
Office of Veterans And Business Development: **Formative Evaluation of the Boots to Business Program**

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FINAL REPORT

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The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations found in this study are those of the contractor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Veterans and Business Development, the United States Small Business Administration, or the United States Government.

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PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The importance of veterans in today's business market cannot be underestimated. Results of a 2012 data sample of small business owners, businesses owned by veterans, and businesses owned by service-disabled veterans, indicated that 2.52 million business were either majority-owned by veterans or fully veteran-owned (Sobota 2017). The most common method for veterans to become business owners is to start or found the business themselves (85 percent of owners of respondent firms indicated this option while 10.8 percent indicated the purchasing of their businesses). Moreover, veteran-owned firms are estimated to represent 9.1 percent of all U.S. firms.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD), Boots to Business (B2B) program provides transitioning service members and their spouses an opportunity to explore business ownership or other self-employment opportunities. It also offers the foundational knowledge required to develop a business plan, as well as introduces key steps in understanding business concepts and evaluating business opportunities. Participants also explore SBA's resources available to transitioning service members and ways to access business startup capital and additional technical assistance during training.

The *Boots to Business (B2B) Program Two-Day Introduction to Entrepreneurship Training Workshop* (heretofore referred to as the B2B 2-day workshop), one component of the B2B program, is the focus of this formative evaluation. The introductory workshop was piloted in 2012 by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University and consists of eight modules. It provides transitioning service members an opportunity to explore their desire to start a business, learn business concepts, and assess their confidence and motivation around starting a business.

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to: 1) identify ways to improve participation of transitioning service members and their spouses in the B2B 2-day workshop, and 2) to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the course quality assessment surveys currently used to appraise

the workshop curriculum. Findings pertain to areas germane to program planning and course quality improvement activities. Two broad research questions frame the evaluation. They are:

1. What factors are correlated with the successful recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of participants in the B2B 2-day workshop?
2. What are the strengths and limitations of the course quality assessment survey for the B2B 2-day workshop?

To answer these research questions several mini-studies were conducted using qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The studies consisted of an interview study, a rating study of course quality assessment surveys, a guided discussion, and an environmental scan. The interview and the environmental scan studies play the most prominent role in answering programmatic questions. The rating and guided discussion play a more prominent role in answering questions about the course quality assessment surveys.

BACKGROUND

Boots to Business (B2B) is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). B2B is open to military service members and military spouses of all pay grades in the armed forces — from those transitioning from career service after initial two-year commitments all the way through retirement following a lifetime working for the Pentagon or, in the case of the Coast Guard, for the Department of Homeland Security.

B2B is delivered through a broad network of partners. The network includes Transition Service Managers (TSMs)¹ who are on-base coordinators; Veteran Business Development Officers (VBDOs) who are field coordinators, and Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC), which provide B2B instruction. The network also includes DoD personnel, SBA District Office Personnel, SCORE, Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), and Women Business Centers (WBC). Operational partners such as the IVMF at Syracuse University contribute to curriculum development and follow-up training.

The B2B program consists of three components:

- *The Entrepreneurship Track Overview* – an introductory video shown during the mandatory 5-day Transition Assistance Program- Goals, Plans, Success (TAP GPS) course;
- *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* – a 2-day workshop offered as one of three additional Transition Assistance Program (TAP) tracks; and
- *Foundations of Entrepreneurship* – an 8-week instructor-led online course that offers in-depth instruction on the elements of a business plan and tips and techniques for starting a business. (NOTE: CURRENT FOLLOW-ON OPTIONS HAVE CHANGED AND NOW PART 3 IS OPTIONAL.)

¹ Transition Service Managers are represented by the acronym TSMs, which is sometimes used interchangeably with Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Manager. Sometimes TSM also refers to Transition Service Members. For consistency, this report uses TSM for Transition Service Manager.

The B2B 2-day workshop is delivered in a series of lectures broken into eight modules as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. B2B Two-day Training Modules		
Module	Module Title	Module Description
Module 1	Introduction to the Entrepreneurial Experience	Information on entrepreneurial process – what it means to be an entrepreneur and military skills and attributes that transfer over to entrepreneurship.
Module 2	Right Idea? Basics of Opportunity Recognition	Process and activities related to understanding the ‘business case’ for turning an idea into a sustainable business concept.
Module 3	Markets & Your Competitive Space	Information on how to conduct market research and the basics of competitive strategy/analysis.
Module 4	The Economics of Small Business	Information on cost, price, and volume relationship and how it informs profit potential and sustainability for planned business venture.
Module 5	Legal Issues Impacting Veteran-Owned Business (VOBS)	Legal forms of business and other legal considerations impacting veteran-owned business and government contracting.
Module 6	Financing Your Venture	Resources that are required to execute a business venture concept, including opportunities to fund startup and subsequent growth.
Module 7	Moving Forward – Business Planning	Information on the Nuts and Bolts Guide to Business Planning and how to move from feasibility analysis to constructing a viable and fundable business plan.
Module 8	Moving Forward: Resources to Support You	Resources available through the SBA, Veterans Administration (VA) and other resource partners to support the training participant’s efforts to launch and grow a sustainable business venture.

