secondly, to establish and build relationships, loving people, because Christ did and understanding that, ‘It’s not terribly easy to love some of those people, because they are so set in their ways sometimes’ (Bornstein 50). Third, to put everything before God because it is His work, not my work” (Lacanlale).

Embodying this principle, Breach Point builds lasting community relationships through several avenues that include charity, military re-integration into the community, and partnerships with local businesses within the community. Building community through charity and financial contributions is one way Breach Point can give back and further support the community development locally, partnering with organizations that are postured to follow sound, fundamental development principles. At the end of each year, Breach Point will solicit input from a group of advisers who will formulate the criteria for selection of community focused organizations and will also determine the partner organization who will receive the funds. A total of 10% of the annual earnings will be contributed towards the organization that best fits the criteria. Additionally, Breach Point would like to support a development project that encourages other construction and engineering firms to participate to provide an opportunity to give back through another avenue

that facilitates building community through relationships, person to person. From active participation in local homeless missions to international opportunities, Breach Point would like to integrate, stimulate, and mobilize community to unify and serve other communities.

As a cultural broker, Breach Points prepares candidates for re-integration into the civilian world, ensuring that military members have the understanding that they will fall under new systems that include health care, retirement, and taxes. All members that do not live in government quarters typically get Basic Allowed Housing (BAH), which is an additional benefit that is added to the base military pay but is not taxable. Sometimes military members overlook this calculation, which means that their total taxable income in civilian employment will be taxed at a higher rate. By developing a relationship as a cultural broker, I can advise and ensure that members are mindful of important aspects of their transition to ensure that they adequately plan and are equipped for the imminent change.

### **Counter Argument**

The argument exists that the field and resources for assisting veteran transitions is already oversaturated as mentioned by a retired Army Colonel David Sutherland who said, "I've culled a network of over 25,000 organizations...getting them to work together so they are not all overlapping and chasing the same dollars is a challenge" (Dao). Refuting this argument, I would agree there are many efforts to assist veterans, but the amount of quality organizations and efforts that provide help that isn't toxic is far and few between. Many efforts and organizations haphazardly apply a canned process from an exclusive penthouse view taken at the

50,000-foot level, cut and paste, and repeat without consideration as to the specific context of the situation and without meeting people at the ground level of where they are. With the “now trending” media pushes of the global giants of Starbucks and Amazon that broadcast, “Hire 100,000 Vets,” propaganda that is self-benefiting in claiming their leading-edge efforts to claim nobility in the social hearts and minds of customers and investors in what appears to be a win-win situation. Keep in mind that based on the ethnographic research and input of other veterans within my network, many would consider themselves as under-employed.

This event of achieving the hiring of 100,000 Vets is a moment in time that supports the propagation of economic capitalism and the accumulation of more capital for the sake of doing so. The long harsh reality of the matter as witnessed by several former military members is that corporate America utilizes human capital as parts of a machine. With the expectation to achieve constant progress and results as humans, it is simply an unsustainable goal of being bigger, faster, strong, better each day. The deep flaw of this model objectifies humans as sole pieces of flawed equipment that has a battery life and once that expires, another one will be needed in replacement. All this occurs while the big machine keeps on producing and keeps on churning, stopping for no one and a respecter of no persons –enter Globalization- and with that Goudzwaard, Vennen, and Van Heemst eloquently describe ideology as the entire set of conceptions and beliefs subscribed to by a specific people group (32). Part of the process of pursuing the idol of economic capitalism in a globalized world is to pursue the objective of acquiring more capital at any cost. This process acted out is similar to the Actualization phase of fully developed ideologies

described where, "...modern ideologies are tied to concrete reality in powerful, dynamic, ways. They will use every means available to come alive, to become incarnate. At such pivotal moments, everything strains toward concrete implementation. All real and imagined power, including range and intellectual combativeness, is concentrated on that objective" (53). In this way, people are objectified and used to churn toward this unsustainable and relentlessly unsatisfying hunger for capital. Because of this purpose, there exists a gap between military culture, where the purpose and mission at the tactical level differ from the purpose of achieving endless capital. Furthermore, Stiglitz says, "the system is structured not to serve general interests or assure equitable results" (210). Without a legitimate system of checks and balances in place, "only the voices of the financial community are heard" (211).

### **Conclusion**

Breach Point utilizes experience, passion, knowledge, and partnerships that expand and grow relationships within the community and also help transitioning military members and their families re-integrate into the civilian world.

Functioning as a cultural broker, community volunteer, and a financial contributor are all avenues that Breach Point will utilize in efforts to build and impact the community, people's lives, and to also grow meaningful relationships.

Having the firsthand experience from one transitioning community to another provides a unique perspective that facilitates trust and communication. Moving from one employer to another is difficult, changing careers presents additional challenges, transitioning both careers and cultures with different values

and priorities adds further stresses and complexities that make the transition difficult. As a prior Army Officer in a combat arms branch, with a bachelor's degree, I found it difficult to transition into the civilian sector. Several challenges existed with my situation, which included having a degree that was not used for 5 years, being in combat arms branch whose skills did not readily translate to the civilian sector, not having any corporate or civilian exposure, or a network of contacts or peers who were established in the professional industry.

Today, there are significant improvements to programs, government assistance, and greater awareness backed by policies that help veterans, however, the core issue remains, finding a place of belonging or an appropriate place and purpose within society. The time invested being trained and indoctrinated within the military culture with specific values, and associated behaviors that are constantly trained and reinforced do not leave an individual overnight. These traits are carried with that individual, and become part of that individual's identity. With this understanding, Breach Point can meet military members at their point in transition, to help encourage and reinforce their value and transferrable skills and support their efforts in finding meaningful employment opportunities and a place of belonging within the context of their new community.

God made us who we are, and as a fingerprint on this earth, we are charged with being good stewards of our talents and gifts. At the beginning of the course I wrote a post listing a culmination of talents, hobbies, interests, experiences, education, and desires wondering where God would lead. Reflecting now and thinking about that initial post, I find it interesting and exciting that an



entrepreneurial opportunity exists with Breach Point that will provide an opportunity to connect the dots of who I am in a meaningful and exciting new way in a combined effort that focuses outwardly on transitioning military members and community.

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**APPENDIX A: BREACH POINT BUSINESS PLAN**

# BREACH•POINT

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Truth. Life. Passion.

Business Plan

2017

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 MISSION STATEMENT

Breach Point desires to connect both transitioning military leaders and organizations by serving as a cultural broker, which connects and fosters genuine, quality relationships and community through employment opportunities. It is our goal not only for meaningful and intentional relationships to go beyond the resume, job descriptions, and brick and mortar of our workspace but also to delve into the introduction and integration of military members into the meaningful employment. By doing so, we deliberately invest in people, gaining a unique and precise understanding that facilitates community and integration into culture. Furthermore, from a holistic approach, Breach Point works with the families of the veterans who are also going through the transition process to provide them with connections within their new community for support and integration.

