Emerging Currents and Guiding Lights in a Sea of Goodwill

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This paper provides a compelling narrative that describes and explains several prevailing currents impacting the Veteran Support landscape and ultimately affecting Army readiness. These are seen in the likes of navigation and aggregation challenges; the absence of strategic narratives to inform the ecosystem; restrictive public policies and regulatory obstacles; a lack of investment in technological advancements within the military transition process; and persistent forms of information asymmetry directly impacting the transitioning service member. It aims to explore these challenges facing the transitioning service member and family; as well as, barriers impeding creators wanting to bring innovative technology solutions to bear within this space. Lastly, informs senior military and civilian leaders to current challenges if left unabated will continue to reduce the readiness of the military and veteran support ecosystem. As a potential way forward, an enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership construct for a readiness campaign is proposed.
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Abstract

This paper provides a compelling narrative that describes and explains several prevailing currents impacting the Veteran Support landscape and ultimately affecting Army readiness. These are seen in the likes of navigation and aggregation challenges; the absence of strategic narratives to inform the ecosystem; restrictive public policies and regulatory obstacles; a lack of investment in technological advancements within the military transition process; and persistent forms of information asymmetry directly impacting the transitioning service member. It aims to explore these challenges facing the transitioning service member and family; as well as, barriers impeding creators wanting to bring innovative technology solutions to bear within this space. Lastly, informs senior military and civilian leaders to current challenges if left unabated will continue to reduce the readiness of the military and veteran support ecosystem. As a potential way forward, an enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership construct for a readiness campaign is proposed.
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A new way of visualizing the Sea of Goodwill and the conditions that will be needed to increase the military readiness of the current All-Volunteer-Force (AVF) is needed today more than ever especially due to a declining penchant to serve by today’s generation. Reverberations from this failed attraction of talent will directly impact the overall health of the AVF and severely stress the AVF model in future years. This paper aims to explore several challenges facing the transitioning service member and family; as well as, barriers impeding creators wanting to bring innovative technology solutions to bear. Its purpose is to inform senior military and civilian leaders to current challenges if left unabated will impact the readiness of the military and veteran support ecosystem. Equally important, it provides an intellectual framework for understanding which creators are performing specific business roles within this fragmented environment and what conditions are needed to accelerate or decelerate fragmentation pending one’s view of contribution to the system at large and achieving desired readiness outcomes. Lastly, it highlights several intervention points for action and provides plausible recommendations building upon an enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership framework.

This intellectual journey begins in a manner similar to how Robert Axelrod and Michael Cohen began their book, *Harnessing Complexity*. “This is a small contribution to a large question.” In a military and veteran support environment where the social space is robust in supply; yet, persists fragmented and dysfunctional in delivery; information asymmetry reigns predominant; aggregation points are lacking; policies established to protect on one front serve as barriers on another; and a budding ecosystem resembles more that of an echo chamber—we discover tensions currently bearing on the Sea of Goodwill.
What is the significance of defining the Sea of Goodwill through the lens of an ecosystem? For the purpose of this paper the term ecosystem was used to describe the interconnectedness of individuals, government and non-governmental entities representing a holistic community of practice striving to achieve social impacts across the military and veteran support landscape. Key stakeholders within this environment are the DOD, Veteran Affairs and Department of Labor; as well as, countless for-profit, non-profit and private organizations and individuals leading change within this space. Though this environment is extremely fragmented and social change remains hyper-local, the system at large represents a learning organization.

Many scholars contend that it is healthy to revisit one’s understanding of an environment from time to time to see what has changed and to identify where more effort is needed regardless as to knowing what path or course it may lead. One need to look no further than recent commentary by General Milley, US Army Chief of Staff, to know that he agrees—“Every assumption we hold, every claim, every assertion, every single one of them must be challenged.” In this article, he went even further stating—

The structure and organization of our Army, both operational and institutional, may change drastically…this requires significant change in our current methods of thinking, training and fighting… And frankly, we are not going to get it right.

His commentary is certainly welcome and applicable to how we as an Army and society view military readiness. In essence, one may take from this passage that an iterative approach is needed to achieve readiness outcomes. Moreover, that contributions by public-private and non-profit partnerships directly impact the military readiness of the current and future AVF. As well, contends that a lack of technological innovation
invested in the transition process historically has only contributed to and exacerbated military and veteran employment and health and human services related outcomes.

Today, global research suggests that better healthcare practices coupled with improved technology through collective impact dramatically improve broader health outcomes and improve the sustainability of coordinated care networks and health-related supply-chains. The emergence of AmericaServes and its innovative technology platform in metropolitan communities across the country demonstrate the power of a collective impact organization to collect and aggregate data and ability to amplify ecosystem learning as it relates to participant behavior(s), environmental factors and social circumstances.

According to a scientific and medical research journal specializing in risk management and healthcare policy, “the most consistent positive outcome of intervention to improve self-care has been improvement in self-efficacy, an important element of self-management.” Another form of intervention that has enhanced coordinated care between differing parts of the healthcare system may be observed in “computer-based programs for people with chronic disease [combining] health information with online peer support, decision support, or help with behavior change.” Additionally, there is a large and growing repository of literature regarding health literacy, specifically with respect to understanding, capacity to seek, and ability to act on health information. A deduction obtained within this study is that “low literacy and numeracy means health communication is poorly understood, leading to inadequate self-management and perceptions of health responsibility and inappropriate health care utilization.” As such, one may quickly see the parallels between interventions within
the healthcare industry to drive improvements in health outcomes and the interventions occurring in limited capacity across the various Soldier Life-cycles and the Soldier for Life—Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP). Improvements are occurring and are realized by increased education, internships, fellowships, credentialing, training and mentorship opportunities; as well as, the emergence of new innovative technologies entering the space. Put another way, the self-efficacy of the transitioning service members with respect to health, transition and career literacy are imperatives for obtaining knowledge, capacity of service(s) desired and securing opportunities.

Within this research, two central challenges emerged: First, the lack of access to and navigation within a metropolitan area create inefficiencies and a lack of efficacy that is borne by the individual and family transitioning; not the system at large. Second, information asymmetry is widespread and present in multiple forms serving as an impediment to the transition process and most definitely, at the disservice of the military transitioning population. Together, these challenges impact the readiness of the military and veteran support system extending broader than just the transitioning service member and family. So, what actions should be taken to move this environment from its current fragmented state to a more desired future state? Who are prominent creators’ transporting ideas to consumers and communities? Which creators are building infrastructure and platforms and melding solutions to increase desired outcomes that impact both readiness to those transitioning from military service and ultimately the readiness of the current AVF?

So, who within the federal government owns this complex set of problems and to what end is there a mechanism that facilitates collaboration? Certainly, the DOD,
Veteran Affairs and Department of Labor (DOL) reflect the continuum of services and resources where many of these inefficiencies, tensions and challenges are shared. However, neither of these entities have the power, resources and mechanisms required to effectively drive impact across the continuum alone.

Given a new administration is within its first 100 days in office that campaigned on reforming the VA, a policy window may have opened providing new champions and political pressures needed to drive innovative changes for the purpose of increasing readiness outcomes for the AVF. Exploring the benefits of a Joint Commission where senior DOD, White House, VA and DOL leaders; as well as, representatives of public, private, academic and non-profit entities may serve together in a mutual cooperative structure may provide the setting and visibility needed to enhance readiness. As such, readiness gains may be observed with the emergence of aggregation points where data and information sharing practices between federal and non-federal entities are achieved, and ecosystem learning is realized through evidenced-based analytics and increased in-transit visibility of the service member across the three phased Soldier life-cycle.

To truly gain an appreciation of the military and veteran support system is to look at it within the context of new terms and models. Amy Wilkinson’s terminology for creators—"Sunbirds, Architects, and Integrators"\textsuperscript{13} were adopted as descriptors of individuals and entities operating within this system. Additionally, John Hagel and colleagues at the Deloitte Center for the Edge, posited terminology for "scale-and-scope operators as Infrastructure providers, Aggregation platforms and Agent businesses"\textsuperscript{14} proving useful for describing the businesses landscape within the Sea of Goodwill.
Together, this body of work provided valuable insights identifying the conditions needed to increase readiness.

Additionally, viewing the Soldier Life-cycle—Starting Strong, Serving Strong, and Continuing Strong—as both an information asymmetry challenge and a logistics challenge, revealed the need to use a supply-chain model and joint logistics doctrine to understand intervention points. That is, within the recruitment, development and transition process to impact readiness. In this light, a description of a joint logistics environment operating framework proved very analogous to the current military and veteran support system and what is needed at the strategic level in respects to guiding principles to achieve readiness. Lastly, the Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning applied to the military and veteran support system proved beneficial and served as a framework to organize the sections of this paper: Current challenges and Implications, an Expanded view of the Sea of Goodwill, and an Enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership construct for a readiness campaign.

The purpose of viewing this ecosystem through these treatments and through a joint logistics and supply-chain lens were to highlight emerging currents and guiding lights for transitioning service members and businesses alike. As such, this paper communicates a set of guiding principles within a framework for a readiness campaign that will provide senior civilian and military leaders an appreciation to the creators’ who are making tremendous strides in solving these gaps; and the transitioning service member and families navigating it.

Technology alone will not solve these identified health and human services and employment related challenges. However, technology through internet-based
applications and robust algorithmic data processing infrastructure, remains a critical component for managing end-to-end processes and providing in-transit visibility capabilities. Put another way, enabling technology provides the infrastructure and aggregation platforms needed to accelerate change.

Creators applying both Sunbird, Architect and Integrator-like attributes\textsuperscript{16} are needed and will serve as guiding lights in a fragmented environment. These creators transport ideas and build innovative technological infrastructure and platforms that span individuals, time, geography, industry, and product & services. As their discoveries and applications emerge, convergence and aggregation is achieved providing Great Captains the information needed to chart the seas and navigate from one system and culture to another. Understanding the navigational aids and currents are critical to achieve desired “individual-level and network-level outcomes”\textsuperscript{17} as seen in receiving improved healthcare and obtaining meaningful employment.

This paper is influenced by information gained through interviews of practitioners leading non-profit and for-profit companies. Namely, the Institute of Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, and technology firms, Unite Us and Fastport. Additionally, and germane to this research will be interviews with current and former Soldier for Life Regional and Functional Directors and my most recent experiences as the Northeast and Western Europe Soldier for Life Regional Director engaging across a disparate and fragmented military and veteran support ecosystem.

Interviews were conducted with James McDonough and Nicholas Armstrong with the Institute of Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) and Jean Coyne and Mark Schimer with PAServes, a collective impact organization within the AmericaServes
enterprise. They provided valuable context with respects to: collective impact theory, the achievements and growth of AmericaServes models impacting the readiness of a community, transitioning service member(s) and to the current AVF.

With respects to the for-profit companies, interviews were conducted with two leading technology firms operating in different sectors of the military and veteran support system. Dan Brillman, CEO of Unite Us, provides valuable insights from a technology firm operating within multiple business types and exclusively serving as the technology platform for IVMF and AmericaServes affiliates. Unite Us is a company that spans infrastructure management and serves as an aggregation platform. Additionally, it represents a customer relationship business through the role as a Consumer Agent specializing in coordinated care. Brillman is a USAF Reserve officer and veteran and with his team continuously innovate to solve the access, navigation and coordination of services challenge found in metropolitan communities across America. Practicing within and observing this system through a national lens, one understands Brillman’s accurate depiction of the space—“robust in supply; yet fragmented in access and delivery.” As such, through their expansive networks, they are able to identify and impact the seams that are sub-optimal through scale and scope to increase the readiness of the community, the transitioning service member, and that of the current AVF.