Authorized both by statute and Executive Order, B2B is a result of the law that directs the DoD to provide information to veterans on small business ownership and entrepreneurship programs of the Small Business Administration (10 U.S.C. § 1142(b)13). At the beginning of 2013, U.S. military installations across the nation started offering B2B. Since 2014, B2B has been funded by the Federal Government and has been expanded to full capacity by increasing the frequency of the training and its geographical reach – i.e., including overseas locations. Currently, B2B is offered annually at 213 military installations around the world to more than 13,000 transitioning service members and spouses. Since its inception, over 40,000 service members and spouses have taken the B2B 2-day workshop.

The Global Evaluation and Applied Research Solutions, Inc. (GEARS) evaluation team conducted a comprehensive review of available reports and other documents provided by the SBA (e.g., *Boots to Business: From Service to Start-up Training Program FY2017 Program Announcement* and *Boots to Business Learning Agenda*) as well as relevant government Websites to understand the B2B program and obtain relevant information that informed the development of the current evaluation.

The GEARS team also conducted a preliminary literature search and examined peer-reviewed articles, white papers, and government reports that provided insights on transitioning service members' participation in the B2B program. Because of limited publicly available literature, the GEARS team has focused on only two studies that assessed the B2B program. The first study was conducted by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) of Syracuse University to assess the reasons why veterans select self-employment and business ownership as career paths when transitioning from the military. This study also explored the concepts of entrepreneurial intentions (interest to start a new business), motivations of B2B participants (willingness to start business), and efficacy of the training (capacity of participants for producing intended outcomes).

Despite a low response rate (10%) of contacted study participants, which may suggest a selection bias, the findings of the IVMF study observed increases in the areas of entrepreneurial intention, efficacy, and motivation. Highlights of the findings for the B2B 2-day workshop included:

- 79% of the respondents indicated they were more/significantly interested in starting a business after completing the B2B 2-day Workshop;
- 84% of the respondents indicated that participating in the B2B 2-day workshop increased their level of confidence in starting a business;
- 89% of the respondents indicated they are “somewhat motivated” to “very motivated” to start a business after completing the B2B 2-day workshop while 67% indicated that they were “somewhat motivated” to “very motivated” to start a business 12 months prior to participation; and

- 59% of the respondents indicated they were “somewhat likely” to “very likely” to start a business within 12 months after completing the B2B 2-day workshop while 42% indicated they were “somewhat likely” to “very likely” to start a business 12-months prior to participation.

In general, results from this study suggest that transitioning service members are interested in business ownership, with many beginning the path towards business ownership while still in service. Given that the study was conducted within three years of B2B implementation, the authors proposed the need for further studies to address the needs of transitioning service members. Their conclusion suggests the need for a formative evaluation to understand program factors (e.g., outreach, marketing, and enrollment) that influence transitioning service members’ participation in and completion of the B2B 2-day workshop. Understanding these factors would enable SBA’s OVDB to identify and remove barriers that affect participation of transitioning service members.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is organized in the following sections:

- *Evaluation Framework*. In this section we provide a high-level overview of the evaluation framework and design.
- *Findings by Evaluation Study*. In this section we present findings of each mini study. For each study, we present the following information: 1) overview of study and/or methods; 2) evaluation questions; 3) methods; 4) findings; and 5) conclusions and recommendations.
- *Overall Conclusions and Recommendations*. In this section we provide a summary of the conclusions and recommendations for the formative evaluation study.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND DESIGN

The evaluation framework utilizes constructs from the Precede and Proceed Model (Green & Kreuter, 2005) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) evaluation framework (CDC, 1999). The Precede and Proceed model consists of nine multidimensional phases that serve to provide a step-by-step approach for planning programs. The Precede and Proceed Model is one of the most successful models in understanding knowledge and behaviors related to predisposing, reinforcing, and enabling factors in program design (Crosby & Noar, 2011).

The CDC's program evaluation framework provides a systematic approach to improve and account for programs by involving procedures that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate. The framework is a practical tool designed to summarize and organize essential elements of program evaluation and comprises six steps in program evaluation practice and standards for effective program design. Combining elements of these models helps to understand the program's context, involves program stakeholders, and improves how program evaluations are conceived and conducted.

