BAE Recruiters Look To the Fortinet Veterans Program To Pinpoint Optimal Candidates

BAE SYSTEMS

Fortinet, a global cybersecurity leader, has identified an opportunity many companies overlook when hiring for technology positions: Every year servicemen and women transition out of the armed forces and into civilian careers. Military veterans are problem-solvers who understand the importance of maintaining a strong defense posture and following the chain of command. They are also practiced in understanding the mindset of their enemies. As the armed forces become increasingly digital, these digital skills translate well to cybersecurity.

Fortinet created the Fortinet Veterans Program to assist transitioning servicemen and women, veterans, and military spouses in entering the cybersecurity industry. As one of Fortinet's corporate social responsibility initiatives, the Veterans Program provides mentorship, professional networking, and access to opportunities to re-skill, up-skill, or learn new skills, for example, through Fortinet's globally recognized Network Security Expert (NSE) certification and training curricula.

When individuals are accepted into the Veterans Program, they become known as FortiVets. A visual resume or "battle card" is created for each FortiVet, containing the FortiVet's clearances, commendations, certifications, education, and positions targeted. Every three weeks, the Fortinet Veterans Program distributes the FortiVet battle cards to over 300 organizations looking for veteran talent.

Jay Garcia, who served 20 years in the Marine Corps and is now the Global Veterans Program Manager for Fortinet, explains the program's value to the industry and the community: "Through Fortinet's ecosystem of not-for-profit partners and employment partners, including managed security service providers [MSSPs], resellers, integrators, and distributors, Fortinet is not only closing the cyber skills gap but also giving back to the community because our services are at no cost. We like to call this, doing well while doing good!"

A Fortinet Veterans Program Success Story

BAE Systems, an end-user of Fortinet products, specializes in several advanced defense technology areas, including electronic warfare, cybersecurity, and intelligence services. BAE Systems works in close cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense and is typically ranked among the Pentagon's Top-10 suppliers.

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– *Nanci Long, Talent Acquisition Business Pursuits Manager, BAE Systems*

Details

Fortinet Partner: BAE Systems

Industry: Technology

Location: Falls Church, VA

Business Impact

- Provides access to highly trained cybersecurity professionals with a military mindset

- Helps recruiters to promptly hire military veterans and spouses with the right skill set, streamlining their recruiting processes

"Usually we do not have a huge need for security talent, except this one time when we had to fill 80 positions thanks to a large contract," says Nanci Long, talent acquisition business pursuits manager at BAE Systems. "It was perfect timing, since there were a handful of FortiVets that actually fit the contract roles very well." Long leads a team of recruiters who attend military recruitment events and visit military bases and says the battle cards turned the prescreening process into an easy and efficient exercise in precision hiring. "FortiVet battle cards offer a snapshot for recruiters," she explains. "Their standardized format makes it easy to see each candidate's background at a glance. It helps us to quickly schedule interviews with the individuals that seem like a close fit."

Chris Davison, veteran recruitment program manager, BAE Systems, agrees on the usefulness of the Fortinet Veterans Program battle card format: "Battle cards display the certificates each individual is holding or pursuing. Certifications such as the Fortinet NSE levels are very relevant in the IT space, especially when deciding on the area where we can place each new hire for optimum efficiency."

Davison leads the veteran recruitment program at the company. A vet himself, he constantly pushes for hiring more ex-service members: "Last year we hired 1,346 veterans. Overall, one out of every five people in the company is a vet. In Long's sector alone, around 30% are veterans." Long, for her part, has practical reasons to gravitate toward hiring veterans for IT and cybersecurity positions at BAE Systems. "The things they learn in the military are very much in line with the way we approach things here at BAE Systems," she says. "Veterans already have a strong focus on mission objectives and on figuring out creative ways to accomplish them. The ability to take initiative is also important, as is agility—rapid adaptability to new processes and conditions." Davison agrees and adds, "Veterans are also highly trainable, quick to learn. And probably one of the most important characteristics of veterans is that they take accountability seriously. In the military, we learn that early on."

Another factor that makes the Fortinet Veterans Program's candidates so desirable is their technical domain knowledge and expertise. Since most of the business BAE Systems does is with the U.S. Department of Defense, veterans are a natural fit. Then, there is also the factor of the security clearances that BAE Systems regularly needs to issue to around 60% of its employees—security clearances that most ex-military personnel already have.

"Veterans have already proven themselves twice—first in the military and then when completing the Fortinet Veterans Program. Couple that with the impressive resumes and technical skill sets, and you would be hard-pressed to find better candidates for the work we do here at BAE Systems," says Long. "Of course, my sector is more cybersecurity-focused, so the veterans I have hired recently have been network engineers and penetration testers. But it is the work ethic of our veterans that makes BAE Systems such a strong company overall. I am convinced of that."

Solution

- Fortinet Veterans Program

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