### 1.2 VISION STATEMENT

Breach Point envisions a thriving community of integrated military veterans contributing towards a meaningful purpose of employment that are utilized, appreciated, and treated as valuable team members within an organizational culture that is prepared and determined to invest in the inclusion, professional development, and support for transitioning veterans. Breach Point envisions the vital integration of family members of military veterans that are welcomed into a new community, forming meaningful relationships that promote growth and friendships. Breach Point envisions a welcoming group of community that is willing to support vets and their family in transition.

### 1.3 STATEMENTS OF BELIEF



- Breach Point believes that transitioning military veterans and their families are valuable members of our society.
- Breach Point believes that military veterans are not victims.
- Breach Point believes that military veterans and their families understand the concept of significant sacrifice.
- Breach Point believes that military veterans are resilient and can thrive, given an environment that is inclusive and open.
- Breach Point believes that military veterans bring both quantifiable and unquantifiable skills that may or may not be understood by any organization.
- Breach Point believes that empowering and including military veterans within a team will contribute towards the success of the organization.
- Breach Point believes that leaders of organizations are responsible and accountable for the culture they create, support, and promote.
- Breach Point believes that organizations with a positive inclusive culture and internalized values that are clearly evident, naturally promote a team environment.
- Breach Point believes that the military profession and organization is uniquely sacrificial by the nature of the mission.
- Breach Point believes in serving as the cultural broker to help military veterans and their family's transition into their new communities.
- Breach Point believes that it takes a welcoming and supportive community for anyone to succeed and to integrate as new members.

#### 1.4 COMPANY OVERVIEW

Breach Point is a for-profit, limited liability corporation based in Seattle, WA that focuses on serving as a cultural broker between transitioning military members and potential employers and communities. As a prior service Army Captain and West Point graduate, Joe made the transition from active duty military service into the civilian world in 2006. Not having much guidance and support before, during, and after the transition, Joe realized the gap of knowledge and understanding that existed on both ends from a transitioning military member, to the new business culture of the civilian world. Not only does a drastic change in culture from the military institution exist, but also a significant shift in purpose, mission, and objectives –the bottom line of why things are done. Realizing this gap, Joe worked to create a concept and solution whose focus is to improve the transition process for military veterans seeking entry into the civilian world and to connect them with good, professional, and purposeful employment opportunities that allow future growth. Through this process, Joe discovered a strong and genuine passion for helping military veterans connect with good employment opportunities for the benefit of the veteran, their family, and the hiring organization.

With this in mind, Breach Point operates on the values of truth, life, and passion. *Truth* is having an honest understanding of ourselves given the *Life* we live, composed of a variety of experiences and paths travelled, that informs us of our *Passion*; a deep desire that motivates and drives towards action. Specifically, Breach Point seeks out partnerships with companies and organizations that desire and demonstrate an inclusive and welcoming culture, reinforced through a common understanding and practice of inherent and internalized values. Breach Point actively networks with military for-profit

and not for profit organizations and communities in order to establish a robust understanding of the resources available for both the veteran and the employer. Working towards authentic relationships, Breach Point's approach focuses on helping veterans determine what their natural gifts, talent sets, and interests are, to include identifying potential industries and sectors for employment. Likewise, Breach Point works with employers to develop and identify specific skill sets that would succeed within their culture and organization.

Combining the two perspectives of the military veteran and the potential employer naturally leads towards the necessity of a cultural broker who can understand the military veteran, interpret their qualities, value, and experiences to a potential employer. In the same manner, a cultural broker can communicate the specific needs of an employer in a way that military veterans can understand and relate to.

Additionally, in an added effort to help develop community, Breach Point pledges to contribute ten percent of their total profits earned annually at the year's end towards a local community development benefit. Military veterans, their family, and the partnering employer will vote on the benefit of choice. This positive gesture not only benefits the specific cause, but also creates public awareness and builds upon strengthening relationships in the local community between veterans, families, businesses, and the general public.

## PRODUCT & SERVICES ANALYSIS

### 2.1 PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Breach Point offers several products that are applicable for both the transitioning veteran and the hiring organization, and is extremely flexible and resilient to meet the employers

and veterans' expectations and desired effects of building a cohesive and strong team. Specifically for veterans, Breach Point conducts in-depth interviews and analysis utilizing a variety of custom design tools to help paint a full picture and comprehensive understanding of each individual veteran. Developing this thorough analysis, Breach Point will in turn offer recommendations back to the veteran to solicit feedback that will continuously refine the prospective search for employment. Once a conclusive, non-monetary agreement and plan is agreed upon, Breach Point will work towards finding a point of entry into the desired industry, taking into account the constraints and limitations set for by the veteran that often include geographic specificity, salary, and benefits.

Primary products available for employers include: Point-to-Point (P2P) hiring, Strategic Team Building & Planning (STRAT-4), and Test-Fire (R&D) solutions. Since Breach Point is a for-profit organization, the hiring company and Breach point will come to a contractual agreement for a specific scope of work and associated cost. Anything outside the scope of work or requested changes associated will be agreed upon and added to the initial contract in the form of addendums.

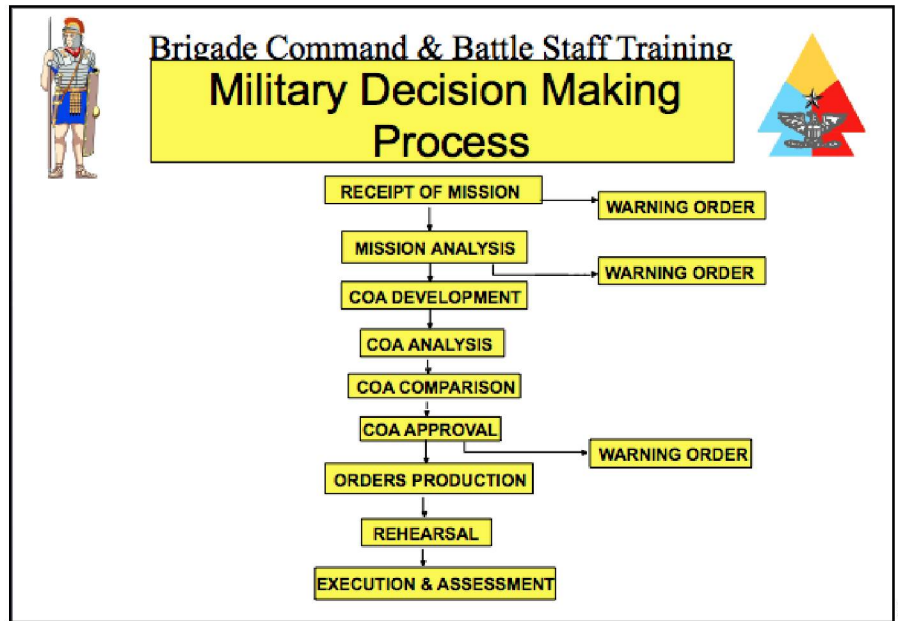
Point-to-Point (P2P) hiring is a straight, forward approach that matches basic skill sets, qualifications, and known attributes and personalities of transitioning military members with employers seeking the same qualifications. Typically this occurs through communication that can take the form of a combination of methods that include electronic correspondence, verbal communications, and interviews. Breach Point's efforts as a cultural broker not only focuses on the cold hard facts and qualifications, but