GEARS combined constructs from the Precede and Proceed Model and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program evaluation framework (CDC, 1999) to create the framework that guided the B2B program evaluation. The combined B2B evaluation framework consists of the following seven steps described below.

- *Step 1 – Examination of factors that influence behavior and responses to environment:* Step One of the B2B evaluation framework comes from the Precede and Proceed Model. This step identifies the factors that will create the behavioral and environmental changes sought. The factors include: predisposing factors such as intellectual and emotional factors that tend to make individuals more or less likely to adopt behaviors (knowledge, attitudes and beliefs); reinforcing factors that encourage a given behavior (social environment); and enabling factors to facilitate behavior change (resources available to individuals).

- *Step 2 – Engaging Stakeholders*: Step Two of the B2B evaluation framework comes from CDC’s framework. It involves inclusion of people or organizations invested in the program, interested in the results of the evaluation, or that have a stake in what will be done with the results of the evaluation.
- *Step 3 – Describing the Program*: Step Three of the B2B evaluation framework comes from CDC’s framework. This step involves creation of a detailed description of the program to ensure understanding of program goals, objectives, and strategies, and the development of a logic model to describe the sequence of activities for bringing about change (a clear picture of how the program is supposed to work).
- *Step 4 – Focusing the Evaluation Design*: Step Four of the B2B evaluation framework comes from CDC’s framework. The step determines the purpose of undertaking the evaluation (gain insight and/or change practice) and the intended users of the evaluation’s findings.
- *Step 5 – Gathering Credible Evidence*: Step Five of the B2B evaluation framework comes from CDC’s framework. This step involves collecting information that conveys a well-rounded picture of the program so that information is seen as credible by users of the primary evaluation findings. It also strengthens evaluation judgments and recommendations that emanate from them.
- *Step 6 – Justify Conclusion*: Step Six of the B2B evaluation framework comes from CDC’s framework. The step involves linking evaluation conclusions to the evidence.
- *Step 7 – Ensuring Appropriate Use and Sharing Lessons Learned*: Step Seven of the B2B evaluation framework comes from CDC’s framework. The step involves unbiased communication to the relevant audiences in a timely and consistent fashion of either the procedures or the lessons learned from an evaluation..

GEARS used these steps to guide the process of developing the evaluation protocol and data collection tools, implementing evaluation activities (e.g., analyzing gathered data), creating evaluation findings reports, and sharing lessons learned from the B2B evaluation. Appendix A provides a detailed explanation of how each of these steps was implemented in the current evaluation project and the B2B Logic Model.

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

OVERVIEW OF APPROACH

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three distinct groups that play major roles in the implementation of the B2B workshop. These groups include:

1. Transition Service Managers (TSMs), who coordinate B2B workshops on military installations;
2. Veteran Business Development Officers (VBDOs) (SBA personnel), who coordinate B2B workshops in the field; and
3. SBA-funded Resource Partners, which contribute to B2B curriculum development, provide instruction, and facilitate B2B workshops on military installations.

These telephone interviews provide respondents' firsthand accounts, opinions, and perceptions about the coordination and implementation of B2B workshops at military installations.

Evaluation Questions

The interviews were conducted to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. Which B2B program components influence participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
2. What are the facilitating factors that have enabled some military installations to have high participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
3. What are the barriers that have prevented some military installations from having high participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
4. How can SBA enhance B2B program components to increase participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
5. What are the facilitating factors that have enabled some military installations to attract participants in the B2B 2-day workshop?
6. What are the barriers that have prevented some military installations from attracting transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
7. How can the SBA enhance B2B program components to attract transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?

METHODS

Sampling and Recruitment of Participants

Between December 2017 and January 2018, the SBA Evaluation Team, OVBD, and GEARS discussed several strategies to recruit interviewees. We identified three factors as key to interviewee selection: 1) location of military installations (overseas, U.S.); 2) type of installations (joint base), and 3) service branch (Army, Navy, Airforce, Marine, and Coast Guard). The additional factors we considered were project timeline, the Department of Defense (DoD) approval process for TSMs, and the participants' level of activity and involvement with B2B 2-day workshops.

The SBA approved convenience sampling as the recruitment and sampling strategy to identify TSMs, VBDOs, and Resource Partners. These groups could be accessed for telephone interviews to discuss their perceptions of both facilitating factors and barriers to the participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop. In March 2018, GEARS received approval to conduct interviews. With OVBD's assistance, GEARS generated convenience sample of 69 persons (TSMs ($n=30$), VBDOs ($n=30$), and Resource Partners ($n=9$)).