Similarly, William “Bill” McLennan, CEO of Fastport, and former USMC Reservist showcases an innovative technology company that operates multiple business types. Most recently, Fastport became the Transportation and Logistics intermediary partner for the US Department of Labor to increase the number of apprenticeship across all segments of industry. Additionally, Fastport has partnered with the US Chamber of
Commerce Foundation, Hiring our Heroes to serve as their exclusive technology platform. Like Unite Us, it serves as an infrastructure provider and manager. Moreover, it serves as an aggregation platform and represents a customer relationship business. Fastport differs from Unite Us in the fact that it serves as both a consumer and talent agent specializing in employment opportunities for transitioning service members, military spouses and veterans.

Current Challenges and Implications

What conditions are present that have resulted in the current military and veteran support system remaining in a state of fragmentation? The intent of this section is to create a shared understanding to a number of these present challenges found within a dysfunctional and fragmented market that have a negative drag on readiness related matters. These challenges are identified as Fragmentation and Need for Aggregation, Strategic Narratives, Public Policies, Technological Advancements and Information Asymmetry create a complex and ever-changing environment. The military and veteran support system represents the sum of conditions and circumstances that affect transition. Understanding this environment is essential to improving efficiencies and readiness. As such, these downward pressures will bound the inquiry into manageable areas to explore in an effort to contribute to a larger conversation on where to intervene to drive change.

Challenge One: Fragmentation and Aggregation

The first perceived challenge pertains to fragmentation of the market and the need for navigation to services. That is, “the confluence of cheap and accessible technology, shareable tools and infrastructure, and supportive public policy has made it
more attractive for individuals to leave large organizations and create their own fragmented businesses.\textsuperscript{20} That is, multiple agents striving to make impact; however, diseconomies of scale, transiting participants, hyper-local intensity to issues, and lack of feedback mechanisms for learning lead to its current state of dysfunction and high inefficiency. As one would imagine, fragmentation will vary in speed and degree across metropolitan areas due to increasing capacity for connection between participants in an ecosystem.\textsuperscript{21} Hyper-local politics and social-tensions exist and will provide barriers for collaboration and implementation. It is here, where creators assess the environment to see if conditions are right for innovative practices and strategies to emerge.

As some practitioners in this space have described, the military and veteran ecosystem "has become a world unto its own with very little influence exerted from outside in."\textsuperscript{22} As such, a lack of unity of effort achieved across government and non-governmental entities contributes to a lack of shared ownership of the problem. Others have described the nature of participants within the Sea of Goodwill as those—"More worshiping the problem, a lot of talk of the same issues…there truly is an echo…a constantly relearning having to take place."\textsuperscript{23} Conversely, others have described the fragmentation, as thousands of military support organizations (MSO) and veteran support organizations (VSO) participating in a complex adaptive environment. According to GuideStar—there are over 45,000 nonprofit organizations registered with the IRS devoted to Veterans and their families.\textsuperscript{24} Of note, 30K or 65% of these nonprofit organizations are comprised of organizations like Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.\textsuperscript{25} Outside of these are 18% charitable organizations providing emergency support services for Veterans and their families.\textsuperscript{26} The other remaining 17%
approximately 7,700 VSOs and non-profits are more specialized in nature; providing a broader array of services.\textsuperscript{27}

Given the propensity of the environment to continuously increase supply, McDonough clearly raises the right question—“Why is the rest of the world building capacity when no one is tackling providing navigation to this capacity.”\textsuperscript{28} McDonough, Armstrong and Brillman, have contributed immensely to impacting the problem surrounding fragmentation in the healthcare arena. To that end their contributions are largely metropolitan and industry specific. Innovation that drives customers to services remains essential and key to achieving higher degrees of readiness both at the individual and network levels.

Through the use of AmericaServes and backed by Unite Us technology in ten AmericaServes models and expanding across the country, data samplings are increasing and allowing the data to drive the alignment of network providers around focused objectives. Practitioners are now presenting through evidence which is serving as a catalyst to drive change and to structure the learning of the enterprise. As such, resource providers are more aligned to provide desired individual outcomes making the navigation for individuals much easier. In this regard, measurements of performance and measurements of effectiveness at the metropolitan level have the potential to demonstrate how their efforts directly affect the readiness of the transitioning service member and ultimately the preservation of the current AVF.

What this data represents unfortunately is a fragmented system that largely represents potential landing sites for military and veterans transiting; but, does not reflect capability or capacity of either. This data coupled with operating budgets and
memberships is understood by those that contribute and practice within this space as another classic divide along the lines of big and small, and old and new. It is here, where navigation and efficacy of services becomes an issue for the transitioning service member and family members. Conversely, it is within this process where service providers and industry are unable to find and connect the service(s) with those desiring the opportunity, capability and need. Fragmentation in this context serves as an impediment to the transitioning service member.

Arguably, what is needed now is for the ecosystem to mature and to mature as fast as possible—that is a thinning of organizations and players likened to what Hagel describes as the early days of over saturation in the PC market. The significance to this discovery is understanding that “fragmentation at the beginning of the curve is replaced by concentration and scale as a category matures.” This proves informative to conditions needed for a desired future state—policy implications, access to and aggregation of information to connect and deliver value to key stakeholders. To achieve this end will require a strategic leader championing this reform. This champion began with GEN Odierno and later adopted by the Honorable Patrick Murphy. Today the Army currently lacks an Army Secretary and a champion has not clearly been identified.

In this challenge, there is a dire need for an aggregation platform. According to Hagel and the Deloitte Center for the Edge, “aggregation platforms enable connections among fragmented players, helping to dismantle the kinds of barriers to entry, commercialization, and the learning” needed to drive change. His team further posits that these aggregation platforms can create connections in one of two ways. On one hand, aggregation is used to “foster connections among participants—both fragmented
and concentrated—in the ecosystem.”33 On the other, “they connect fragmented players conveniently and quickly to aggregated data and resources.”34 Figure 1 represents a modified SERCO diagram to demonstrate how the concept of aggregation is applied to a military and veteran landscape from SFL-TAP locations representing upstream transition activities to employers and service providers representing downstream activities along this transition journey.

![AGGREGATION Diagram](image)

**Figure 1: Aggregation**

McDonough argues within a fragmented military and veteran support ecosystem, navigation and aggregation challenges lead to a less ready transitioning service member and military spouse. As such, longer term implications to neglecting these conditions may lead to further reduced readiness of the current AVF. This is evidenced by transitioning service members unable to find desired services and meaningful employment opportunities and businesses unable to match desired talent and/or coordinated care services. A rise in underemployment amongst Veterans and millions of
dollars still spent on unemployment compensation for ex-service members (UCX) supports the assertion that there is a need for innovative solutions to improve navigation and the development of aggregation platforms are needed to match seller and buyer demands to drive change.

Currently, barriers to entry exist within this space in the forms of restrictive policies and regulations pertaining to data and information sharing. Second, barriers to commercialization exist as seen in the high costs associated with technology development and scaling infrastructure that would provide the aggregation opportunity to match in this case transitioning service members with employers and service providers. Lastly, barriers to learning exist largely due to information asymmetry, and a deficit of infrastructure providers and aggregation platforms that may serve as a feedback mechanism for the ecosystem to learn, adapt and grow.

What is clear is too much supply is having an adverse impact on the transitioning service member. Navigation is needed, as well as mechanisms to inform the individual, the provider and the system as a whole. Without infrastructure and aggregation platforms, information asymmetry will continue to plague the transitioning service member and ultimately impact the readiness of the AVF.

**Challenge Two: Strategic Narratives are Lacking a Unifying Vision for the Ecosystem**

The second perceived challenge pertains to the absence of a strategic narrative to communicate: a desired future state of the military and veteran support system; a strategic message to industry partners; to potential recruits; and ultimately the current AVF. As a result, the system remains in a constant state of adaptation with no vision or guiding framework nor market to truly drive conditions for innovation and improve unity
of effort amongst stakeholders. Stated differently, the lack of a defined future state by a credible authority and/or commission-like body results in a complex adaptive system wandering aimlessly without purpose.

Fully acknowledging that no one is directly in charge of this ecosystem. There is merit for a strategic leader and/or a representational commission of leaders spanning public, private, non-profit and government to begin the conversation to help an ever-adapting system change the current propensity towards a desired future state. Other operational designers have described this as casting a vision, impacting along a continuum of an end-to-end Soldier lifecycle from recruitment to service in uniform and beyond. McDonough, Armstrong, Brillman and McLennan believed that the idea of having policy implications to define and describe a future state connected to the readiness and health of the AVF would be very important.”35
Unfortunately, a lack of knowing what success looks like breeds a lack of measurements of performance by both service providers and coordination centers to produce explanatory power. That is, the potential to discern a causal link from community actions to military readiness of the transitioning service member to the preservation of the AVF model. With this logic, it is easy to see the state of the system today is lacking feedback mechanisms to allow the ecosystem to learn, adapt and assemble in a manner that drives change and accelerates a way forward where individuals, agencies and organizations are able to understand their position and relevance to the system at large.

With respects to the second strategic narrative directed towards industry. A key message often overlooked is framing military investment into industry and institutional gains. That is the military sunk costs in creating the training and leadership environment
is at a scale unrivaled by corporations; yet, serves as a mutual benefit to both over time. Put another way, the military serves as the premier training and leadership laboratory like no other—providing culturally diversity, intergovernmental, interagency and multinational experiences in cross-functional environments. In short, Army investment in achieving specific talent outcomes will mutually attract industry partnerships benefitting each organizational and talent acquisition aims. Former Defense Secretary Carter may describe these outcomes as on-ramps and off-ramps to opportunities that may lead to service within industry and across all Army components in a service life-cycle.

Similarly, the third strategic narrative aimed at potential recruits demonstrates the strengthened commitment between military service and continued service in the corporate sector. The message here proposed captures Bill McLennan’s vision for enhanced public-private partnership with the military. The message is simple; yet, powerful—“Fulfill your obligation in the military, American Business has your back!”37 The intent behind this message is that because of your commitment and dedication to serve your country in uniform, American businesses will be there for you when you decide to transition from military service to continued service in a specified field, industry, trade, etc. This message links American business values to respect for national values and commitment to the individual. It also demonstrates how transition occurs over a continuum of service benefitting both the military service, industry, community and individual.

Lastly, the fourth strategic narrative is directed towards the current AVF. A message needed and one that would reinforce positive morale is “the Army will honor its commitments to Service members and their families.” Too often readiness outcomes
are reduced across administrations and especially in times of budget austerity. Together strategic messaging at directed audiences may assist in reinforcing why current conditions exist, what impacts it is having on readiness related matters, and what collective actions need to occur to achieve a more desired state of readiness. A challenge seen across military and industries alike are the issues surrounding retention.

Challenge Three: Public Policies

The third perceived challenge pertains to the public policy arena. That is, “supportive regulations and public policy are necessary because less than 1% of our citizens are shouldering the burden of freedom for us all.”38 As within all regulatory environments, there are positive benefits to legislation and there are examples where over-regulation negatively impacts the intended beneficiary. Figure 3 provides examples of positive legislation over time that have benefited the service member.