also takes into account the cultural aspect of the hiring company. Often this effort will require an in-depth understanding and study of the hiring company's culture and the vision of the leadership, understanding what additional attributes and characteristics the company is looking for. Digesting this information, Breach Point becomes well informed of the specific type of background to search for within the military context. Using institutional knowledge and myriad of contacts and networks within the military organization, Breach Point will search to find and pool a collection of transitioning veterans who have interest in the specific job description, culture, and location of the hiring organization.

Team Building and Planning (STRAT-4) is an intensive and pro-active planning product offered by Breach Point that takes the vision of the organization's leadership and conceptualizes it through the rigorous and civilianized version of the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP)<sup>1</sup>. The end result of this product provides developed, specific, and actionable courses of action and recommendations for the organization's leadership to consider for execution. Each of the developed courses of action will have associated decision points and call for organizational leaders to provide clear guidance and instruction for their vision. Part of the concept for building the team includes finding critical junior leadership that have the background to integrate and execute the vision of the leadership according to the specified course of action, guidance, and desired way forward.

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<sup>1</sup>According to U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 6-0, Commander & Staff Organization and Operations, the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) identifies several formal meetings and briefings between the commander and staff to discuss, assess, and approve or disapprove planning efforts as they progress.



**Figure 1 – Military Decision Making Process**

Test Fire! (R&D) solutions are often dynamic and customized solutions that can be as specific or as broad as the mind's imagination. Breach Point meets with prospective employers to think of creative, out-of-the-box solutions to meet their employment needs. This takes into account a myriad of veteran's benefits and individual flexibility and situations that come together for consideration into a well organized and planned effort, postured for success. Using the similar principles of the IDEO organization, the hiring employer will be challenged to think of solutions that are creative and often thought be off-the-wall and impractical. By understanding and analyzing creative solutions, a collaborative, unique and single solution can be formed that will push the limits of the team to determine ways to pull together resources in order to make the solution become a reality.

<sup>2</sup>A copy of this slide is a product of the Army's Professional Military Education, known as the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) for officers. The slide brief is part of the brigade command and battle staff training curriculum.

## 2.2 SERVICE DESCRIPTION

Breach Point offers a variety of services to transitioning military veterans and their families that are also an added benefit to the hiring employer. The concept of this service is a holistic and start-to-finish approach that begins with the first screening interview and ends with a successful transition for the veteran and their family. The concept applies the fundamental principle of “loving your neighbor” and going the extra mile to show genuine care for the individual and their families. This approach benefits the hiring employer since it is typically resource intensive to help someone integrate into not only their job, but also their new community.

Breach Point’s initial services for the veteran will commence after an in-depth screening interview is conducted. Breach Point takes a realistic and holistic approach to analyzing the totality of the situation for the veteran and comes to a decision point of whether to take-on the veteran, or to provide an alternate recommendation. Once Breach Point decides to take on the veteran, a formal plan is put together that is captured in three phases: pre-employment (Assembly Area Operations or AAO), interview execution (Time on Target or T2T), and post-interview (Objective Rally Point, ORP).

Pre-employment Phase - Assembly Area Operations (AAO) services focus on resume writing, the in-depth process of career and industry exploration, interview preparation and rehearsals, and administrative preparation. The intent of this phase is to identify the veteran’s potential career field based upon the findings of the initial interview and to talk through a timeline based upon their specific situation, clearly

identifying constraints, limitations, and concerns. Veterans will be asked to submit a comprehensive resume that will serve as the master resume that will be specifically curtailed to fit each specific job that is applied for. Additional administrative documents will be requested to ensure a full understanding of the veteran, their performance on duty, their job description, and specific roles and responsibilities throughout their career and within their respective units. This phase culminates in a frequent rehearsal of interviewing in various forms from on the phone, via live video-internet, or person-to-person. The objective is to provide the veteran with repetition and a standard approach and format to answering questions thoroughly, thoughtfully, effectively, and concisely.

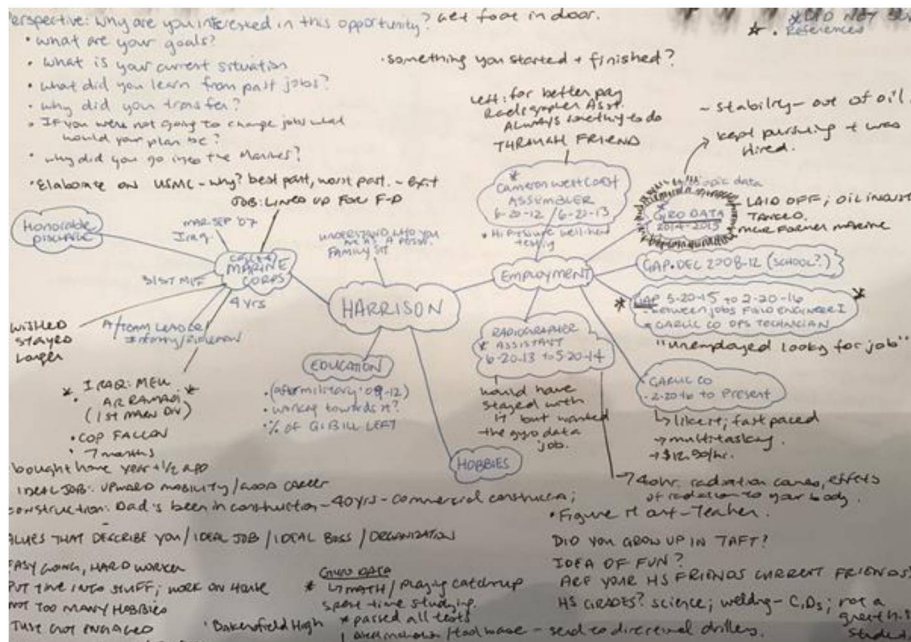


Figure 2 - Breach Point - Mind Map Session with Candidate

Interview execution, Time to Target (T2T), specifically focuses on a ramp up and intensified interview preparation that is focused on the specific company or organization that desires to bring the veteran in for a job interview. During this phase, veterans will focus on researching the specific company and formulating an applied strategy and



understanding of how to conduct the interview. Veterans will also develop an informed list of questions about the job description, culture, team, location, benefits, and any concerns that they or their family might have regarding the opportunity. Additional instruction will also include means and methods of negotiation, should the veteran receive an offer from the potential employer. This phase culminates in the on-site interview by the hiring authority. Should funding and logistics work out, Breach Point strives to have a representative, if not a former or current military sponsor that is local to the geographic area at which the job interview is taking place. The purpose will be to provide support and logistical coordination.

