

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

**INTRO:** Welcome to the National Veterans' Training Institute Podcast Series, where we discuss pressing issues affecting today's veterans.

**HOST:** Welcome, everyone, and thank you for taking the time to participate in today's podcast, Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses. I want to take just a few moments to introduce the panel today. My name is Hannah Toney, and I'm with the National Veterans Training Institute, or NVTI. Before we get started with our panel, why don't you all just jump in here and share your name, your role, and where you're located. Stan, if you don't mind, I'd love to start with you.

**STAN:** My name is Stan Kurtz. I'm currently with the US Small Business Administration. I am the Programs Director for the Office of Veterans Business Development, also known as OVBD. So I'll refer to during this podcast, so refer to OVBD, and that's what it means. So I've been with SBA for a little over four years, and before getting to SBA, I served as the Director of Veterans' Employment Services for Texas. And then, before that, I served as the Assistant Director of Veterans' Employment Services for Florida. I am a retired Navy veteran after 23 years of service.

**LAURA:** Hi, I am Laura Wages, and I am the Director of Policy and Engagement at the Office of Veterans Business Development with Stan. I have been at SBA for about seven years now, I was in the Army for 28 years after I retired, and I purchased a franchise before I went to work at the Department of Veterans Affairs before coming to SBA. And both Stan and I are located at the headquarters here in D.C.

**BILLY:** Hi, Hannah. Thanks for having me on the podcast today. My name is Billy Wright. I am a 20-year retired Navy veteran and now the founder and CEO of Martini Mates, which is a pre-made alcoholic cocktail company. And I'm currently living in Scottsdale, Arizona.

**HOST:** Fantastic, it is so great to meet everyone. Thank you for taking the time to be here and to share your experience and expertise with us. To start the podcast, will you share the first step that you recommend to a veteran if they are interested in starting a business? Stan, we'll start off with you again this time.

**STAN:** Great. So yeah, just you know, as the military, as being in the military, one of the things we always do first before any mission is doing your research, before you get into anything before you start that mission. And that's where I would say to start here as well. And I think you know, the US Small Business Administration, Office of Veterans Business Development is a great way to start. Start doing that research, and that will lead you to the Veterans Business Outreach Centers, where they're located, the district offices, how many there are, where they're located. And then some of our other SBA resource partners such as SCORE chapters, which are across the country, Small

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

Business Development Centers, which could be located across the country, and sometimes in colleges and universities, and then also Women Business Centers. So all those resource partners are a good place to start and start making contact. And again, doing that research.

**LAURA:** I would suggest that they talk to people in that industry. Ask what they like about owning their business? What are some of their challenges? What has been their experience? Even though you may have a general idea of what it is that you would like to do, it's always good to talk to people that are already in that industry to kind of help shape your idea a little bit more.

**HOST:** Great advice all around. Thank you so much. You will have some wonderful programs that are very helpful to veterans when they're just starting out in the business journey. Will you tell us about the Boots to Business and Boots to Business Reboot programs? When you explore these programs with veterans, how do you explain the benefit of the programs as a tool on their path to entrepreneurship? Laura, will you start us off this time?

**LAURA:** Boots to Business is a great place to start. I would say that B2B is the gateway to SBA and all entrepreneur resources. Boots to Business is an eight-module course that goes gives veterans an idea of what they need to consider to start or grow a business. For example, they will learn that they should probably have a banker they should have an accountant. They will also learn some of the different ways to fund their venture and what additional resources are available to them. Boots to Business Reboot is the same course as Boots to Business, but it's offered off military installations for veterans of all eras.

**STAN:** So I agree, Laura, that's a great point. So, Boots, the Business is OVBD's flagship entrepreneurship education and training program and really offered as part of the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP as we refer to it. So TAP is really required for all service members who are transitioning out of the military, and it's a required course that they go through. So the Boots to Business course is part of that it's one of the tracks, it's a two-day course. And it's really just an overview of how to start your business or, in some cases, how to grow your business. I want to talk about TAP. TAP is really a cooperative effort among the Department of Labor, the Department of Defense, Department of Education, Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs, and then us as a Small Business Administration, and also includes the Office of Personnel Management. And it really provides all the tools and training to ensure service members, you know, have that for transitioning. And when I talked about service members, also military spouses are also encouraged to attend those TAP classes as well. So the Boots to Business classroom program, it really introduces, you know, to aspiring veteran entrepreneurs and military spouses to just the fundamentals of small business ownership. And some classes are available on military installations worldwide or in local communities through the Reboot program. So, what that means is, if you're a

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

veteran, and you've gotten out of the military, and you did not take Boots to Business, and you no longer have access to a military installation. The Reboot class is offered off military installations. And it's open to veterans of all eras, and military spouses, National Guard reserves.