![Key Legislation](image)

**Figure 3: Key Legislation Benefiting Service Members**

According to McLennan, “the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act served as a catalyst not only for the training and establishment of the SFL-TAP program; but it provided a potential aggregation point.”39 He went on to demonstrate the magnitude of this legislation by first explaining that “it is the first time in our nation’s history that someone other than your mother knew you were coming home.”40 This legislation provided a potential aggregation point where an intermediary company could find a
service member, veteran or military spouse. Identifying this opportunity, McLennan and Fastport mobilized to provide the infrastructure and aggregation platform to match transitioning service members, veterans and military spouses with meaningful career opportunities in the most efficient process. The VOW Act in his mind represents “the most significant piece of bi-partisan legislation relative to our military that has ever been enacted.”

As described earlier, policies and regulations at all levels of government have the potential to impact environmental conditions making them either favorable or unfavorable for creators to enter a market. Hagel’s paper referenced a U.S. Chamber of Commerce survey that captured a notable statistic, that 44% of small business owners had called their most significant challenge—over-regulation.

Within the CNAS—Passing the Baton White paper, Better Data-Sharing is listed as the number one strategic opportunity for the next administration. The lack of data-sharing serves an “array of legal and regulatory obstacles, from concerns about sharing national security information to health privacy concerns to ethical concerns about providing federal data to nonfederal entities.” The report shares extensive examples where data-sharing lacks implementation and enforcement at the DOD and VA level. Also, makes the case that “theoretical capability to track receipt of unemployment compensation by departing service members and link that receipt to service histories, training records, location, and other data” however, has not been explored.

What’s important according to McLennan is the use of public policy as an additional deterrent for transitioning service members and veterans to find employment when coupled with information asymmetry. The point he makes is that between 2011
and 2013 almost half of transitioning Army service members applied for UCX benefits. What that highlights are that UCX benefits were too enticing and potentially created a disincentive for a veteran to seek employment—especially if they had convinced themselves the only thing available was low wage or temporary work opportunities.46

Given these reservations and opportunities, exploring an in-transit visibility approach towards transition, through the creation of a digital application platform, would prove useful for those seeking information to obtain additional services in the form of employment and coordinated care. Advocating for changes to allow data sharing to occur with an appropriate inspection layer would serve as a powerful current and change driver to facilitate ecosystem learning.

Challenge Four: Technological Advancement

The fourth perceived challenge agreed upon by scholars and practitioners within the military and the veteran support system is the recognition of a lack of technological advancements impacting this space. To some it was described as if they were living in analog instead of high-definition. We are living now in an application technology world where smart technology is now assisting individuals and families with break-through technologies revolutionizing how they shop, conserve energy, and learn. Unfortunately, though innovative technologies exist, there has been little applied within this military and veteran transition pipeline to aid the service member and family to desired services and meaningful employment opportunities. As Williamson Murray describes in—“Thinking About Innovation,” part of what is contributing to this lack of investment is the ability of leaders to truly conceptualize how technology will enable revolutions in military affairs to
change current practices and truly generate new processes, markets and aggregation activity to achieve increased readiness outcomes.  

McLennan describes a contributing factor to this dilemma as the fact that efficient profile posting services currently exist; however, there is—“no efficient market-place where a digital match occurs between the profile and the job.” McDonough believes the lack of innovation largely was due to a scaling issue. Given the current conditions and his understanding to gaps in this social service space, he and his team set out to test and put a collective impact theory into practice. McDonough and Armstrong drive this point—

When you consider it from a technological standpoint and social services in general has not been infused by any technological advances at all. When you look at care and how services are delivered the idea and use of technology is quite new and disruptive in itself. The echo chamber has prevented and kept the Sea of Goodwill in a steady state of fragmentation and dysfunction and that it has not embraced the use of technology to serve the needs of individuals.

It is here where the Deloitte Center for the Edge descriptors of Scale-and-Scope Operators prove useful to understanding the challenges associated with achieving innovation and commercialization through the advancement of technology. Thus, when looking for advanced technologies to impact the Sea of Goodwill understanding the agent one is seeking is an Infrastructure Provider, proves useful. That is a company with an innovative technological solution that “deliver(s) high-volume, routine process services.” These agents will most likely bring with them an expansive network to “serve both business to business and business to consumer needs.” These types of agents are few and far between within the military and veteran support ecosystem, due to the high costs required to scale the infrastructure in a manner that would allow
affordable access to services through a network. As such, the current barriers of commercialization limit technological advancements from impacting this landscape.

The second role identified within this scale-and-scope operator is the aggregation platform. That is, connect fragmented and concentrated participants in the ecosystem; as well, connect the fragmented participants to aggregated data and resources. The challenge that remains is creating an aggregation point for transitioning military service members and veterans that public and private entities may access to accelerate change. The technological solutions that facilitate aggregation and learning exist; unfortunately, restrictive policies and regulations are prohibiting the accelerants needed to drive change, reduce information asymmetry, and increase readiness of the transitioning service member and readiness of the current AVF.

**Challenge Five: Persistent Forms of Information Asymmetry**

The fifth pressure bearing on the military and veteran support system is the presence of information asymmetry. The imbalance of information is complex and widespread serving as impediments to the transition process; and most definitely, at the disservice of our transitioning population. As such, increasing information asymmetry is observed across the three Soldier Life-Cycle (SLC) phases: Starting Strong, Serving Strong, and Continuing Strong; too include, the Employer and Service Provider space. For the purpose of demonstrating information asymmetry across these phases a few examples will be provided; but, will not be all inclusive.

Information asymmetry is prevalent within the STARTING STRONG phase of SLC as seen with the costs associated with acquiring an Army recruit. When looking at this problem through a supply-chain lens there is a discernable contrast to the costs
associated with hiring a civilian candidate and that of acquiring an Army recruit which could vary from $22,000 to $4,000. Critics would argue these dollar amounts should not be compared equally due to the constraints and requirements associated with gaining the commitment of an Army recruit. Even if this were true, this variance in cost to acquire a recruit plausibly may be reduced into a more tolerable band if innovative practices were introduced. Information asymmetry within this phase may be evidenced by missed recruiting goals and lowering of standards for accession.

Within the SERVING STRONG phase of the SLC, sustaining a ready Soldier is rife with challenges. Readiness of the service member may be impacted in many ways. First, a faulty mental model as to what transition entails is crippling to the readiness of the transitioning service member. That is, believing transition is an event versus a process translates into a service member or military spouse beginning their transition with little time to build and develop their networks to find employment opportunities and desired services.

Second, a cognitive belief that a broad array of skills makes one more attractive and marketable to an employer may not be the case. Believing that your strength lies in your adaptability to be a generalist versus a specialist may not translate well in all industries and at select levels. In fact, our tendencies throughout this phase of performing multiple roles as a ‘jack of all trades and a master of none’ lead to confusion and at times paralysis in determining which future career path to take post military service due to exposure to many concepts, roles, and ideas tested in both training and operational environments. Put another way, a lack of concentration in an area
compounded with a disparate array of credentials has the potential to result in an asymmetric disadvantage for transitioning service members.

Third, at the intersection of this phase and the CONTINUING STRONG phase is the prominence of service members not understanding their value within the civilian sector as they progress in title and rank. What complicates this realization is that service members are often serving in roles, positions, branches, services, and locations that are not necessarily reflective of an individual’s future desired capacity, title, business unit, industry and metropolitan area. McLennan expands on this topic by positing insights into this phenomenon.

Current technology favors the employer at the expense of our Veterans because of information asymmetry. When I graduated with an engineering degree, I knew exactly what I was worth to several industries across a variety of jobs because company and recruiting information was made public between the graduates interviewing for jobs.

McLennan further describes the information asymmetry challenge of not understanding one’s value in the market partially due to not having an aggregation platform that would allow information to be shared far and wide across an industry to narrow this variance in compensation. He states—

The market knows the worth of an 11B (infantryman); but, the market does not have a vehicle to share that broadly. We have to open the aperture to let them know what their value is in business and how broad of an opportunity set they have. This is important to solve at the front end of the transition process.

The fourth implication from information asymmetry in this phase is observed by the rise of underemployment, a phenomenon largely due to an individual’s unknown value in market. By not having this information, transitioning service members who have yet in their military careers had to negotiate a salary are now faced to engage with no
prior rehearsal and negotiate from something much less than a position of strength.

McLennan adds to the understanding of this phenomena—

Career Builder reported underemployment has risen from 27% to 31% of Veterans in the workforce without a concentrated effort and successful public-private partnerships to ameliorate the issue. Employers are incentivized to under-employ veterans and will continue doing so until veterans are shown they have far better economic opportunities across a wide range of employers and career opportunities.\(^58\)

Similarly, service members and their families battling information asymmetry while CONTINUING STRONG phase of the SLC is seen in impacts to transition activities both at the network (AVF level) and individual level. The first implication borne from the phenomenon of information asymmetry is the lack of a common operating picture by senior leaders and transitioning individuals to understand environmental conditions creating a drag on the readiness of: the individual, the SFL-TAP process, the community, and market. McLennan demonstrates how this information asymmetry prevents a transitioning service member; as well as, senior leaders from gaining an understanding to adaptations occurring in the environment and lacking relevant information to make informed decisions. If true, a review or development of relevant measurements contributing to readiness and feedback mechanisms for the system to learn would be most beneficial.

The second implication is seen in a lack of transparency of information between military services and public-private entities that may lead to the receipt of inadequate care and/or wasted time, money and energy. McDonough, Armstrong and Brillman describe this as costs borne by the individual and families and not to the network and community. In this description, a reduction in search and wait times for services may contribute to making the individual more-ready and less distracted.\(^59\) Given this logic,
optimization of a provider network may lead to a reduction in non-value added costs incurred by the individual and military service. Moreover, as provider efforts in respects to timeliness and appropriateness of care increase as should the readiness of the transitioning service member and ultimately the efficiency of the process. That is why it is so important to define what one wants to measure to demonstrate readiness outcomes at the individual, unit, process, community and industry-levels. Thus, viewing the Soldier Life-Cycle through a supply-chain lens would prove beneficial to visualizing intervention points where optimization may occur throughout the process.

The third implication in this phase is seen in respects to unemployment compensation payments. When studying civilian and US Army unemployment insurance and UCX data trends from 2002 to 2015 it becomes obvious where the most pain was felt and garnered senior leader involvement in an era of constrained resources. In 2011, Army UCX peaked at $515 million\textsuperscript{60} contributing to a rising concern at the strategic level due to its shock directly impacting military readiness of the AVF. When studying the data more, one identifies that the civilian unemployment insurance leads Army UCX by roughly 2-4 years. When overlaying the data, one may see two distinct rises for civilians in 2002 and 2009 and military lagging in 2006 and 2011 contributing to the challenge of information asymmetry.\textsuperscript{61}
Reduction in UCX is one of these statistics that the Army tends to use when trying to boast successes within this space. Unfortunately, this metric does not accurately reflect the military and veteran employment situation holistically. The more our senior leaders accept UCX to be a metric of success the more information asymmetry will persist and remain a drag on the readiness of the system at large.

Information asymmetry is also identified in the CONTINUING STRONG phase of the SLC further downstream in the employer space. As the CEO of Fastport succinctly addressed “The great news is that employers are publicly announcing their intentions to hire our veterans. The challenge is that a very small number of very large employers have announced their intentions to hire more veterans than are available in the workforce.” To compound this issue is the fact that many of these promised forms of employment are low wage, in many cases seasonal work in the retail industry. To put
more frankly, the employer obtains the public relations victory in the media proclaiming their company is Veteran friendly with a large number of job offers; yet, in all actuality it exacerbates the information asymmetry challenge often masking the growing trend of underemployment.