The final phase of services is defined as the post interview or the Objective Rally Point (ORP). This phase begins once an offer of employment is extended at which point may or may not trigger a period of negotiations. Services provided during this phase are geared towards the active onboarding and transition of the member and their family. Each veteran and their family will develop their logistical and transition plan and Breach Point will help to facilitate their effort through a network of volunteers and current or prior service military. Breach Point will specifically work on networking in the specific geographic location that the veteran secured employment in. From house hunting, moving-in, to additional community services, Breach Point will go the extra mile to ensure a smooth transition and reception of the transitioning military member and their family into their new community.

Services provided for a conglomerate of entities that include investors, developers, businesses, organizations, and military veterans seeking employment will be

in the form of an annual, by invitation only, hiring conference that will be hosted by Breach Point. The focus of this service is to connect a variety of people within the community, in one room, over a period of two days that culminates in a round-robin hiring conference with interviews for transitioning military veterans. This also creates a space and time for the formation of a general, industry specific community that facilitates networking, awareness, and support.

### 2.3 COMPETITIVE EDGE

#### *Key Competitive Challenges*

The current market for recruiting veterans is saturated at various levels, and businesses of all shapes and sizes to include for-profit and non-profit are as many as there are industry niches. Over the past years, the generic path of success leads down the road of the hackneyed expression, "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em." Companies that are successful grow over time to compete against the bigger firms such as Orion International, Lucas Group, Bradley-Morris, or Cameron-Brooks. These large, well-oiled firms compete against each other to claim stake over the finite resources of highly trained senior non-commissioned officers and top of the line service academy graduates who are transitioning into the civilian sector.

Additionally, the larger firms have a much farther reach, more resources, and provide a diverse amount of opportunities for transitioning military candidates. Counter to this is the reality that with a greater reach, comes a greater cost and overhead for operations, which in turn is passed directly to the hiring employers. It is my theory that these larger firms must focus their business model and pursuing officers from the ranks of

O-1 to O-4 (Second Lieutenant to Major) and senior non-commissioned officers that possess a technical skill, leaving the junior enlisted ranks of E-5 (sergeant) and below – arguably those who need the most help and guidance finding employment– to fend for themselves.

### *Key Competitive Strengths*

With that said, Breach Point's focus is not on growing in order to be consumed or to even pursue a merger, but rather Breach Point's focus is a precise, deliberate, and calibrated approach that focuses on the finer things that truly matter; such as building genuine, quality relationships that sustain the test of Corporate America's musical chairs and in turn make an impact locally within the community. Growing deep roots by taking care of people when it matters produces loyalty and trust, two commodities that cannot be found in today's stock market.

Breach Point offers a very competitive strategy to remain viable in today's saturated recruiting market. Applying the principles of the Blue Ocean Strategy<sup>3</sup>, Breach Point's low overhead makes the business extremely viable and sustainable. Simply put, Breach Point's current operational requirements are composed of a lab top, cell phone, and Internet connection. The ability to travel at a discounted rate for airfare makes the concept even more feasible as the current market for Breach Point is in Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area. Not having a large overhead also directly impacts the bottom

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<sup>3</sup> Blue Ocean Strategy does not focus on winning the race in competition with other organizations, but rather the focus is on re-engineering opportunities to create a niche. Several key steps that are applicable for Breach Point include: creating an uncontested market space; pursuit of differentiation and low cost; focus on converting non-customers to customers; maximize opportunity while minimizing risk; make the process inclusive and easy to understand and communicate; and it creates a win-win for the company, military veterans, and Breach Point.

line for the customer who is the hiring employer. According to discussions with other recruiting firms, the cost of recruiting services ranges from 20-30% of the candidates' first year salary to include bonuses.

Additionally, another competitive edge for Breach Point is the flexibility and agility of the company. Maintaining a small firm allows creativity and the customization of solutions for both military veterans and the hiring employer. Leveraging size, Breach Point can go the extra mile to care for military veterans and their families adding a piece of mind without incurring additional costs for the hiring employer creating a win-win solution.

The relative affordability and scalability of Breach Point's services based on the size of the hiring organization presents small to medium sized companies with a comparative advantage and an opportunity to bring in talent and leadership in from the military at a reasonable cost. Organizations without a robust budget for recruiting can now compete for the same pool of talent that larger companies are able to secure.

## 2.4 SOURCING

Typically, active duty service members depart the service when they retire or when they fulfill their service obligation. With the consistent flow of departing personnel, opportunities for engagement exist, but the question then becomes a matter of gaining access to those members. Each branch of service is different, and an internal service network must be developed to better understand the points of contact that are necessary for gaining access to the masses of transitioning service members. From social media avenues, alumni associations, and transitioning offices within each military branch

and location, Breach Point focuses on building relationships with candidates who display an active interest or background for the construction and engineering industry.

## 2.5 TECHNOLOGY

Accessing the Internet could be utilizing anything from a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or a phone. In today's world, access to information is at our finger-tips, and recruiting firms must keep pace with the evolving changes of technology and the points of access for information. Primary methods of technology include utilizing the internet and social media outlets which include LinkedIn, Facebook, and numerous other network databases and social media forms for specific groups. Additionally, there are several software programs and applications that Breach Point is currently researching that will be implemented should task saturation occur. Currently, Breach Point utilizes Xcel spreadsheets to track candidates and opportunities.