**HOST:** That is all great information. Thank you so much. Now, once a veteran has completed Boots to Business, what are some of the next steps you often see them take as they build their business? Let's start with you on this one, Stan.

**STAN:** So part of the Boots to Business course or Reboot, we encourage those participants to go to the next step. So, if they're really interested and very serious about starting that business, we recommend that they take the Boots to Business Revenue Readiness course, which is the next step. Of course, it's more intense. And that course is a follow-on course to Boots to Business and Reboot for those graduates, and it's a six-week interactive virtual course where the participants develop or define their business model into a business plan. So that's the focus, and the course is hosted by Mississippi State University.

**LAURA:** Absolutely, Stan, we know that it's overwhelming. There are so many resources out there and companies that offer to write your business plan for you or to help incorporate your company, but it's all done for a fee. I would say that go to a VBOC, our Veteran Business Outreach Centers. They're there to help you tell them where you are, where you want to go and take advantage of the no-cost to you resources that are available to you. They are a huge help.

**HOST:** You are so right, Laura; starting a new business can be utterly overwhelming, especially as veterans try to navigate all the steps they need to take. When you work with veterans, how do you help them maneuver through what they need to know in a way that's not confusing or overwhelming?

**LAURA:** Well, SBA has a great program called SCORE. SCORE has retired business executives that serve as mentors, and I think veterans are used to having mentors. This is an excellent opportunity to have someone to bounce ideas off of or ask questions more directly, rather than asking vague questions. You can ask questions specifically about your business or what your next plans or steps are. We all have things that we think are great ideas, and we all have some doubts, but the SCORE mentors can help you work through those areas if you still have questions about where you're going.

**STAN:** Laura, you're right. I mean, it can be very overwhelming. And so when I'm speaking to veterans, one of the first questions, or the biggest question or concern that I normally get from veterans, is, you know, where do I start? And so it really to me, it depends on, you know, where you're at, in the process. So, if you're transitioning out of the military, again, Boots to Business is a great great place to start. But then again, if you've been out for a while, and maybe you had to get a job, and once you've got out of

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

the military, and now you're ready to start your entrepreneurship journey, then Reboot is a good place to start. So, you would take the Reboot course, or if you just want to reach out to Veterans Business Outreach Centers, that's a great resource as well. And as you mentioned, Laura, the SCORE chapters are phenomenal, made up of, you know, retired executives, all volunteers, and so, so they're a great organization The Small Business Development Centers, which, you know, I said earlier, which can be located on colleges, universities. And then when the Women business centers, all those are great resources. But again, it really depends on where you're at in your journey, you may have started a business, and you're just looking for that mentor, or you're, or you're looking to grow your business, so the VBOCs are a great resource to do that. So again, to me, it really depends on where you're at, and that journey is going from there.

**HOST:** Well, that's great. It sounds like there are a lot of supports in place to help it be less overwhelming. And part of what can be overwhelming, we know, is that starting a new business can be expensive. Are there costs for veterans to participate in the programs you've been discussing in your programs and to receive your support? Stan, we'll start with you on that question.

**STAN:** So, there are no costs associated with the services provided by SBA and our resource partners. So again, I'll go back to my initial thoughts were, you know, just really just doing your homework, because there's a lot of resources out there for veterans and military spouses, there may be some costs associated with it, but not with SBA. So, if you start with SBA, you'll know that there's no cost associated with it. So that's a great place to start.

**LAURA:** I like to say that these programs are at no cost to you, but they're definitely not free. There's a lot of resources that go into these programs because we want you to succeed. The cost to you is the hard work that you will do. We provide training and counseling, and support along the way.

**HOST:** Oh, wow. Good point, Laura, no cost to you, but not without some hard work and effort. Now, we know, I think we've established just in this conversation already that building a business can be both exciting and scary. How do the relationships you create with the veterans you work with help them as they take on the emotions and challenges of, of starting a business? Laura, why don't you jump in here on this one?