Within the Fortune 500 space approximately 27 million people are employed accounting for 17% of the total workforce. The leading retailer for employees is Wal-Mart with over 2.2 million. McLennan shared in his analysis that of the top seven employers in America five are retailers: Wal-Mart, McDonalds (420K), Kroger (400K), Home Depot (371K) and Target (347K). To further illustrate his point, McLennan addresses an issue that is unassociated by many—

The information asymmetry is exacerbated by the few large employers advertising military hiring at the expense of other employers and our veterans. If a veteran only sees ads for military hiring by Wal-Mart for example, how will they ever find out about the great careers tens of thousands of smaller employers have?

In this example, one is able to understand how information asymmetry, whether well intended or not, impacts the smaller companies’ ability to reach potential employees due to competitor economies of scale and market fragmentation.

One may draw a conclusion that due to large corporations flooding the zone with expensive advertising campaigns has resulted in reduced readiness of transitioning service members and military spouses in search of meaningful employment opportunities. This notion may be based on reduced retention with these larger firms and increased underemployment. Others may claim it demonstrates strong support in the Sea of Goodwill and a great problem to have.
An Expanded View of the Sea of Goodwill

Who are the prominent creators’ transporting ideas to consumers and communities? Which creators are serving as scale-and-scope operators, building infrastructure and aggregation platforms, and melding solutions to increase desired outcomes that impact both readiness to those transitioning from military service and ultimately the readiness of the current AVF? Who are the business agents serving both in a consumer role or that as a talent agent?

Identifying who the real change agents and creators are within the space and motivations remains critical to understanding the drivers of implementation impacting the propensity of the system. When applying Wilkinson’s descriptors of “Sunbirds, Architects and Integrators”\textsuperscript{65} to these creators, provided added clarity to the Sea of Goodwill in the past unable to distinguish. Likewise, by applying Hagel’s descriptors of “infrastructure providers, aggregation platforms, and agent businesses”\textsuperscript{66} proved invaluable.

Figure 5 depicts the service member readiness journey from the symbolic shore line representing (military service and culture) across the Sea of Goodwill to a distant shore line representing a new beginning (continued service in a new capacity within a new community and culture). Life rings are symbolic of programs created to aid the transitioning service member and family. Ships represent the architects driving change bringing new innovation to the space. Buoys represent markers where trouble lurks in the form of navigation and information asymmetry. Light houses represent the guiding lights transitioning service members and senior leaders should connect with and steer towards along their tailored journey. For these individuals and organizations provide
tremendous value and utility to a transitioning service member in need of specific services. Emerging currents in essence are reflective of the fragmented environment, changing speed, shifting conditions and accelerating properties created from people, policy and technologies bearing on the system over time. Sometimes this journey may feel like hurricane-like trade winds are at your front and other days at your back. Knowing where you want to end is more important than the initial landing.

Figure 5: Readiness Campaign—Expanded Sea of Goodwill

As such, a few creators were selected to demonstrate the utility of this framework and to highlight their important contributions to driving change. In some cases, as organizations grow and mature one may see a creator move between these labels as needed to lead change. As one would suspect, creators are highly intelligent, with an entrepreneurial spirit and an intense awareness of their environment to identify gaps and quickly bring to bear solutions for implementation.
Sunbirds Defined

According to Wilkinson, Sunbirds “take something that already exists and transport the model to create something new.” The creators’ nature is to identify a working concept, proof the principle and apply it elsewhere. She makes two very cogent points—first, that the creator’s ability to repurpose an idea has a “powerful means of discovery” and second, the “farther Sunbirds transport solutions, the greater the likelihood of breakthrough results.” Wilkinson makes known Sunbirds study the underlying elements, the gaps that prevent the current state from reaching the desired future state. Sunbirds constantly are looking for intervention points or opportunities where solutions may drive change. These players are operating in the Sea of Goodwill provide immense value in their ability to reduce barriers and accelerate change.

Sunbird Examples

Sunbirds are expert finders and interpreters of information and often do the due diligence of moving throughout the space to gain a market advantage. Their ability to apply principles from one industry and/or study to an unrelated field creates enormous opportunities for growth, exploration and ultimately, for ecosystem learning. For these reasons, I believe the Soldier for Life Director, Regional Directors and Deputy Directors represent the term Sunbirds due to their cross-pollinating of best practices and relationships across their respective regions.

The Director of the Soldier for Life Program, COL Adam Rocke, due to position and access to the Chief of Staff of the Army and Secretary serves as a Sunbird to communicate needed changes to policy affecting the regulatory environment that pertains to military transition. Moreover, due to his increasing connections across local,
state and federal governments, industry, think tanks, non-profits and academia provide a unique perspective unlike many practitioners operating within this ecosystem. Exploring human resource policies with respect to sustaining resident expertise and vital relationships should be considered for sustaining Sunbird positions.

The Sunbird represents powerful accelerant qualities due to their positioning within and across multiple entities that have the potential to drive change. Put another way, Sunbirds provide the transportable ideas and feedback across multiple entities that increase the speed of implementation. Understanding who the Sunbirds are within this ecosystem are paramount. For policy makers, Sunbirds will prove useful to ensuring language is stated clearly and appropriately to achieve desired results. For practitioners, self-reflection on one’s organization may prove useful to determine if Sunbird(s) exist within the organization and if are employed appropriately to drive change. For transitioning service members, understanding who the Sunbirds are within your network will prove extremely useful to gain knowledge as to where to look for a desired service, career, care, and mentorship.

**Architects Defined as Infrastructure Providers & Aggregation Platform Developers**

The second descriptor of creators by Wilkinson is Architects. She describes them as ones “building new models from the ground up…and constantly asking why.”71 She argues that “architects don’t dismiss inconsistencies they seize upon what they detect… [They] unpack assumptions and test different variables to order new solutions.”72 As one would imagine, their logic focuses on the question, “Can this be done differently?”73 She emphasizes that Architects “believe once identify a problem, you’re on the way to
solving it.” Where’s the pain—tends to be one of the right questions to ask when in search for intervention points to drive change. 

A valuable point Wilkinson makes and should be considered when looking for and understanding the nature of Architects is their insatiable desire to “deconstruct and reconstruct assumptions, building ideas from the bottom up.” The importance from this explanation is one must always review one’s assumptions to challenge the logic of the system. Are my assumptions still valid given the information I now possess?

Additionally, one may accept that not only are ideas driven vertically but also from diverse and disparate views. Feedback mechanisms are extremely important for learning, challenging assumptions, and gaining an understanding as to what is feasible, suitable and acceptable in a particular environment. The understanding and premise that all things are local is not new regarding social change; but, proves relevant when describing the implementation of collective impact theory and solving the Unit of One Challenge.

Architect—James McDonough, Managing Director, IVMF

A noteworthy Architect within the military and veteran support system that, over the past three years, has truly impacted this system in a positive way is the development by IVMF, in partnership with Accenture and Unite Us, to create the AmericaServes model. What has occurred during this time is an evolution from idea to practice resulting in an acceleration of learning and change. McDonough’s team began with a question—“How could we transform the way veterans, service members, and their families navigate and coordinate the maze of services and resources that they have earned, and unlock a better, more efficient and person-centered approach for
service providers to deliver care?” To structure a means to answer this knowledge gap—

AmericaServes operated alongside the City’s public, private, and non-profit leaders to address—providers across all sectors lacked the bandwidth, tools, and trust to facilitate the cross-sector coordination required to address the needs presented by veterans and their families. Through their discovery they were able to discern an underlying structural element was needed to innovate—“the ability to digitally connect cross-sector partners to match veterans with the diversity of services they need.” This architect argues the gap identified was the need for navigation for transitioning service members, veterans and family members within a community to access desired services. As such, “AmericaServes is the nation’s first, scalable collective impact initiative serving the military-connected community.” What has materialized is a powerful convergence between a think-tank, a consulting firm and a technology company to serve as an infrastructure provider. That is the AmericaServes model provides the network apparatus to connect fragmented participants (both individuals and organizations) to specified services to solve the problem of navigation in a fractured market.

As identified in the November 2016 Transparency Report and subsequent updates, AmericaServes in under two years became operational in six communities (NYServes-NYC, NCServes-Metrolina, NC Serves-RDU/Fayetteville, PAServes, SCServes, and NYServes-Upstate NY) and at the timing of this publication has expanded into four additional communities (Jacksonville-NC, NC-Mountains (Asheville), Seattle, WA and San Antonio, TX). These ten collective impact organizations represent guiding lights for transitioning service members, veterans and families and should be contacted if one of these metropolitan areas is a desired location.
To demonstrate the scale of this model and the power of technology, “six live networks consisting of 288 network providers, 760+ practitioners currently serve over 4,731 individuals and meeting over 7,595 service requests across 15 service categories.” The top five requested services to date across these six communities are— Housing (22%), Employment (21%); Financial Assistance (14%); Benefits (10%) and Healthcare (10%).

Jean Coyne, Network Director and Mark Schiemer, Coordination Center Supervisor for PAServes, provided valuable insight into a collective impact organization making tremendous strides within the greater Pittsburgh metropolitan area for transitioning service members, veterans and military families. Several statistics and feedback demonstrated the power of information collected as of October 2016 within the network to learn and assimilate: 949 unique individuals served, 1,274 services requested across 10 categories resulting in 860 positive outcomes; self-referrals into the PAServes network were at 65%; and 17% of referrals were females. This information demonstrated that PAServes outreach efforts were generating awareness and capability of the program. Moreover, positive feedback regarding the quality of intake specialists and their understanding of the service providers within their network were viewed favorably by those seeking services. As such, their efforts may be viewed as contributing to the increase in readiness of veterans and family members seeking services.

What is most significant with McDonough’s discovery are the impacts driving acceleration in learning for the ecosystem at large. Key performance indicators (KPIs) and learning outcomes recently discovered by the AmericaServes team were powered
through evidence based metrics. The data revealed that there were two clear and distinct layered outcomes produced—network level and individual level.\textsuperscript{86} McDonough and Armstrong provide added context to this discovery below—

If you organize a market place to be efficient and effective to get someone to a point of service in a timely manner and importantly getting individual connected to the appropriate point of service...then and only then can you focus on the outcomes that are in our providers’ hands.\textsuperscript{87}

Armstrong posits what is unique about AmericaServes is not only that they are a “learning organization; but, it takes a systems level intervention approach not an individual approach; it’s about the timeliness and accuracy of referrals and about the network health across communities.”\textsuperscript{88} This was demonstrated within the transparency report when data collected provided the measurement of 96.2% accuracy of referrals were matched to a provider and the speed to which this occurred equaled 5.4 days.\textsuperscript{89} Metrics such as these collected locally provide context to the overall wellness of the community and provide relative and timely information to leaders in uniform and out as to drivers that impact readiness.\textsuperscript{90} Metrics such as these are produced due to the presence of an aggregation platform; in this case, demonstrates the power of Unite Us and its technological advancements it contributes not only to AmericaServes, but the ecosystem at large.