## MARKET ANALYSIS

### 3.1 Market Trends

According to the projected active duty strength for the current year (Fiscal Year 2017), the Department of Defense projects an approximate decrease of -19,400 active duty members,

<b>DoD Manpower Details</b>			
<i>Numbers may not add due to rounding</i>			
<b>Active Duty End Strength (in Thousands)</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>FY 2016<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>Δ FY16-17</b>
Army	475.0	460.0	-15.0
Navy	327.3	322.9	-4.4
Marine Corps	182.0	182.0	--
Air Force	317.0	317.0	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,301.3</b>	<b>1,281.9</b>	<b>-19.4</b>
<sup>1</sup> FY2016 projected end strength level			
<b>Reserve Component End Strength (in Thousands)</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>FY 2016<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>Δ FY16-17</b>
Army Reserve	198.0	195.0	-3.0
Navy Reserve	57.4	58.0	+0.6
Marine Corps Reserve	38.9	38.5	-0.4
Air Force Reserve	69.2	69.0	-0.2
Army National Guard	342.0	335.0	-7.0
Air National Guard	105.5	105.7	+0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>811.0</b>	<b>801.2</b>	<b>-9.8</b>
<sup>1</sup> FY2016 projected end strength level			

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**Figure 3 – Department of Defense Project Manpower**

who will then be in search of employment in the regular civilian world. Additionally, with the current perceived growth of the economy and the current market that is favorable for employees within the construction and engineering industry, there looks to be a healthy competition for talent, which would also drive a demand for qualified talent. To further incentivize organizations, the government is currently providing additional tax benefits for companies that hire veterans of specific demographics that include:

“Veterans with Services-Connected Disabilities: Maintains the existing Work Opportunity Tax Credit for veterans with service-connected disabilities hired within one year of being

<sup>4</sup> This information was queried from the U.S. Department of Defense(DOD) site <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/652687/department-of-defense-dod-releases-fiscal-year-2017-presidents-budget-proposal>

discharged from the military. The credit is 40% of the first \$12,000 of wages (up to \$4,800). Additionally, Long-Term Unemployed Veterans with Services-Connected Disabilities: A new credit of 40% of the first \$24,000 of wages (up to \$9,600) for firms that hire veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been in receipt of unemployment compensation for longer than 6 months. The credit can be as high as \$9,600 per veteran for for-profit employers or up to \$6,240 for tax-exempt organizations. Certain tax-exempt organizations can take advantage of WOTC by hiring eligible veterans and receiving a credit against the employer's share of Social Security taxes."<sup>5</sup>

## COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Key Competitor Analysis

The field of competition for recruiters assisting transitioning military members is saturated with organizations of various shapes and sizes. Regardless of the competition, the key fundamental advantages for Breach Point's success include establishing a niche market within the commercial construction industry, maintaining a competitive price point, providing quality candidates and opportunities, and fostering quality relationships that are mutually beneficial. Breach Point's niche was established naturally over 7.5 years of professional relationships and experiences within the construction industry. A critical part of Breach Point's success is attributed to the development of trust established from working on critical projects.

## MARKETING STRATEGY

### 5.1 Target Market Segmentation

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<sup>5</sup> Information received from <http://www.military.com/hiring-veterans/resources/tax-credits-for-hiring-veterans.html> that provides a brief description of some tax benefits that employers who hire veterans might be eligible for.

The branches of the military offer a variety of disciplines and occupational specialties that can benefit many industries in the civilian sector. Being a small organization, Breach Point focuses on a concentrated niche market within the construction and project management sectors that will target specific companies and veterans who have mutual interests and matching skill sets for employment opportunities. The key to success within the niche market is for Breach Point to find excellent employment opportunities along with veterans who have matching skill sets that would be an added value for hiring companies. The target for veterans departing the military with leadership, management, and construction experience parallels the career path of a field or project engineer within the construction industry. Breach Point will work to establish a primary niche within the construction industry in order to be a prime provider for project engineers entering the market.

Target Market Segmentation <sup>6</sup>				
	<i>Geographic Grouping based on location</i>	<i>Demographic Grouping based on attributes</i>	<i>Psychographic Grouping based on lifestyles</i>	<i>Behavioral Grouping based on location</i>
Candidates	-Major installations in the US & Overseas	-Junior Military Members typically (E-5 to O-4)	-Strong leadership & management skills beneficial for teams	-Growth, benefits, salary, culture, work-life balance
Companies	-Focus will be primarily in WA, CO, CA, & AZ	-Primary companies will have a construction or consulting focus	-Primary positions to look for are project manager/engineer	-Consistent quality of candidates, disciplined, hard working, adaptive.

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<sup>6</sup> This format for the Target Market Segmentation was researched from <http://growmysmb.com/market-segmentation-and-target-market/> posted by Andrew Chin on 26 October 2015. Market Segmentation is used to divide up the larger market in order to determine the needs and specific characteristics of smaller groups, in this case the groups are represented by candidates and companies.



## Figure 4 – Target Markets for Candidates & Companies

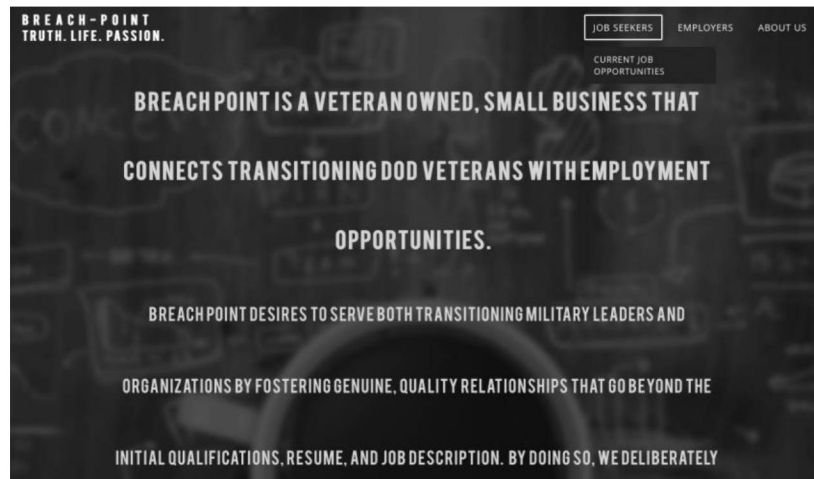
### 5.2 Pricing Strategy

In order to break into the market, Breach Point will utilize a comparative advantage of scaled pricing based upon company size. Instead of administering a flat fee or a fixed percentage fee, Breach Point will provide a tiered pricing system that will allow small, medium, and large companies to compete equally for the same talent. Additionally, Breach Point will provide further incentives for companies that decide to hire multiple veterans at the same time by providing a discounted rate for hiring more than one veteran. By providing extremely competitive pricing and top tiered candidates, Breach Point will work to establish a solidified niche within the construction industry, providing a consistent opportunity for veterans and businesses to succeed together without the hefty price tag of other competing recruiting agencies.