**LAURA:** Sure, being a veteran, you already have a connection. You already have something in common. You understand because you come from an environment where most items are dictated or laid out for you, and now you are an army of one. But the truth is you're not. It's just a whole new team that is here to support you in your endeavor. Whether it is the VBOC member, another veteran or military spouse, a business owner, or someone at the Women Business Centers, you're not alone, you are just executing your vision.

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

**STAN:** One of the things I think is really unique about the services that we provide, especially with the VBOC and district offices and all the other resource partners that we mentioned, is this that personal connection. And I see it all the time, in fact, that was entered at a conference just last week, and I did a panel discussion with a couple of success stories. And at the end of that session, you know, they were vowing to want to use each other's products to introduce them to other business owners in their environment. And so just that personal connection, and one of the things when I talked about the personal connection, they'll stay with you throughout that journey. So, if you start working with a VBOC, or a SCORE mentor, they'll stay with you that whole journey. One of the things we do at OBVD is we capture that we do a lot of success story videos. We do podcasts, and we send a lot of those success stories out through social media. We do that for a reason want to promote the business, promote our services, and really just make that connection. So, it's just it's a great thing to see that personal connection that continues on throughout that journey. And I'm not sure that happens with other organizations, but it does happen with, with our resources that we provide.

**HOST:** That's fantastic, and that very personalized support that you provide is so critical for long-term success. When a veteran comes to see you at the Veterans Business Outreach Center, or VBOC, what are some of the essential programs that you provide veterans? I know we've talked about some already, but what are some of the other essential programs you provide to veterans? And then are there also programs that serve special populations that may be veterans aren't aware of? Stan, we'll start out with you on this one.

**STAN:** Yeah, so we had mentioned VBOC earlier, are Veterans Business Outreach Centers. So, there's 22 of those across the country, but they cover all 50 states and territories. So, there's a huge responsibility, and they're really, we refer to them as navigators. Right? So those are the ones that are on the ground or connecting with, you know, if you need capital to start your business, or you need to get in contact with somebody and provides legal services, you know, what is it in your community that you may need as a business owner, and where are those resources located? So those VBOCs are really the navigators in their community. They're also responsible for coordinating all the Boots to Business classes throughout the nation. So, they make sure that the instructors are there, you know, the materials covered. In addition to that, they do a lot of counseling, they do counseling, they do training, and when I say training, they do it in-person training; they also do virtual training. Even during COVID, they did not stop at all. They were still doing counseling virtually, still doing training virtually. And so part of that is they do pre-business planning, workshops, concept assessments, they assist clients in really assessing their entrepreneurship needs and requirements, which, you know, that business owner or potential business owner may not even know, again going back to your point, where do you start. So they can put them on the right path, assess what their needs are as an entrepreneur. Help them with their business plan and preparing that comprehensive feasibility analysis. They also aid in identifying and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of their business plan. They



# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

also provide entrepreneurship, training, and counseling, and mentoring. And I'll go back to what I said earlier. In most cases, they'll stay with you throughout that journey. You know, what's amazing to me is I can contact any VBOC and say, you know, there's a legislator coming in your area, or, or somebody and coming in your area and maybe the first lady or the second lady or traveling to that particular area, I can pick that phone up and call any VBOC and say I'm looking for a military spouse owned business, or a veteran-owned business that you've worked with, and they know off the top of their head who those business owners are.

So again, going back to that personal connection and staying with those veteran business owners throughout their journey. And so when you talked about the follow-up, so we do have some follow-up courses that we provide. And in some areas, they're specialized. So, the SBA signed an entrepreneurship training programs and through a network of grantees that include specialized programs for women veterans, service-disabled veterans, and veterans interested in federal procurement. So, the Women Veteran Business Entrepreneurship Training Program provides education, resources, specifically for women, service members, veterans, and military spouses, and it also gives participants the tools and the leverage to take advantage of both with those military spousal businesses. SBA also has three of those grantees. And so through Institute for Veterans Military Families, which we refer to as IVMF, and they're out of Syracuse University. So, they provide a program called Women Veterans, Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship, which is phenomenal. The next one is LiftFund; they're out of San Antonio, Texas, they provide counseling. They also look at financial preparation and training. And then we also have ONABEN, which really focuses on Native American communities, coast to coast, and they're located out of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