**Architect, Dan Brillman—Infrastructure Provider and Aggregation Platform Developer**

Dan Brillman, CEO of Unite Us, described that his company is “the exclusive technology provider for AmericaServes, delivering technology and its care coordination solutions along with IVMF in communities that want to elevate the way they deliver services, together.”\textsuperscript{91} The capabilities and experience his team brings to AmericaServes and others is the ability to “help them scale their models and initiatives.”\textsuperscript{92} Brillman, also
noted that Unite Us is positioned to impact all four pillars of our model: Access, Navigation, Coordination, and Outcomes by focusing truly on the coordination between agencies.93

Unite Us serves currently in the military and veteran support space as an infrastructure provider and aggregation platform developer building the coordinated care networks within multiple metropolitan areas. As more data and information is gleamed from the clustering of AmericaServes Models, and barriers to entry, commercialization and learning are reduced, these creators will accelerate their movement from an architect to that of an Integrator.

Unite Us also represents a “consumer agent, [that is] one serving as a trusted advisor to the consumer across a growing array of products and services.”94 Understanding as to who the consumer agents are operating in the space proves useful; for their access to information and ability to quickly streamline services provides value in many forms. Namely, positive impacts to readiness—vis-à-vis through their efforts to improve navigation across expanding networks. That is evidenced by reduced times to find a set of desired services and providers most appropriately aligned and tailored to individual priorities and needs. In this example, increased readiness may be measured in quantities of time, dollars, and satisfaction of care, to name a few.

Architect—Bill McLennan, Infrastructure Provider and Aggregation Platform Developer

Another Architect present within this system that is accelerating change is Bill McLennan, CEO of Fastport. A man driven and motivated to eradicate military and veteran unemployment. At a young age, he witnessed his father’s return from Vietnam with a Bronze Star and Purple Heart and had tremendous difficulty in finding a career to
support his family. Today, he spends 20 hour days travelling across the country developing meaningful relationships within government, public-private and non-profit organizations to help solve the Veteran employment issues resulting in a “No Veteran Left Behind” philosophy. What is unique, is the manner in which he has created a new way of providing transitioning service members and their families a means to increased knowledge and opportunities.

McLennan started out; first, serving as a Private in the USMC Reserve beginning in December 1975 at 17 years of age. Serving over six years in the Marines taught him how to shoot an M-16A1 rifle, how to fire a 60mm mortar, and how to survive in extreme cold weather North of the Arctic Circle and in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, all at the expert level. Obtaining these diverse experiences cemented his confidence in his abilities to overcome challenges, and aided in his habits of continuous learning and honing his skills both in the classroom and through on the job training. Most germane, by highlighting McLennan’s military service and achievements to that of his corporate career demonstrate to many transitioning service members that rank, length of service, and branch should not define you or one’s potential. Instead, provide experiences to which one may infer and apply in other settings and environments to create value.

Throughout his career, he has relocated seven times to continuously accept positions of increasing scale and scope—having served as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Operating Officer (COO) and President of two separate billion dollar businesses. The experiences and education learned throughout this journey are invaluable and have shaped him into the creator he is today and serve as a model for others to follow.
McLennan discussed that he was asked to join Fastport in 2013 by Jim Ray, the founder of the company, who was in the process of developing technology to solve what he considered to be a “complex supply chain problem.” That is—

Creating a repeatable, reliable talent pipeline of veteran candidates for employers requires more than a resume. It requires an employer to search, find, interview, and offer to hire a veteran at the exact moment of their transition experience when they have enough information to make an informed decision.

It is here where the supply-chain complexity looms—balancing cost effective means within a fragmented metropolitan community where support is disparate to find desired talent.

Fastport was initially started to address the job matching challenge in the U.S. trucking industry between professional truck drivers and employers requiring experienced drivers to safely deliver a wide variety of loads. He elaborates on the levels of complexity associated with matching a professional truck driver's experience to a motor carrier's job requirements; specifically, due to the specialization of skills required ranging from operating specific equipment to handling of hazardous materials. To efficiently match a professional truck driver's experience and credentials to a specific career requires a relational database with appropriate attributes tagged and organized. From the driver's perspective, a different set of attributes apply; such as: salary, type of route, expected quality of life and company benefits. Given this example, one may see how a creator, like McLennan would view this complex matching problem and begin taking action to build a new model from the ground up.
The good news for those transitioning service members and families, Fastport has expanded from the transportation industry to seven additional industries at the start of 2017 and expect to expand to twenty by the end of the year. Fastport seeks to be the infrastructure provider and aggregation platform that connects all veterans, military spouses and military community members to all employers in a way that delivers a wide range of career opportunities to our transitioning military and their spouses before they separate from active duty and as soon as they begin to build their resumes.¹⁰³

McLennan states that in his previous business experiences, one position in particular proving instrumental, was when he served as President of Asia-Pacific in Singapore for a leading billion-dollar global supply chain company. It was in this position that he learned how to “recognize and manage complex bills of materials (BOM) with enterprise resource planning technology that reduced errors;”¹⁰⁴ as well, recognized that “the attributes of a driver’s skills represented a BOM that employers were seeking to purchase through a job offer.”¹⁰⁵ His four years of experience in this position provided a new model for application. As a creator, he “would repurpose his knowledge [in supply chain operations] to a seemingly unrelated field [military human resources] producing breakthrough results.”¹⁰⁶
With respects to the third aspect of a scale-and-scope operator identified by Hagel, Fastport serves in a dual-agent role. That is, Fastport represents both a consumer agent and a talent agent. In this role, the company leverages its network and partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Hiring our Heroes and Department of Labor to assist transitioning service members learn faster and improve readiness outcomes by reducing information asymmetry.

Fastport serves as a consumer agent in the respects that it serves as the bridging mechanism to connect employers to transitioning service members and veterans. They were recently selected by the DOL as their Transportation & Logistics industry intermediary partner to increase apprenticeships. In this arrangement, the DOL is able to capitalize on Fastport’s extensive reach below the industry level across large and small companies to develop industry-wide programs with depth and breadth of opportunities for transitioning service members. This partnership benefits Fastport because it provides another competitive advantage to its Veteran employment outreach efforts. That is, it provides apprenticeship opportunities to employers enrolling in DOL industry programs.

McLennan refers to being most proud that his company is building a technology platform that can solve the Unit of One Employment Challenge. He elaborates on this identified gap as—“that means no matter your service branch, no matter your MOS, no matter your pay grade, we will not leave you or any veteran behind in the employment market.” What McLennan brings to the forefront is the realization and understanding that the transition pipeline (SFL-TAP) is largely generalized for the masses; but, the actual transition process to truly be successful must be tailored to the individual. At the
end of the day, it is not the transitioning cohort that will go to an interview or a health care appointment, it is only one seeking specific services, in a specific location, at a specific time with a requisite level of knowledge, experience and ability.

Integrators Defined

The third descriptor of creators by Wilkinson is Integrators. She describes them as a “select group of creators with the ability to meld solutions from a variety of sources to build hybrid outcomes.” Wilkinson further explains that Integrators are different from ‘Sunbirds that transport’ and ‘Architects that build;’ they “combine existing elements to shape novel outcomes.” Put another way, Integrators serve as an incubator for collaboration where fusion of thoughts emerge, focusing on creating a solution for a specific gap or a pipeline for a process that currently is unfulfilled and resembles an unmet need.

Integrator—Eric Eversole, US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Hiring our Heroes

An Integrator arguably operating within this space is Eric Eversole, Vice President, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation and President, Hiring Our Heroes. His organization in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor, the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Army’s Soldier for Life program, and others over the past several years has continued to leverage public-private and non-profit partnerships. This program is viewed by some as the program furthest upstream with respects to talent acquisition outside of the military. As such, one outcome of this public-private and non-profit partnership is —the Transition Summit, to assist transitioning service members and their families make sense of what lies ahead and to create a structured program for talent to be found.
Transition Summits coupled with public-private partnership opportunities and the development of the Army Career Skills Policy were seen as innovative approaches to lower UCX. These transition summits, if viewed as an emerging current, accelerated interactions and exposure for transitioning service members and military spouses with company and government recruiters, regional and national industry panelists, career building workshops, and a hiring fair over a two-day period. For these reasons, the Transition Summit should be viewed as a great aggregation platform for talent that fosters connection with participants and key industry stakeholders for employment opportunities.

| Hiring Our Heroes U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Transition Summit Statistics |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 2015                                         | 2016                                         |
| Paired 18,990 Job Seekers                    | Paired 22,304 Job Seekers                    |
| With 4,183 Employers                         | With 4,699 Employers                        |
| Receiving 2,069 Firm Offers                  | Receiving 3,077 Firm Offers                  |

Figure 7: Hiring Our Heroes 2015-2016 Transition Summit Statistics

A significant partnership recently occurred between the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Hiring our Heroes program, and Fastport. Together they are serving as guiding lights for transitioning service members and employers in the employment arena as Unite Us and AmericaServes are doing in the coordinated care arena. Statistics are provided below to demonstrate the impact of this program since its inception.
Unfortunately, conditions required for integrators to thrive are lacking within the Sea of Goodwill. As such, only few exist. What’s more, it is not the number of integrators present per se; it is the lack of ideal market conditions within this space that is preventing optimization and increased readiness. Scale-and-scope companies, such as: Unite Us and Fastport, have the technological infrastructure and aggregation platforms needed to truly revolutionize network and individual level outcomes in the healthcare and employment sectors. What is missing currently is a governance-like framework centered on a marketplace that allows an aggregation point to become commercialized. The next section will discuss how enhanced public-private and non-profit partnerships with companies like Unite Us and Fastport may provide advanced opportunities to increase readiness.

Enhanced Public-Private and Non-Profit Partnership Construct for a Readiness Campaign

What actions should be taken to move this environment from its current state to a more desired future state that increases individual, system and AVF readiness? What mutually supporting objective(s) would facilitate achieving necessary conditions for integrated and innovative practices to emerge and increase readiness? What model should be selected? The following sections will outline guiding principles, key attributes
and elements required for an enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership readiness campaign.

This enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership readiness campaign will be organized in primary and supporting lines of effort. The primary lines of effort are highlighted in the following three sections—Governance, Performance Management, and Enabling Technology. The two supporting lines of effort are described as Information Controls, Standards and Reporting Policy and Assessments. These two sections will describe how activities applied will influence system behaviors and provide network and individual level outcomes for learning. Lastly, this readiness campaign strategy integrates key elements of a resilient supply chain model with a shared service delivery model to create a comprehensive and operational approach.

![Figure 9: Enhanced Public-Private and Non-Profit Partnership Readiness Campaign](image)

Conceivably, this readiness campaign would reinforce CNAS proposed “Effective, Public, Private, and Non-Profit Partnership framework” with contextual lines of effort and a desired end state. Many of those interviewed believe that an increased state of
military readiness will be dependent upon the emerging currents of technology, public-private and non-profit partnerships and changes to public policy. Some have suggested the National Response Framework as a model to explore as a potential means to form and maintain a semblance of unity of effort within this design. This paper does not explore this; however, believes further exploration into this framework is warranted.

Guiding Principles for Ecosystem Learning

Before an Enhanced Public-Private and Non-Profit Partnership Readiness Campaign is explored, a set of guiding principles are provided. More specifically, these principles are applied within a framework of a readiness campaign in conditions of mutual cooperation that foster ecosystem learning. These are prescribed below:

1. Identify the market conditions military, public-private and non-profit partnerships must enable to effectively shape the military and veteran support ecosystem to a more desirable future state.

2. Recognize the need for strategic messaging from senior civilian leaders within DOD and military Secretaries to cast a vision forward for creators to innovate.

3. Recognize the need and the influence of stakeholders within the expanded Sea of Goodwill and specifically the infrastructure providers and aggregation platforms needed for innovation to flourish.