### 5.3 Advertising & Promotion

Breach Point believes in genuine, quality relationships that are founded upon having the best intentions in mind for all parties. At the end of the day, it is more than a transaction, but a deliberate and intentional effort to take care of people, their families, and their new extended community. Breach Point does not intend to specifically focus on marketing or advertising for the sole intent of doing it, but Breach Point will rather focus on the concept of providing a quality service, allowing one's body of work to speak for itself. Some of the traditional modes of advertising and promotion can occur through social media, written articles, and simple, yet meaningful posts that celebrate and inform the community of newly placed hires and unique construction updates from participating

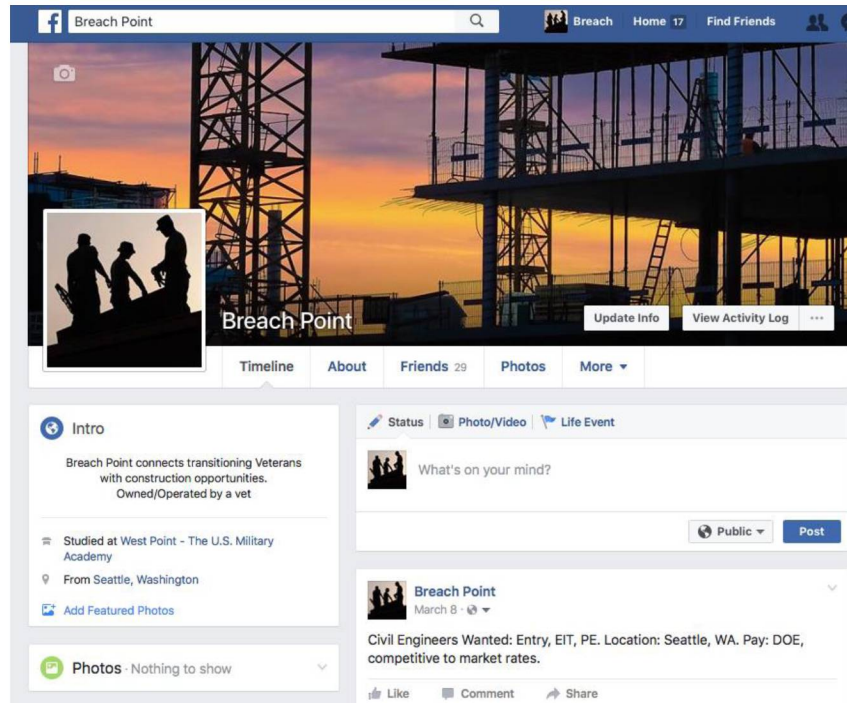
companies. More importantly, if the initial success of the organization is consistent, Breach Point believes that people that have a good experience will be eager to share and pass along information ensuring that others can share in the same successes.



**Figure 5 - Breach Point Business Website**

An additional part of advertising and promotion will be holding on-site meetings and discussions with potential candidates. During this same trip, business development opportunities can be scheduled in order to expand the offerings for employment for transitioning candidates.

Breach Point will pursue social media options that include mainstream advertisements such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn in efforts to reach a wide base of candidates and potential employers.



**Figure 6 - Breach Point Facebook**

## FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Sales Forecast

Breach Point's forecast for a majority of sales will generally follow the standard trend for military transfer season, when most members reach their service anniversary and when their contracts are complete. Typically, most members enlist in the military immediately following high school or are commissioned upon graduating from college. There are off-cycle military members that will become potential Breach Point candidates that will transition from the service during off-peak times, but this amount will be significantly less in comparison. Additional impacts to consider that will impact the sales forecast include business development, economic conditions, and weather. Breach Point's sales are primarily impacted by the amount of clients and candidates. The number of businesses that are under contract and represent viable placement options for candidates are expected to increase as Breach Point's business becomes more mature within its specific

market and geographical focus. Potential sources of income are a function of the economic conditions and are also impacted by the competitive advantage that Breach Point provides.

Construction typically follows similar trends as the economy. As economic growth slows, building and the need for management and labor coincide and vice versa. For regions and areas of the country where weather plays a factor, construction schedules are also impacted. For example, Seattle and Denver are impacted by weather that in turn, impacts the construction schedule. During the cold and wet months, an ideal construction schedule will typically focus on interior work, implying that the building or structure will be “dried in” by that time, allowing temperature and humidity to be controlled, therefore facilitating the installation of electrical, equipment, and fixtures.

A general sales forecast for Breach Point for 2017 and 2018 is provided which shows modest growth for the next two years. As relationships and clients grow, so will the business and as entry-level personnel grow to become managers in 5-10 years, it is reasonably expected that Breach Point’s business will follow the same trend.