So, I also talked about we have service-disabled veteran entrepreneurship training programs that are specific to service-disabled veterans and family members interested in starting a business. So, some of those grantees administer programs, and some of those include Dog Tag Bakery, which is in Washington, DC. So, this is a fellowship that takes cohorts, two cohorts a year, normally made up of 25 to 30 cohorts made up of military spouses, caregivers, and service-disabled veterans phenomenal program. They learn everything about that bakery from how to cook, you know, the treats and sandwiches, to you know how to get ready for catering, the finance part of the supply chain, everything about that business, they learn, and they also get a certificate from Georgetown University, which is pretty cool. So, Dog Tag just opened up another bakery in Chicago, and they work very closely in partnership with Loyola University, the same type of program. Open to this, you know, service-disabled veterans, military spouses, and caregivers. We also have an entrepreneurship program at Oklahoma State University and through the Institute of Veterans Military Families or IVMF, and then we also have a boot camp for entrepreneurship Bootcamp for veterans with disabilities, and that's through St. Joseph University in Philadelphia. And then finally, there's when we talk about federal procurement, we also have a federal procurement entrepreneurship training program, referred to as VIP. So, with VIP, you have to have

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

an established business. It helps you learn more about how to earn more federal government contracts. So, it's a three-day course it's held in Maryland, they have several different tracks. So, the first one is start, and then grow, advanced, and then they also opened up an international program. So this is a great program for veterans who are looking that have businesses already who are looking to get into or how to win more federal contracts. So it's a great course, so those are the courses we have available, both the grantees, and you know, and the VBOCs. So yeah, it's all great programs. You can find out about all these programs by going to our website; if you type in into the internet search, SBA OVBD, it'll take you to our site, and then you can look up all of these programs that I talked about what the requirements are, and how to get into them.

**HOST:** Awesome. Okay, thank you so much. That's is, those are a lot of sounds like extremely useful programs for veteran entrepreneurs at all levels of their journey, and I love that you call it that because it truly is. Along that journey, finances are always a concern. Are there loans that are specifically for veterans? And how can you help within your roles veterans find other funding sources? Laura, on this discussion of finances? Would you mind kicking us off?

**LAURA:** Sure, we know that access to capital is one of the most challenging aspects of starting a business. This is why many of our programs and resource partners focus on access to capital. Getting what we call lender ready is critical to getting financing. We have programs that help with that. It is also equally important to go to the right lender.

**STAN:** Absolutely, Laura. So as you said, finances are always a big concern. But I think you've hit on a great point is really just getting ready or lender ready, and so our courses really focused on that to make sure you're prepared, and in some cases during the Boots of Business courses, but actually, bring in lenders to talk about that specifically on how to get ready or lender ready before they even start looking for capital. But one of the other tools that SBA offers that that's really helpful is called the SBA Lender Match program. And so you can find that by going to the SBA website. And so what it does is it's a program that matches the business owner, with the potential lender offering an SBA back funding. So you'll go on there, you'll fill out the information, what type of business you have, what area you're at, and it matches you to those lenders that offer SBA bank funding.

**HOST:** All those are great opportunities. Thank you. Connecting veterans with the right resources, as we've been talking about here, is really critical to their success. What other vital resources do you often recommend that are perhaps not veteran-specific?

**LAURA:** Again, SCORE is not a veteran-specific program, but it is a great resource. I would also recommend the Women Business Centers and the Small Business District centers; they're great resources.

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

**STAN:** That's a great point, Laura. Where one of the things I like to also point out, especially if there's somebody to starting a business and not ready to just commit fully to the business. So let's say they have a job and they have to kind of figure out, you know, when can I, you know, start talking to somebody's resources, or maybe they're starting their business on the side, but still would like some more information, we did talk about VBOC. But there's also another resource that SBA offers, which is phenomenal, and really, you can use at your own pace. So there is an SBA learning platform. So if you go to the SBA website, you can find it, click on it, and most of these courses are self-paced. And if you're looking for specific areas, like how to finance my business, or how do I name my business, so there's all different types of topics that that business owner or potential business owner may be looking for specifically, and they can find that and, and do it online, at their own pace. So just another great resource that SBA offers, and not just for veterans. It's open to everybody who is a business owner or potential business owner. So I just wanted to point out that, you know, that those are great platforms to take advantage of under the SBA learning platform.

**HOST:** Oh, that's great. Good information. Thank you so much. In your experience working with veterans, do you have any data or specific information on how the programs and resources you provide help veterans succeed in their business ventures?