4. Determine the propensity and capacity of public-private and non-profit partnerships to achieve collective impact in metropolitan areas that contributes to readiness of the transitioning service member, the community, and the AVF.

5. Understand public policy effects towards government, non-federal agency and public-private and non-profit interests, objectives and priorities as it pertains to data and information sharing, information asymmetry, and readiness related outcomes.

6. Understand the supply and demand end-to-end Soldier Life-cycle and intervention points along this continuum where readiness may be improved by easier access, coordination and navigation to services and talent.
7. Understand the current legal and regulatory environment to see where opportunities may exist for cooperation and amendments to restrictions.

These seven principles will prove useful for planners when constructing a framework to enable military, public-private and non-profit partnerships to increase readiness activities to produce the conditions needed for innovation and learning to emerge.

**Guiding Principles for Innovation**

As seen in conditions of mutual cooperation in a joint logistics environment, to improve transition visibility and integrate operations increasing readiness, this military and veteran support environment needs the following conditions for innovation to emerge in a military and veteran transition support system:

1. Develop and enable common processes, methods, and language for all stakeholders that defines roles and responsibilities.

2. Promote public policies that encourage transparency and innovation that facilitate infrastructure providers and aggregation platform companies to emerge; and allow data owners to make their data accessible, interoperable, and secure for the ecosystem to learn.

3. Develop mutually-supporting resources among government, public-private and non-profit partners, across the nation and within metropolitan areas, to improve readiness related requirements.

4. Pursue technology investments offering cost effective methods to advance military, veteran and military spouse transition visibility to improve operational effectiveness and readiness to the individual, transition process, community, and current AVF.\(^{114}\)

5. Embrace disruptive technologies that change current models, processes and thinking to reduce the detrimental effects of information asymmetry have on readiness related outcomes.

6. Continuously look for ways of measuring outcomes that provide inflection points for creators to learn, adapt and innovate quicker than in previous cycles.

7. Share information broadly across the ecosystem to enhance learning, reduce information asymmetry and increase readiness related outcomes.
Governance

Governance is defined as a compilation of decisions, policies and processes leveraged to enhance public-private and non-profit partnership for the aim of increasing readiness to the transitioning service member and to the current AVF. A governing framework is essential for a Resilient Supply Chain Model and for a Shared Services Delivery Model believed to be representational of the military transition process.

Within this component of the enhanced readiness campaign, clear guidance should be communicated by a representational body of practitioners operating within this space. This representational body may take the form of a White House or Defense Department Joint Commission with members across think tanks, federal and non-federal entities, metropolitan areas, and industry scale and scope operators. Moreover, there may be permanent and rotational members assigned for specified durations. The purpose of this joint commission would be to establish a mutually supporting framework, coordination structure and policies to provide these governance functions. This is not intended to be hierarchical structure; rather serve as a credible and representational voice for describing a desired future state of the ecosystem with mutually aligned objectives and collaboration where possible. Together this joint commission may have permanent and non-members representing the entire transition process to gain broad perspectives to locally identified challenges, plausible ways to impact the process, and means for implementation.

In a 2014 Deloitte study, four key pillars were identified to facilitate governing mechanisms within a resilient supply framework—*Visibility, Flexibility, Collaboration* and
The following paragraphs will describe and explain these pillars in the context of an enhanced readiness campaign.

Figure 10: Governance

The first governing mechanism pertains to *visibility*. That is the visualization of key stakeholders and interactions within this ecosystem and the in-transit visibility of the transitioning service member across all three phases of the Soldier Life-Cycle. Ultimately, visibility within the Continue Strong phase should be directed both internally and externally to identify inefficiencies in the process and towards the transitioning service member. To achieve this aim, analytics and digital visualization tools will need to provide the levels of information desired to balance and reinforce success. Thus, within this readiness campaign; both federal, non-federal entities, service providers and industry stakeholders should take prudent measures to increase in-transit visibility outcomes of the service member from recruitment to transition related activities. By doing so, readiness outcomes may be improved.

McDonough, Armstrong, and Brillman made reference to visualization of the process and discussed the importance of gaining an appreciation and understanding to both network and individual level outcomes garnered through Unite Us technology.
applications powering AmericaServes models. As the system learns from evidence based analytics more clarity will be achieved providing service members with increased navigation to services and reduced amounts of information asymmetry found within the transition process. Mapping the coordinated care and employment supply chains and visualizing where to intervene within this process may provide new ways for partnerships to emerge and increase readiness outcomes.

The second governing mechanism is flexibility. That is having multiple options to consider across specified healthcare and related services and meaningful employment opportunities. Thus, for transition to be likened to a supply-chain process, mapping of the environment is critical. Looking for intervention points upstream and downstream of the DD214 serve as plausible recommendations to increase readiness. Figure 11 highlights this visualization.

![INTERVENTION POINTS](image)

**Figure 11: Intervention Points Upstream and Downstream of the DD214**

The third governing mechanism pertains to collaboration—the strengthening of established relationships and partnerships. Joint public-private and non-profit
partnership activities within the military and veteran support ecosystem will require conditions that foster cooperation and opportunities for commercialization for creators to enter the space and to scale their infrastructure and aggregation platforms as conditions change.

To strengthen these partnership opportunities, the Army should serve as the executive agent for DOD to build partner capacity. The purpose of this readiness campaign will be to increase readiness of the transitioning service member; specifically, with respect to employment and coordinated health care outcomes. Collaboration activities may be seen in the likes of: an establishment of a joint commission, proposed legislation, public policy amendments, Defense Innovation Unit Experimental (DIUx) awards, technological innovations and the emergence of more collective impact organizations within metropolitan communities.

The fourth governance mechanism is control. Certainly, internal and external mechanisms reinforcing compliance related matters aid with corporate governance control. However, for the purpose of this model, innovative technologies will serve as a primary control mechanism for making sense of the operating environment and having the capability to provide feedback ranging from: oversight and performance management to status of compliance. Applying evidenced based analytics against a hypothesis and a theory provide explanatory power for future network and individual level outcome discoveries.

A key aspect of control is the commitment of resources to fund specific activities. Within a business service model this is referred to as the Funding Mechanism. In a service business, senior leaders must give careful thought to how excellence
(acquisition of military talent) will be paid for. In this case, a new market will need to be created. This new market through the creation of aggregation point(s) will allow military talent to be better prepared to find meaningful employment opportunities and coordinated services. As well as, non-profit, for profit and other government agencies to know specified and desired talent and requisite skills availability in a more structured and procedural basis that is fee-based to access the market. The question senior leaders should ask is—may operational benefits, such as military readiness, be obtained from service features—that is the establishment of a market or governing apparatus that facilitates aggregation? Thinking in these terms will be required if the military wants to continue operating under an AVF model in years to come. Likewise, it will also allow planners, policy makers and senior leaders view the environment potentially in a way unlike before. Ultimately, all stakeholders are seeking to reduce non-value added costs and increase efficiencies that provide competitive advantages to each while creating value and integrity within the supply-chain(s).

An important point to consider with respects to control is that “if the goal is service excellence, then you must create a situation in which the customer will prefer the do-it-yourself capability over a readily available full-service alternative.”117 One would logically assess, the government is not equipped to provide such an alternative; thus, the government would want to create the conditions that employers and service providers would desire to take on this role. A plausible alternative to begin leveraging technology to increase readiness would be to adopt a Fastport technology solution to serve as the intermediary in this role between the supply and demand aggregation point for employment and a Unite Us technology to serve as the intermediary role for
coordinated care. Together their secure and regulatory compliant technology applications would quickly produce the learning needed to reinforce successful practices and counter those that result in inefficiencies and less than ideal readiness results.

Great service businesses remain very clever about who it selects as its customers; as such, DOD should do the same when creating this governing and market framework. One plausibly would begin this search with a values match for those desiring to participate in this newly created market. Transitioning service members and employers alike would welcome this; because, this may potentially over time lead to increased retention of new hires and a reduction in training costs for employers. Moreover, lead to a correlation to increased job satisfaction for transitioning service members and ultimately to a reduction in UCX for the military and state governments.

Additionally, seeking out innovative technology solutions through these partnerships to address gaps in supply-chain efficiency should be explored. Engaging in dialogue with IVMF, Unite Us, Fastport and the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Hiring our Heroes certainly would be a great start in understanding capabilities and capacity available today in the military and veteran support system to increase levels of readiness of the current AVF and the readiness of the transitioning service member. Having a senior Defense official or Secretary of the Army to host a round table with the aforementioned public-private entities would additionally be favorable to impacting readiness outcomes and explore new integrative strategies for innovation.

Lastly, these four mutually supporting pillars facilitate effective governance outcomes in the forms of: alignment of goals and expectations, standards, processes,
policies, streamlined communication, conditions generating entry, commercialization and learning in the environment. More specifically, the defining and introduction to service usage fees for buyers. That is service providers, scale and scope operators, industry stakeholders desiring entry highlight the commercialization of a newly established market. Visibility and flexibility activities engaged-in by scale and scope operators and creators serve as guiding lights for transitioning service members and families. While collaboration and control activities leveraging enabling technologies serve as emerging currents.

**Performance Management**

Performance Management serves as the second critical line of effort within the readiness campaign. It is comprised of three core components—*talent process, performance processes, and workforce utilization*. Together these components provide an end-to-end process to assess performance. Within this context, key performance indicators will be developed in a collaborative environment to align activities to achieve increased readiness. To further explore performance management two elements of a Shared Services Delivery Model were selected—*Employee Management System* (Upstream of the DD214) and *Customer Management System (Downstream of DD214)*.
First, in an *Employee Management System*, the employee reference represents the Soldier Life-Cycle spanning from a prospective recruit to a transitioning service member. To some, this life-cycle may be viewed as a supply chain in need of optimization. Thus, an important principle to institute when attempting to maximize readiness outcomes is attempting to eliminate non-value added (NVA) costs associated along this continuum. Moreover, the application of technology coupled with public, private and non-profit partnerships present a means to demonstrate how training in the military will directly translate to a suite of civilian performance enhancing skills, credentials, and capabilities.

Second, this segment of the military and veteran support system represent the supply side of the value-creation process. Like any business, “employees who are above average in both attitude and aptitude are expensive to employ.”¹¹⁸ This is simply due to talent driving a premium. Across many industries today, there is acknowledgement to the quality of product they receive in a transitioning service member. This has been communicated as to their vast array of knowledge, experience
and education that has advanced their ability to reason and problem solve; as well as, to their leadership and management acumen tested in the most austere and complex environments. Others have touted a premium is placed on this type of talent due to their service in a premier world-class training and leadership incubator known as the Army and its values based culture.

Arguably, the amount of investment a company would have to spend to obtain these attributes from a candidate would not be sustainable. Though all are true, obstacles still remain in the transition process that prevent the employer and service provider from finding the military, veteran, and military spouse talent and individuals seeking health and human related services. On the other side of this talent and capability pipeline is the transitioning service member and family member attempting to navigate to potential meaningful employment opportunities and across an array of provider services.

