



*Great Leadership Only Happens by Design*

## Making the Jump

### Transitioning from Military to Civilian Leadership in Singapore

Singapore has a history of integrating retired military personnel into the civilian workforce. Considering that most military members face a retirement age in their early- to mid-40s, it is no surprise they pursue second careers, and the civilian sector is happy to have them bring the technical and the soft skills they developed during their years in uniform.

The gap, however, between the military world and the civilian workplace is getting wider. From structural elements like strict hierarchies and clearly defined roles, to day-to-day interactions such as following orders without question, many aspects of the military are very different from the rapidly changing civilian world. Civilian organizations get many benefits from the experience retired military personnel bring, but maximizing those benefits requires adaptation to the modern workplace. This session will introduce key issues that businesses and government agencies in Singapore have identified, and provide leaders with the understanding they need to address them, including:

#### THE REALITIES OF THE TALENT MARKET

This provides an understanding of *why* leadership approaches often need to be different in the civilian context. While some aspects of military-style leadership will be useful, certain practices must evolve to take into account the size of Singapore's talent market relative to the demand for talent; modern attrition challenges; and, employee preferences that drive recruiting and retention. Simply put, a soldier cannot just say, "I quit," but a civilian can.

#### MAXIMIZING WORKFORCE PERFORMANCE

A leader's job is to get the greatest business value from employees, and in the civilian world, a leader often focuses more on supporting employees than on issuing orders. Getting the best performance requires enabling employees with resources and training; motivating and encouraging them through various means; and, evaluating them both informally – to improve immediate performance – and using performance reviews that align employees with evolving needs.

#### LEADING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Military leaders come from an environment that is predominantly male, largely young, and entirely Singaporean. Leading in the private sector, though, requires them to understand employees' unique needs and find ways to meet them; take advantage of the opportunities presented by diversity; and, build effective relationships to enable communication within the workforce.

#### TAKING OWNERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The military has career paths that are well understood and development opportunities at certain points throughout one's career. Now, as they work in changing organizations and face the possibility of changing jobs every few years, leaders must identify their own development needs and seek out opportunities to meet them.

*(Though designed with Singapore's particular culture in mind, this seminar may be adapted for other countries' needs.)*