**STAN:** Yeah, so I do. There's always data, right? So I do have some data today. So for the Boot to Business class, you know, it really was established in 2013. So from 2013 to today, we had 107,589 participants go through that class. So almost 7000 classes have been taught. And then for the Reboot, you know, for that same timeframe for 2013 to today, we've had 15,157 participants and 1039 classes held. One of the things I also want to point out is we talked about Boots to Business and Boots to Business Reboot, but there's another avenue through the Department of Defense, and it's called the Department of Defense learning management system. Now, this is an online TAP course, and Boots to Business is part of that, Boots to Business curriculum is part of that. And so through that course, it's had 38,682 participants take that course. So in total, we're talking about 161,428 participants, over 8000 classes since 2013. And one of the other things I'd like to point out, I talked about the follow-on course for Boots to Business, the Revenue Readiness follow-up course, they just surpassed their 2000th graduate. So just a phenomenal amount of people have gone through those courses, and really, the big part is learning about all the resources that are available; that's the biggest part of the Boots to Business and Reboot courses is where the resources, the follow-on resources, now talking about, you know, the district offices, what they do SCORE chapters, which we talked about SBDC. Women Business Centers, so even though they go through Boot to Business classes, they may not start a business right away. They know where they can find those resources and where they're available when they decide to start that journey.

**HOST:** Wow, impressive numbers. Thank you for sharing that with us today. I think that really brings home, just as you said, how many people are, are interested and taking



# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

advantage of these really fantastic resources. So, all of the information today has been so helpful. We know relationships, and we've talked about this some already, but we know relationships are essential as well. How can veterans help support each other when starting businesses? And what's unique about the relationships that are built between veterans when we're talking about starting businesses? Laura, let's start with you on this one?

**LAURA:** Well, we know relationships are incredibly important, and being a part of that ecosystem is very helpful. There are several organizations that post veteran and military spouse own business directories as a resource. Examples are IVMF and the Rosie network, which have great directories. We also have some amazing success story videos highlighting specific veterans and military spouses to show their journey and how it's possible to take an idea, take a dream or a need, and watch it grow.

**STAN:** Yeah, I would recommend really just stay in contact or staying connected with the SBA resources as I said, you know it's a personal connection, and normally stay with them, so it's not just a counseling session and it's over, you know, I recommend to staying with those SBA connections. One of the things, too, I think, is impressive. You know, I recently attended a storefront opening of a veteran business owners that we've worked with for a long time. She recently opened up a storefront. And the amount of people alumni from the Dog Tag program that came out to support her on her storefront opening was amazing to me, and to watch them work together and see how their businesses connect with one another. And then also last week, I also did a panel discussion with several business owners who were in the same industry. And so at the end of the panel discussion, you know, they're, they're exchanging business cards, they're talking about networking, and how they can, you know, work with each other, and so just those connections, not just with SBA resources, but also within, you know, the veteran business community, I think is pretty awesome. And with that said, you know, we've got Billy, who is on with us today. And so, so he's part of that he's, he's experienced those resources. You know, he's going to talk about his journey and how he stays connected as well. So So Billy, I'll turn it over to you.

**BILLY:** Yeah, thanks, Stan. In regards to veterans helping veterans, I would say the entire VBOC OVBD concept is just that, veterans supporting veterans. The comradery is probably the only thing I truly miss about the military. So, this is paramount to your success when starting any new business because you won't get that level of encouragement and support outside of those fellow veterans. That cliché concept of "you are not alone" it's so true throughout the entire VBOC/SBA veteran community at large.

**HOST:** That's great to hear, and we seem to be hearing that is one of the key components to success during our conversation today. And you know Billy. I think hearing success stories like yours are just some of the most important are so important

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

things that someone who is new to this could possibly hear. What are some things you can share with our listeners around both how you used the resources talked about today as well as what it took for you to be successful?