With respects to the supply side of the equation, McLennan, addresses the recruiting challenge and advocates for expansion in public-private partnerships to improve performance management. What McLennan describes is how a public-private partnership between recruiters and an intermediary company could potentially provide a win-win scenario for the recruit, the military service, and a company or service provider. Currently, this out-of-the box thinking pertaining to an employee management strategy is missing. He asserts—

Imagine a partnership especially in Reserve components—I can stand next to a recruiter at a high school and can offer any recruit a pre-hire offer who decides to enter service pursuing a high demand skill….and then come into a civilian work environment post service.
McLennan expands this idea and describes it as a pragmatic calling, not a higher calling—

In this example, multiple job offers for follow on employment after military service are presented to a recruit because they are choosing to come into the Army.\textsuperscript{121}

If this model were tested and adopted, then certain NVA costs may be reduced providing more dollars for military readiness and performance related efforts such as training and equipment. The first NVA cost may be evidenced from a significant imbalance to acquire a military recruit ranging as high as $22,000. The second NVA costs may be seen in roughly $80 million spent between the Army and the Army Reserve annually for sign on bonuses for recruits with no prior service. The third NVA cost is the impact of rising costs of maintaining thousands of recruiters assigned across the country. As McLennan argues, you have to take NVA costs out of the system to optimize workforce utilization. Certainly, unemployment compensation accounts for a large portion of these costs, as seen on average over $200 million since 2003.\textsuperscript{122}

First, within the \textit{Customer Management System}, the term customer here refers to the employers and service providers that make up the Sea of Goodwill. Second, this segment represents the demand side of the value-creation process. Frei recommends when designing this type of a customer management system there are three primary questions a service business should ask—which customers are you focusing on? Which behaviors do you want? And which techniques or mechanisms will most effectively influence behavior?\textsuperscript{123} These three questions have merit when designing a mechanism or framework that would allow the conditions for aggregation to occur.
A service secretary embracing industry engagements and public-private and non-profit partnerships, to include advocating for increased data-sharing amongst government and non-federal entities will result in the establishment of a new market where Integrators will emerge and a norming process for goods and services will begin. Similarly, an increase in navigation to desired services will emerge and information asymmetry will be reduced now that a mechanism is established for them to share information broadly. Industry round table discussions, attendance and speaking engagements at large industry wide events, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) signings, and senior level representation at Transition Summits, all serve as effective means for senior leaders to gain diverse perspectives to current tensions within the ecosystem. Additionally, through these engagements emphasis should be placed on building industry-wide support and championing the narrative—Soldier for Life is made possible because “American Business Has Our Back!”

Enabling Technology

Enabling technologies serve as the engine to create breakthroughs in performance and capabilities for the user. Others will describe these capability generators as market disruptors due to their dramatic impact on streamlining processes and providing timely information allowing the system to learn and adapt faster.
Breakthrough or disruptive technologies contribute to solving societal challenges and focus areas. Specific technologies that have revolutionized markets or opened new markets in the 21st century—fiber optic technology, cell phone and satellite technology, personal computing, the internet of things, unmanned aerial vehicles, radar technology applied to automobiles and the emergence of 3D printing.

Due to speed, process and computing power, these key enabling technologies provide the infrastructure to make connections faster, the ability to track and organize data and provide quantifiable metrics to increase system learning. Additionally, these technologies provide transparency, full-supply chain visibility, and platforms for aggregation and learning. Technologies such as these have been lacking in the social services space for years.

Leveraging technology to produce individual and network level outcomes may be evidenced by—real-time analysis informing decision makers on scales of readiness occurring with: an individual transitioning, the community providing services for those reintegrating into society, and the employer creating talent pipelines across industries. Together collectively they would prove powerful to achieving increased military readiness of the current AVF. McLennan agrees and adds—

If you focus on NVA costs associated with the Soldier Supply-Chain then I think you can increase the mission readiness of the Army and the military by attacking systematically the NVA costs just like we do in business.126
Thankfully, companies like Unite Us and Fastport have entered the ecosystem and serving as both an infrastructure provider and aggregation platform to connect transitioning service members to networks of service providers and to meaningful employment opportunities respectively.

**Information Controls, Standards and Reporting Policy**

Like any campaign, information is used to bridge all lines of effort and serves as a critical element to the overall readiness strategy. Key and salient to this operational approach are the use of strategic narratives. Additionally, key applications found within the information environment, relevant to both supply-chain and service delivery models, are the data and administrative controls, data standards and reporting policy.

![Figure 14. Components of Information Line of Effort](image)

By linking policies, processes and preparation activities of the transitioning service member to positive impacts in military readiness is crucial. As such, strategic communication is needed to define specific narratives to intended audiences as to what a desired future state of the military and veteran support system should look like. The author purposefully did not title this line of effort strategic communication; however, acknowledges the importance of it within the shaping context Information provides.

It is the author’s recommendation that one of the first actions of the new Army Secretary either alone or in a commission-like capacity should be to describe a desired
collective future state of this ecosystem. In December 2016, GEN Milley made comments pertaining to readiness gains and risks largely associated to describe requirements needed of systems and processes for ways of improving the readiness of the current and future AVF. His comments are below—

Our readiness is steadily improving across the entire formation of the United States Army, but our progress is slow. It is going to take consistent, predictable funding and much more time and effort to reach the levels we need…We cannot afford systems that are late to need, and we must not send tomorrow’s Soldiers into harm’s way with yesterday’s equipment.127

If this were a description of a military organization or a description of a process that was seen to impact the projection of forces into a theater of operation, immediate alarm would have sounded and senior leader attention and resources would have been given the highest priority. By viewing the military transition of service members in the context to the preservation of the current and future AVF is imperative. Thus, a new way of thinking about transition will require previous assumptions, claims, and assertions to be challenged and this is the objective of this paper—to add contribution to a military and veteran support system currently lacking in direction, market conditions, governing structure, navigation, and an ability to learn.128

A second strategic narrative is needed to communicate to potential recruits as part of this end-to-end life cycle. That is, change the narrative from simply joining the military to a comprehensive approach of coupling one’s life serving both in uniform and out. In this case, a new Secretary of the Army adopting similar strategies observed by the former Under Secretary of the Army, Patrick Murphy, and Mr. Michael Michaud, Assistant Secretary of Labor. Conducting industry roundtables and actively participating in industry-wide career fairs will demonstrate the vision in action while reinforcing a
powerful message to the buyers of military talent. Before this message may be used, changes in policy will be needed which will be discussed later in this section and more discussions with industry leaders will be required.

McLennan and McDonough, agreed that clearly describing a desired future state if crafted appropriately would embrace and reinforce the Soldier for Life mindset. McLennan suggests the narrative should simply be—“Fulfill your obligation in the military. American Business has your back.”129 He believes this strategic message is the only narrative that makes the long-term viability of an AVF.130 In essence, what you are telling a potential recruit is, the reason you are receiving these multiple job offers before you even join the military is due to your willingness and commitment to serve your nation. As such, in return for your service, regardless to length of duration in uniform, we want you in our company and most definitely our industry due to your talent and experiences. In this light, industries view transitioning service members as those that have received world-class training in a leadership environment they cannot replicate; however, experiences gained through military experience are translatable and needed within corporate America to drive innovation and to solve complex problems. Given this logic, if Soldier for Life represents the end-to-end lifecycle of a young man or woman, then looking at transition from a new perspective proves useful—one in which may begin prior to and/or concurrently with one’s commitment to join the military service.

The last recommendation regarding strategic narratives is the strategic messaging to address the current AVF. It is here the message from a strategic leader should be one that communicates the Army’s intention to honor its commitments to
service members and their families regarding benefits and continual assessment and innovations to improve opportunities for a successful transition.

There are many positive developments that have occurred in a relatively short period of time: implementation of DOD Skills Bridge, Army Career Skills Program, DOD-DOL-Small Business Administration (SBA), US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Hiring our Heroes Transition Summits, creation of the Army University, improvements made within the SFL-TAP process and numerous public-private and non-profit partnerships continuing to form. The DOD and Services should be proud of these achievements; like all programs and processes more can be done. Optimization along the SLC continuum and SFL-TAP process through an enhanced public-private, non-profit partnership framework will contribute to increasing desired readiness outcomes.

Data and administrative controls are defined as an ongoing operations management system that reconciles both supply and demand activities. Thus, within this readiness campaign of establishing a system that may collect information that improves efficiencies on both sides of the equation is important. Who, what types of information and for what purpose is critically important and should be discussed. However, liberalization of restrictive data-sharing policies is warranted if aggregation points are to be created that allow creators to bring innovative technologies to bear. Without question, this disruptive innovation will be the catalyst for increased readiness.

With enabling technologies often come the need for data standards. When referencing an enhanced readiness campaign—the need for data standardization is even more pronounced. Joint military and industry representation is critical if this campaign is to succeed. Leading DOD, military service chiefs, and industry leaders
understand that more can be done to reduce inefficiencies currently impacting the military and veteran support system.

Forming a joint commission among public-private and non-profit sector leaders to develop a standards process would prove useful. Representation from the IVMF, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Unite Us and Fastport would be the first selections to this joint commission and first creators to meet with the new Army Secretary to gain insights to the current state of this military and veteran support system. Especially in developing clearly identifiable metrics that may be applied to both network and individual level outcomes to aid in ecosystem learning. These metrics would inform both the Defense Department, service providers and industry partners with quantifiable information that assists in reducing information asymmetry and increasing readiness outcomes. This may be evidenced by understanding: supply-demand aggregated numbers, time associated with receiving appropriate level of care, talent management matches between military occupational skills and industry positions, and installation transitioning service populations to metropolitan cities where collective impact organizations may assist with navigation to desired services.

Another benefit of enabling technologies is reflective in changes to policy and reporting of information ascertained from data collection. This information is critical to understanding iterative inflection points and states of readiness with individuals, communities, processes and to the preservation of the AVF. As more emerging technologies come online and are able to gain advantages from large population sets of data, innovative analytics will be able to produce more favorable and predictable network and individual level outcomes. This will be evidenced in speed and accuracy of
appropriate services increasing a level of wellness and exposure to more employment opportunities where unemployment and underemployment may be reduced.\textsuperscript{131} AmericaServes and U.S. Chamber of Commerce Transparency Reports demonstrate how enabling technology is able to interpret data collected and transfer knowledge across the ecosystem.

Assessment

Lastly, and some may argue the most important component of a readiness campaign is the integrated ability to perform program oversight activities. That is developing and monitoring activities in a structured way to provide a feedback mechanism to: prioritize issues, initiatives, and allocation of resources. Moreover, identify intervention points within the environment that may lead to solving gaps and opportunities previously not explored.

With respects to assessing an enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership readiness campaign, there are several distinct areas of readiness that should be considered: career readiness, community readiness, AVF readiness and industry readiness. Looking at readiness through a holistic lens provides credence for strengthening public-private partnerships and in the establishment of mutually supporting programs and metrics. Unfortunately, this paper does not explore these distinguishing types of readiness enough and future inquiry into this topic is warranted. What this paper does offer with regards to this topic is the cursory notion that there are distinct areas of readiness that may provide artifacts and information markers and/or signals to potential emerging trends if collection mechanisms and information sharing activities are established.
Individual career readiness standards are found at the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Home Page. This website is beneficial for the transitioning service member and should be used as they prepare for the start of a second career. Ultimately, each transitioning service member should tailor their readiness to their journey. Seeking the guiding lights described within this paper and through other sources will prove beneficial. Starting the transition process early and throughout one’s SLC cannot be overstated. One’s reputation and activation of a network are the currency for future opportunities.