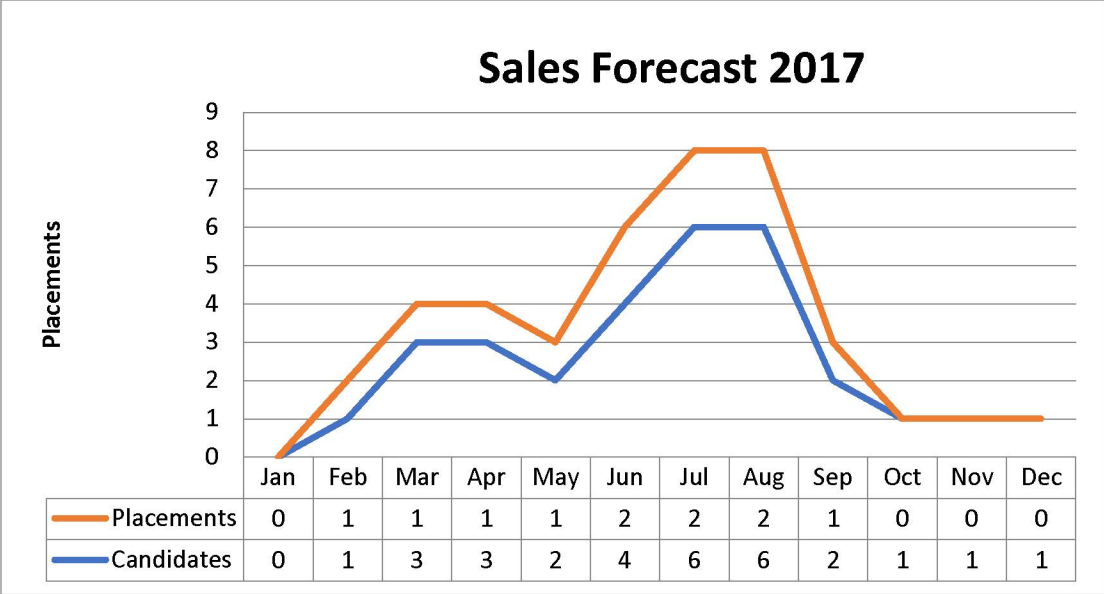


Figure 7 – Sales Forecast for 2017

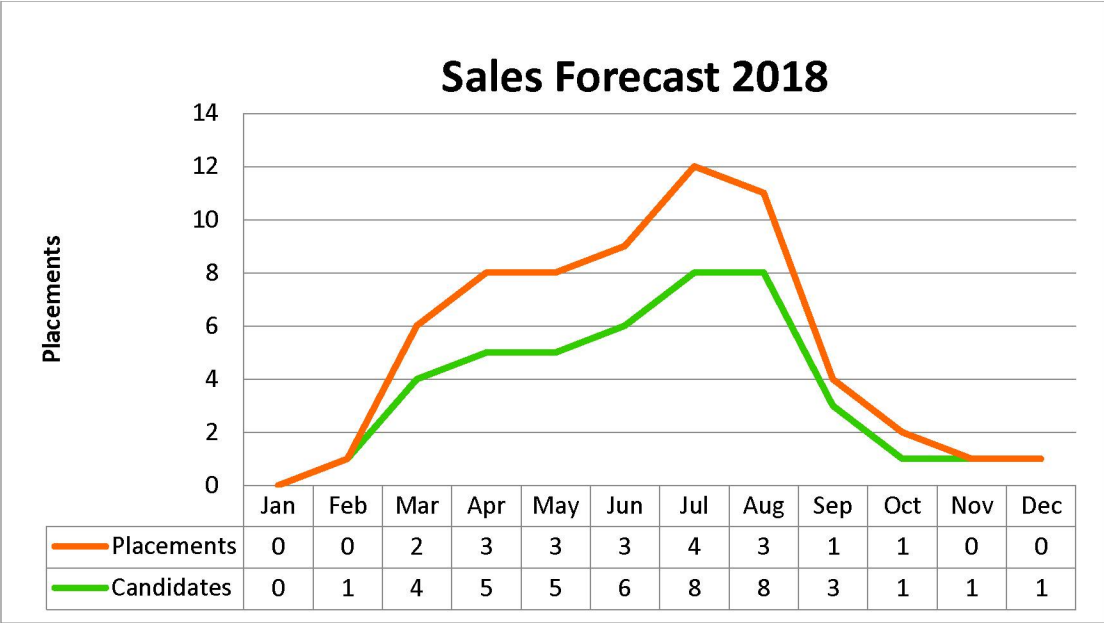


Figure 8 – Sales Forecast for 2018

6.2 Expenses Budget

Breach Point’s estimated annual expenses budget is provided below. The expenses budget represents a basic estimation of operating costs for Breach Point on an annual basis. One advantage of Breach Point’s business is there is no requirement to have a

commercial office space and therefore the lease/rent fee goes towards monthly rent, the same applies with internet, car, and cell phone service.

BREACH POINT ANNUAL BUDGET	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Total
Rent/Lease Space	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 600.00
Cell Phone	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,200.00
Car	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,200.00
Gas	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,200.00
Office Equipment	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 600.00
Internet Service	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,200.00
Travel	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$12,000.00
Website/Social Media	\$ 200.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 3,100.00
Business Development	\$ 300.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 9,300.00
<b>Monthly Total</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,800.00</b>	<b>\$2,900.00</b>	<b>\$2,900.00</b>	<b>\$2,900.00</b>	<b>\$2,700.00</b>	<b>\$2,700.00</b>	<b>\$2,700.00</b>	<b>\$2,200.00</b>	<b>\$2,200.00</b>	<b>\$2,200.00</b>	<b>\$2,200.00</b>	<b>\$30,400.00</b>

**Figure 9 – Breach Point Annual Budget (Estimate)**

### 6.3 Break Even Analysis

A business is viable only if it is sustainable. Taking into account the budget for expenses and a modest cost of living using an average of current expenses, it would take an approximate income of \$86,400.00 to cover, food (\$600), rent/monthly payment (\$2,500), medical insurance (\$1,100), utilities (\$500), Bills (\$2,000), Misc. (\$500) to sustain current living, which would mean a total of \$116,800 to sustain Breach Point as a viable stand-alone business.

**APPENDIX B: PUBLISHED LINKEDIN ARTICLE**

**Finding the Breach Point: Reflections for the transitioning Junior Military Officer (JMO)**

Link: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/finding-breach-point-reflections-transitioning-junior-joe-lacanlale>



**Figure 10 – Published Article on LinkedIn by Joe Lacanlale**

"You have to do some soul searching!" exclaimed the JMO headhunter who feverishly worked to get me to see the light of the corporate world while trying to draw me into what I believed to be the fatal funnel; stuck somewhere between a commissioned based sales gig and a position managing 50+ underpaid shift workers that were calloused to the preaching's of mandatory encouragement until group morale and production improved. I thought this was the kinder, gentler civilian world? In either case, I chose the

third option, telling myself there has to be a better way, that there must be a better way, and how do I make my equivalent salary and benefits of \$100K+ since I'm an O-3 academy grad right? Right. I mean growing up as a junior officer we spend so much time in doctrine learning and applying processes such as the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and principles like allocating 1/3 time for planning and 2/3 for operations, that when it comes time to exit into the unknown, we should be well postured and equipped to continue with successful follow-on operations. Yes, we might be landing on a different drop zone and the fog and friction of war always exists, but what about landing a civilian gig?

I can attest that my civilian experience has been anything but the wandering reality as I've bounced around more as a civilian than I would have as a normal active duty member experiencing four jobs in 7.5 years, living in three cities, and taking a year long project overseas. Granted, I always transitioned to "better opportunities," but I can honestly say that I've never been deeply passionate about any of my corporate jobs, and I doubt that I'm alone. From my initial assessment as a transitioning officer, I made as what seemed to be the "logical choice" for careers. In retrospect, I can say sometimes the logical decision isn't the best choice and that sometimes we need to further exploit and draw out those obscurely creative and potentially impossible courses of action during our planning process.

Undoubtedly, I do not regret the paths I've chosen, which proved rich in many other ways, to include experiencing amazing relationships and the integration into rich, meaningful communities. I would recommend allowing yourself the latitude to explore or at least dream about what you think may initially seem illogical and unrealistic by putting



the pen to the paper and forcing yourself to drill down a few levels in order to discover potential options and pathways that were not initially considered. Continue to believe that you have a relevant purpose because you do. Don't be afraid to take two steps back in order to move forward in the long term, maintaining a perspective that is not solely fixated on the daily battles, but more aware and at peace towards a long-term objective.

