

Designing Your Value Proposition

It is critical that you make it easy for the hiring manager to see how your uniqueness is relevant and compelling for the position in which they are hiring

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Don't be surprised if at some point you're in a job interview and the recruiter asks, "What makes you special?" The recruiter is asking you to differentiate yourself from a sea of candidates who might all look and sound like you and have a similar experience.

Recruiters need you to have a clear value proposition because most job candidates spend so much time working on their resumes that they forget to focus on what makes them unique, valuable and attractive for the open position and employer.

When an employer publishes a job request, they typically list the skills, abilities, and experience required, such as "10+ years' experience as IT leader for global company in the security industry" or "senior-level expertise in UX/UI web design." These job requests are designed to help identify candidates who qualify for the job.

The hiring manager is looking to see if you are a good fit within the company or the team. Are you someone they'd enjoy working alongside? Do you work well with others? Are you a more social or independent worker? Can you handle stress?

As a veteran, you know the importance of building alliances and creating strong teams. You have worked under pressure where your ability to think and respond quickly was not only appreciated but crucial. Are you explaining this to the hiring managers? Are you listing this on your resume? You should!

Then, the hiring manager or job recruiter is looking for some aspect of who you are that is unique. What makes your application stand apart from the thousands of others they might be reviewing?

For example, are you:

- Passionate about information technology and global security?

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- Someone who enjoys working with diverse teams?
- Able to speak a foreign language?
- A member of a family with a unique and unusual history?
- Someone who taught him/herself to play bagpipes?

While your uniqueness might be interesting and clever, it is critical that you make it easy for the hiring manager to see how your uniqueness is relevant and compelling for the position in which they are hiring.

For example, you might say:

- If you've ever heard or seen someone play the bagpipes, you know the skill, training, and patience it takes to master that instrument. I taught myself to play the bagpipes when I was 14, and today I would like to bring my strengths to your position. I am a self-starter, quick study, and passionate musician – all skills that would serve well in your job opening.
- Because I am well-traveled and can speak three languages fluently, I would be an ideal candidate for your international teaching position. As a former Army Sergeant deployed to four tours overseas, I was often called upon to help troops integrate into new cultures by teaching them the language. This skill makes me a good team builder, teacher and someone who learns quickly.

Your value proposition should make you memorable enough to stand apart from the competition and should be authentic and genuine to who you are and how you live your life. Your value proposition is a key attribute to your personal brand.

Developed through the VFW's collaboration with Lida Citroën of the international brand strategy firm LIDA360, this article is part of the VFW's expanding education and transitioning services, resources and webinars designed to provide service members and veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce with an opportunity to learn about personal branding and strategies for navigating the job search process. To learn more about Lida's commitment to the veteran community, [check out her recent TEDX talk.](#)

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