Community Readiness may be viewed as a compilation of programs, policies and efforts to achieve an impact towards a public policy aim. A leader or champion within this local area is a must. Identifying the creators and aggregation points are critical for understanding changes in the ecosystem. Assessing a communities’ knowledge of issue and receptivity on a particular topic is important to understanding the likelihood of committing resources will occur to impact change. Collective Impact organizations such as AmericaServes organizations in select metropolitan cities serves as the model to bridge the divide between transitioning service members and their integration or re-integration into a community. The power of these organizations and their technology platforms provide resident expertise to aid in the navigation to services and opportunities on a degree of scale that far succeds an individual’s capacity. These are the guiding lights a transitioning service member should immediately seek out when a destination is known.

AVF readiness means different things to different audiences. However, for the sake of argument, readiness may be defined but not limited to various metrics such as:
end strength of the total force, personnel quantities by service, personnel quality, command climate, individual and unit training and performance, equipment and technology capability. Developing iterative processes to assess states of readiness against defined standards at varying levels and across differing topics demonstrates the importance of clearly defined standards to use as benchmarks for assessment in a readiness campaign. Readiness of the AVF is seen in collective environments, training exercises and ultimately in deployed environments. Within the context of this military and veteran support system, the AVF represents the supply side of the equation for both military and industry talent management. This is because the military is viewed not only as the world’s best combat fighting force, it is also viewed as the premier training and leadership laboratory.¹³³

Industry readiness may be defined as a creative talent pipeline comprised of adequate planning, training and support services for the right person with the requisite skills, training and experience to emerge. Thus, on the demand side of the equation, industry readiness goes beyond the individual hire and should be viewed more broadly. Reducing non-value added costs, lowering recruiting expenses and time to acquisition of talent, and increasing retention outcomes strengthen industry readiness. As the DOD and Service cultures relook at the AVF model and implement the former Defense Secretary Carter’s initiatives of designing on-ramps and off-ramps with respects to talent management demonstrate the importance of establishing strong partnerships with industry. In this light, the optimization of the transition process should be viewed as a rising tide or emerging current to lift both military and industry desired outcomes—not as competitors for talent; but, collaborators of talent.
Looking at readiness through this framework and understanding to how assessments will contribute to system learning remains vitally important. In this same manner, acknowledging that the military and veteran support system is largely fractured it appears assessments would be most useful within metropolitan constructs; as well as, in respects to the transition process as a whole. Hyper-local outcomes are best viewed as just that—in relation to their inherent socio-economic and socio-political environment.

Conclusion

Findings through this research provide an expanded way of visualizing the Sea of Goodwill through Wilkinson and Hagel’s descriptors—Sunbirds, Architects, Integrators, Infrastructure Providers, Aggregation Platforms and Service Businesses. Analyzing the military and veteran support ecosystem through these labels provide a deeper understanding as to who the creators currently are operating within the space and what is required for innovation to occur. More importantly, it explains capability and capacity each brings to shift the current conditional state to a desired future state of increased military readiness. As well, provides context for transitioning service members as to who and what organizations to look for depending on one’s desired needs.

A myriad of challenges and implications bearing on the military and veteran support ecosystem ranging from: disparate fragmentation hyper-localized in metropolitan areas, absence of aggregation points, messaging of strategic narratives, restrictive policies and regulations preventing information and data sharing exchanges, rampant information asymmetry both upstream and downstream of the DD214, and a lack of innovative technology and scale present within the environment to drive change.
These identified tensions serve as intervention points for creators desiring to fill gaps and to apply innovative strategies to gain integration and collaborative advantages.

Lastly, a cursory overview of an enhanced public-private and non-profit partnership construct was provided for a readiness campaign. Within this section a readiness campaign strategy integrated a resilient supply chain model with a shared service delivery model to form the necessary components to organize activities in a cogent manner to impact readiness outcomes. As such, it was organized in primary lines of effort consisting of Governance, Performance Management and Enabling Technology and supporting lines of effort—Information and Assessment.

Through these means and the application of systems thinking, supply chain principles, business service models and design theory it remains plausible that— the transition process over time will trend more favorably as more intervention occurs both upstream and downstream of the DD214. Health care services are improved through the use of coordinated care technology creating increased navigation, access and coordination within local networks. The discovery of two dimensional outcomes at the network and individual level provided timely and relevant information increasing the learning of system participants; as well, improved levels of timeliness and appropriateness of care. In the same way, talent pipelines emerged through a new resume compiler and applicant tracking system technologies. These technological advancements will revolutionize industries through the development of a two-way market impacting both recruitment and retention outcomes while providing the transitioning service member with an array of meaningful employment options—
impacting unemployment and underemployment challenges facing the military and veteran population.

Leveraging technologies to innovate represent another key component to the supply and demand side of the value-creation process and the reduction in non-value added costs and information asymmetry. Innovative technology solutions and engaged leaders serve as currents that allow a marketplace to work; as does, collective impact to be achieved within metropolitan ecosystems across the country. AmericaServes models like PAServes; and technology companies— like Unite Us and Fastport, serve as the Architects lighting the path for improved navigation and efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness in service delivery and employment activities and increased readiness for all.

Establishing a new market with governing mechanisms, reducing barriers to entry, commercialization and learning will provide the market conditions for Integrators to emerge and for readiness outcomes to increase. Champions will be needed and an enhanced public-private and non-profit readiness campaign may serve as the guide. As a new presidential administration forms, perhaps a policy window will emerge where these initiatives will be implemented. Until then, transitioning service members should continue to look for guiding lights and emerging currents as they navigate the Sea of Goodwill.

Recommendations
A number of recommendations stem from these conclusions:

1. Use Principles for Ecosystem Learning and Principles for Innovation to describe desired conditions for mutual cooperation and innovation solutions to emerge.
2. Apply a resilient supply-chain and shared services delivery model construct to the military and veteran transition process to better visualize the impacts supply-demand have on optimization of system readiness.

3. Form a joint commission or representational body with permanent and non-members representing the entire transition process to identify challenges and to recommend solutions. As one voice, cast a vision to describe a desired future state of the Sea of Goodwill to inspire individuals and organizations contributing to this military and veteran support system.

4. Adopt an Opt-Out approach to information and data-sharing practices between federal and non-federal entities to assist transitioning service members find desired services and meaningful employment opportunities.

5. Establish a new market with aggregation point(s) that allow both the transitioning population members, service providers and employers more access, coordination and navigation capability within a market framework. Commercialization of the transition process would result in a reduction in information asymmetry, reduction in non-value added costs ultimately leading to increased readiness.

6. Focus efforts on how to govern this fragmented market and to commercialize the transition space to increase readiness outcomes of the transitioning service member, the SFL-TAP process and the community at large.

7. Leverage Fastport technology solutions to impact underemployment and unemployment drags on readiness and leverage Unite Us technology solutions to connect transitioning service members and family members with desired coordinated care services within metropolitan areas.

8. Adopt strategic messaging examples to communicate to multiple audiences across this military and veteran support ecosystem.

Endnotes

1 John W. Copeland and David W. Sutherland, *Sea of Goodwill: Matching the Donor to the Need*, White Paper (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), 2. “The potential of the Sea of Goodwill is not just the nation’s government, nongovernmental agencies, benevolent organizations, and institutes of higher learning. Its potential is in the heart of our nation’s communities – the citizens of those towns and cities. The aim of this Sea of Goodwill is matching donors with the needs of Service members, veterans, their families, and the families of the fallen.”


5 Ibid.


8 Ibid., 4.

9 Ibid., 5.

10 Ibid.


15 Soldier for Life Program concept slide, July 6, 2016.


17 James McDonough and Nicholas Armstrong, telephone interview by author, December 2, 2016.

18 Daniel Brillman, CEO of Unite Us, telephone interview by author, December 20, 2016.

19 McLennan, interview by author.

20 Hagel et al., *The Hero’s Journey through the Landscape of the Future*, 18.

21 Ibid., 27.
22 McDonough, telephone interview by author.

23 Dr. Nicholas Armstrong, Senior Director, Research and Policy, Institute of Veterans and Military Families, telephone interview by author, December 2, 2016.

24 McLennan, interview by author.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 McDonough, telephone interview by author.

29 Hagel et al., The Hero’s Journey through the Landscape of the Future, 32.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 36.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 McDonough, telephone interview by author.

36 McLennan, interview by author.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid. Other policies that have provide positive impacts to military transition are the U.S. Department of the Army, Implementation Guidance for Credentialing Program and Career Skills Program, Army Directive 2015-12 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, March 11, 2015); U.S. Department of the Army, Soldier for Life-Transition Program, Army Regulation 600-81 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, May 17, 2016); “Delegation of Authority of Permissive Temporary Duty (PTDY) for the Career Skills Program),” Memorandum for HRC, December 9, 2016. Together these policies and Army Regulation demonstrate the Army’s acknowledgement and commitment to improving the Transition process both at the individual and network level outcome. Without question the Army is dedicating more resources to invest in our Soldier’s education and developing opportunities through public-private partnerships as evidenced by—joint training, employment skills training, apprenticeships, internship (JTEST-AI) programs to name a few.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.
42 Hagel et al., *The Hero’s Journey through the Landscape of the Future*, 29.


44 Ibid.

45 McLennan, interview by author.

46 Ibid.

47 Williamson Murray, “Thinking About Innovation,” *Naval War College Review* LIV, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 120

48 McLennan, interview by author.

49 Armstrong, telephone interview by author.

50 Hagel et al., *The Hero’s Journey through the Landscape of the Future*, 35.

51 Ibid., 36.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.

55 McLennan, interview by author.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 McDonough, telephone interview by author.


62 Ibid.

63 McLennan, interview by author.

64 Ibid.

66 Hagel et al., *The Hero’s Journey through the Landscape of the Future*, 37.


68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., 20.

71 Ibid., 27.

72 Ibid., 29.

73 Ibid., 30.

74 Ibid., 33.

75 Ibid., 33.

76 Ibid., 40.


78 Ibid.

79 McDonough, telephone interview by author.


82 Ibid., 19.

83 Ibid., 19, 43.

84 Ibid., 45.

85 Ibid., 34.

86 Armstrong, telephone interview by author.

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88 Armstrong, telephone interview by author.


90 McDonough, telephone interview by author.
Brillman, telephone interview by author.

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Ibid.

Hagel et al., *The Hero’s Journey through the Landscape of the Future*, 37-38.

McLennan, interview by author.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid. “It is a compilation of digital tools consisting of a resume builder application that contains translation tables to electronically match a veteran’s military experience to a civilian career opportunity, and to translate that military experience into a resume that any civilian hiring manager can understand.”

Ibid. 

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

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Ibid.

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Ibid., 41.

Ibid., 41.


Ibid.

Our readiness is steadily improving across the entire formation of the United States Army, but our progress is slow. It is going to take consistent, predictable funding and much more time and effort [with an increasing need for public-private partnerships] to reach the levels we need...Overhauling [the way we view and understand] the [military and veteran transition support system] and process is a way of improving readiness [that mutually benefits the military, industry and communities at large]. We cannot afford systems that are late to need, and we must not send tomorrow’s Soldiers into [the civilian sector and workforce] with [inadequate knowledge as how to find specific services that improve their readiness within a community and most specifically without the knowledge to the value of their skills and experience when seeking meaningful employment]. We must do better. We can do better. We must exploit science and technology to create [navigation to services and to reduce information asymmetry to gain knowledge and access to opportunities] for the very challenging future [where military readiness and the preservation of the current and future All-Volunteer Force is at stake]. [It is imperative the U.S. Army remains credible by honoring commitments to those that have served], and have [an integrated network] that’s up to the task, a system that can deliver on time and on budget.
130 Ibid.

131 McDonough, telephone interview by author.


133 McLennan, interview by author.