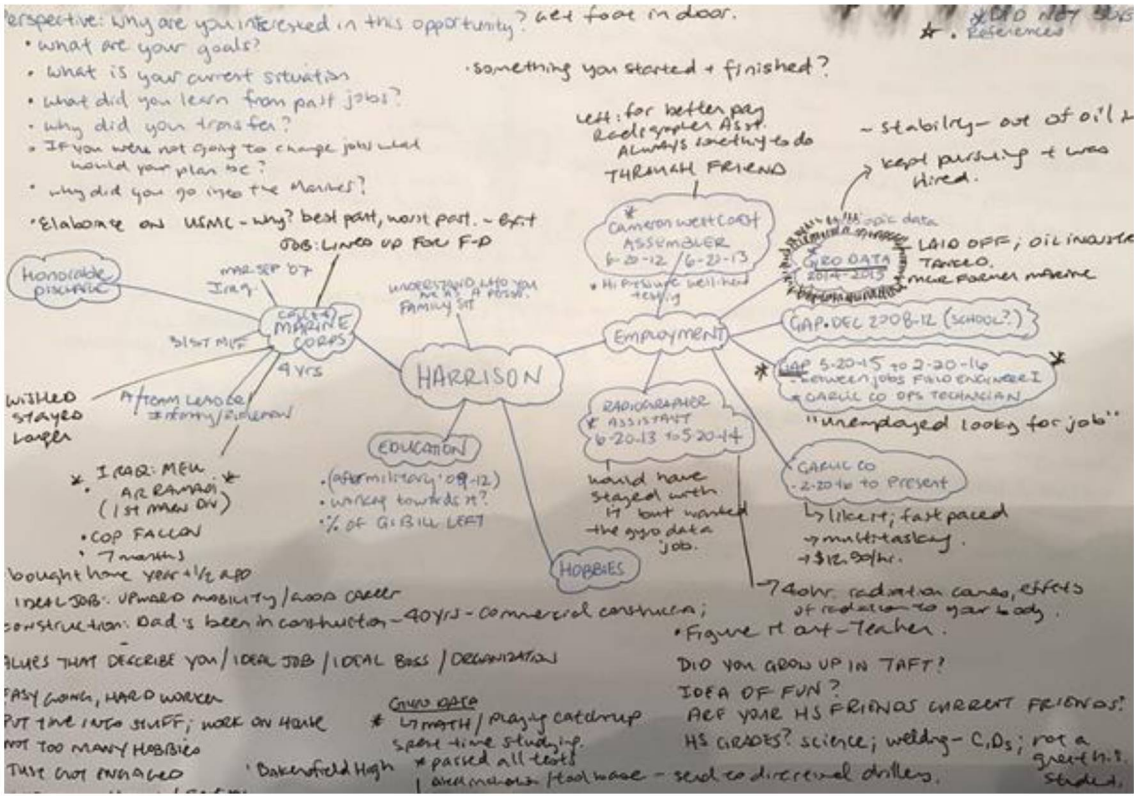
Regardless of what path you travel, treat people respectfully well, because at the end of the day people remember you for who you are as a person whether that be good, bad or ugly. Even as I've transitioned through different jobs and locations, I've always been fortunate to rekindle many of the past professional relationships with a simple and genuine call or note. You never know when you may re-enter or re-invent yourself in another context that will include the formation of teams in communities or industries that you once passed through. In this entrepreneurial age of startups, find, learn, grow, and build genuine relationships with others that share the same end state and desires. In today's rapidly changing world, we cannot be masters' of whatever universe without building a strong, trust-worthy, and competent team.

With the rolling barrage of anecdotes I offer, I will add that just as we develop a plan for real military operations, our civilian plan for transition is quite similar, only now you and perhaps your family serve as the "Household 6" element, calling the shots and deciding on a deliberate course of action. I offer that it's never too early to start planning a transition strategy, considering multiple courses of action that are war-gamed by various "threats" and criteria that may critically shape your desired end state and future success. Early on in the planning process dream big, explore creativity, and delve into the unknown while building genuine relationships with people in many industries and

various backgrounds. Try finding pieces of your puzzle while helping others find theirs, and hopefully a mentor in the process. Use your creative and transferable problem solving skills to continue to generate potential solutions. I've found that we are often not limited by opportunities, but limited to what we are able to envision and develop as perceivable and likely courses of action.

When trying to find your breach point, be true to yourself as you conduct your evaluation about your strengths and weaknesses. Examine your life as an entire body of work and include your experiences, background, and hobbies in hopes to connect concepts that will lead to a profession and work you may find worthy of a life to serve. Live purposefully, live well, and pursue your passions, being true and genuine. Thanks for serving and I hope you continue to bear fruit in a new capacity within an opportunity and community that you are genuinely passionate about.

APPENDIX C: MIND-MAP



This is an example of a mind-map effectively used when interviewing a military veteran. The bubbles represent points of discussion throughout the interview, which are tied to additional notes and responses. This effort allows me to better understand the background of the individual and represents a person's story, allowing me to meet the person where they are at and to move forward with viable career counseling and guidance.

# APPENDIX D: BREACH POINT TRI-FOLD HANDOUT



### Breach Point Qualifications

- West Point Graduate & Commissioned Officer
- Active Duty Army Service (5 years)
- OIF/OEF Veteran
- Project Manager, Govt. (Federal)/Commercial/Retail
- Project Engineer, Civil/Industrial
- Project Superintendent, Residential
- Professional Interview/Candidate Preparation

### About Breach Point

Breach Point is a veteran owned, small business that is dedicated and focused on connecting talented transitioning military professionals and veterans with good employment opportunities, specializing in the construction and engineering industries.



Cover watch: Renegade Platoon on Patrol, Ar Ramadi, Iraq (2003)

### Contact Us

- Phone: (206) 484-2870
- Email: [joe@breach-point.com](mailto:joe@breach-point.com)
- Web: [breachpoint.weebly.com](http://breachpoint.weebly.com)



**Breach Point**

*Connecting military talent with employment opportunities.*



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*With the experience as an Army Officer  
and as a construction professional,  
Breach Point understands the criteria  
for a successful partnership.*

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### Products & Services

- **Point-to-Point (P2P)** – straight forward recruiting approach, matching skill sets, qualifications, and known attributes with employer’s requirements.
- **Strategy of Forces (STRAT-4)**  
*Coming Soon* – Full service, start to finish, customized transitioning military and on-boarding program specific to each organization.
- **Muster** – Hiring conference that is specific to the construction and engineering industry, geographically specific and by invite.



*Maintenance: Breach Point Platoon, Ar Ramadi, Iraq (2003)*

- **Breach Point** focuses on recruiting talented military members who have construction and/or engineering experience, connecting them with good employment opportunities.
- **Breach Point** believes, values, and builds on genuine relationships that are committed to doing good work and providing meaningful impact.



*Patrol Prep: Breach Point Platoon, Ar Ramadi, Iraq (2003)*

### Competitive Strengths

- Customized Talent Acquisition Solutions
- Competitive Pricing Strategy
- Professional Industry Experience in a variety of roles and responsibilities
- In depth understanding of Military Knowledge, Skills, and Experiences

### Good Stewardship

In efforts to give back to community, **Breach Point** pledges **10%** of all transactions towards community development. This year’s benefit will be announced by the Fall of 2017. We look forward to your partnership!