**Billy:** Yeah, absolutely. So when I retired from the military, I knew I would never be an employee again, but that's about it. I had no idea how to really start any entrepreneurial adventure. So I loosely had a concept that I did want to implement into a business. So, I first started by contacting just my local VBOC, and they set up my path for me, so starting with the Boots to Business Reboot course. I had already taken the Boots to Business course during my transition out of the military, so this was that Reboot course we were discussing. And attended that 1-day course, and that spawned into attending the Revenue Readiness course at the Mississippi State University, and that was paramount to writing a business plan that was phenomenal. Simultaneously I was also assigned a few of the SCORE mentors, and they assisted me while going through the whole process through CDC Small Business Finance to get my SBA loan. Through that entire network I ended up being a part of, I was made aware of a pitch competition called "veterans business battle," and that was hosted by Rice University's MBA program. Also, on the sidebar, I was attending SBA-provided webinars online that were all about pitches, about how to pitch to investors, etc. I ended up placing top 6 out of 200 in that entire veteran business battle competition. And so, that was paramount. That information provided through all these courses is extremely valuable, but in my opinion, the connections and networking that's what really propelled me down the right path, and I wouldn't have been able to get there without that guidance from all the courses and people that put that together, absolutely.

**Stan:** Billy is truly a success story! To also encourage others, we promote success stories, we do that a lot, promote businesses, and we also send out a lot of information to the clients we are working with, anything that is happening, PPA loans, EIDL loans, anything that is happening with SBA we normally get that out through social media, through our partners, stakeholders, VBOCs get it out to their clients. So we always try to keep those business owners in the loop of what's happening, and Billy mentioned pitch contests. Those are phenomenal. There is a lot of those popping up, and again our VBOCs and some other resource partners help prepare those business owners for those pitch contests, and for those who don't know what a pitch contest is, they are really just getting up in front of a group of people, kind of like Shark Tank, and you are pitching your business, and out of that, there is money tied to that. In fact, we have some clients we work with and are very, very good at pitch contests and continue to win and put the money back into their business. So really, it is just all about, as Billy said, staying in contact and just that network.

**HOST:** Fantastic. This has been a really valuable discussion today, and I want to thank you all for sharing your insight and experiences. As we close out the podcast, will you share the best advice you can provide to a veteran who wants to be an entrepreneur?

# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

**Stan:** Yeah, again, we kind of started off with this, but again I would say just do your research, do your research out there; hopefully, you are listening to this podcast. The first place really to start, or a great place to start, is with the SBA Office of Veteran Business Development, and then go from there. Start connecting the dots, you know, as Billy had mentioned, once you connect with the VBOC and they are plugged in to all the resources, so just doing your homework, and then going back to what Laura said and really looking at, you know, how to research other companies, the areas they are in, just try and get a plan, is this going to work, is it going to work in a specific area. So again, going back and doing all your research like you did in the military before you do any mission.

**Billy:** Yeah, absolutely, Stan, that is pretty much what I did. So I would just say, reach out to your nearest VBOC and enroll in the very next course they have to offer, whatever that is because future resources will become available quicker than you think once you are "in the system." Then, just go for it! Absolutely go for it, full pledge. Research, research, research!!! I would talk to as many people as possible beyond your friends and family regarding whatever your business model, whatever the "problem" you are trying to solve. That will help you get a good understanding of a good versus a bad idea and how you could implement it. Surround yourself with like-minded people; that is huge. They say, show me your friends, and I'll show you your future. I fully believe in that, focus heavily on your mental strength, and never, never stop making efforts to make that a priority, especially if you're in the midst of transitioning from active duty military right into the entrepreneurial world. That's a big plunge, so.

**Laura:** I would tell them to set goals. Write them down and put a mark on the wall: by this date, you will flush out your idea; by this date, you will meet with a VBOC; by this date, you will take a certain number of courses or whatever it is. I think it is important to write down your very own operations plans with a timeline, and as veterans, you know, we don't like to be late, so it's good to have dates associated with your timeline and your goals. But I agree with Stan and Billy; just get started!

**HOST:** Stan, Laura, and Billy, thank you so much for sharing these last words with us as well as for joining us for this podcast today. To our listeners, if you would like more information about serving veterans, please visit [NVTI.org](http://NVTI.org) to access resources such as this podcast. We are constantly adding new material at [NVTI.org](http://NVTI.org), so check back often. We also invite you to continue the conversation at Making Careers Happen for Veterans: Community of Practice. Thank you all so much.

**HOST:** This podcast is brought to you by the National Veterans' Training Institute, whose mission is to further develop and enhance the professional skills of veterans' employment and training service providers throughout the United States. This program is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment & Training Service



# Supporting Entrepreneurship in Veterans: Helping Veterans Start Businesses

and administered by Management Concepts. For more episodes, visit the NVTI website at [www.nvti.org](http://www.nvti.org).