Data Collection

The GEARS Evaluation Team developed three semi-structured interview guides containing semi-structured and open-ended questions (Appendix B) to gather information from study participants. All interview guides were reviewed and approved by the SBA Evaluation Team and OVBD (Appendix B).

The administration of interviews took between 30 and 45 minutes and were limited to participants who provided verbal consent to participate before the telephone interview started. At the beginning of the interview, participants were also told that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. Two participants withdrew their consent after accepting an invitation and three participants did not respond to email invitations by the study/interview end date.

Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the number of participants by interview method. Data was collected from 64 participants between January 24, 2018 and May 18, 2018. Of the 64 respondents, 59 (92%) were interviewed by telephone and five (8%) provided written responses to interview questions. Interviews were conducted by telephone by one member of the GEARS Team at times chosen by the participant. Each interview session was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a transcription company.

Table 2. Participation by Interview Method and Respondent Type					
Interview Group	Response Target	Telephone Response	Written Response	Total Interviews	Percent Completed
Transition Service Managers	28	21	4	25	89%
Veteran Business Development Officers	30	28	2	30	100%
Resource Partners	9	9	0	9	100%
Total Interviews Completed				64	96%

Interviewees unable to participate in a telephone interview responded to questions via email. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analyzed using a content and thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Charmaz, 2007). (See Appendix C for a description of the content analysis approach). The GEARS Team also quantified the data to describe frequencies, and analyzed the presence, meaning, and relationships of categories emerging from the textual data.

Study Limitations

One of the study’s limitations is the sample size. While the sample sizes for TSMs and VBDOs were acceptable to achieve a research-concept called “saturation” (e.g., the point at which respondents are telling similar stories or repeating similar themes), the number of Resource Partners was under ten, which created a study limitation. The study could also be strengthened by increasing the diversity of stakeholders as interview groups (e.g., spouses, graduates of B2B 2-day workshops, etc.). Addressing these two limitations may influence the emergence of new themes or concepts in data analysis that provide useful information for identifying ways to market, recruit, and offer B2B 2-day workshop to transitioning service members and their spouses in military installations.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

The interviewees were 25 TSMs (39%), 30 VBDOs (47%), and nine Resource Partners (14%). Of the 25 TSMs, twenty-four percent (24%) were Air Force, and twenty percent (20%) were each from the Army and Navy.

The majority of the TSMs market the B2B workshop in military installations and provide logistics support to B2B instructors during B2B implementation. VBDOs represent the 10 SBA Regions and the majority were in Region IV and Region VI. Most of the Resource Partners are affiliated with Women Business Centers (WBCs) and Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs). On average, participants have worked one to six years on the B2B workshop. Some participants reported working with the B2B program for more than six years. Within the 6-year period since inception of the B2B program, the greatest length of time working with the B2B program was reported as three to 4.5 years by TSMs, one to 2.5 years by VBDOs, and three to 4.5 years by Resource Partners.

When asked about the number of staff supporting the program, only a few mentioned team involvement in the B2B workshop. In general, TSMs work alone with coordination and implementation activities for the B2B program. Some TSMs indicated having support staff that assist in various capacities with the B2B program. Staff capacities vary from: *a receptionist taking registration for the B2B workshop*, to *additional staff persons stepping in to observe and coordinate the Workshop*, to *two additional team members providing limited assistance with portions of the program and an office assistant “picking up the slack”* when the TSM is not available. Only four TSMs indicated total numbers of staff.

VBDOs reported mostly working by themselves but a few VBDOs mentioned working with Branch Managers to initiate Workshops at more distant installations. VBDOs also reported working closely with Resource Partners such as SCORE to host additional (i.e., “Start Your Own Business”) workshops and “tag-team” teaching on modules presented in the B2B workshop. Resource Partners serving as instructors indicated that they taught the course of the B2B workshop by themselves.

FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

Results from interviews with TSMs, VBDOs, and Resource Partners are each described below. Breakdowns of these themes and information about them can be found in Appendix D.

Findings from Interviews with Transition Service Managers (TSMs)

Five overarching categories and subcategories emerged from interviews with the TSMs that describe factors influencing the participation of transitioning service members in B2B workshops.

Installation characteristics that increase participation

When the TSMs were asked what military installation characteristics influence participation in B2B 2-day workshops, participants reported several macro-level variables, such as installation size, type of military installation, perception of command leadership, and support and scheduling. For example, some TSMs indicated that *large installations* tend to accommodate a larger number of transitioning service members. Interviewees, however, did not indicate what constitutes a large installation.

Others indicated that the type of military installations – whether the installations house regular Army, Navy, Air Force, etc. – could increase the number of transitioning service members participating in the B2B workshops. When installations house regular Army personnel, they tend to have members transitioning to civilian life who want to participate in skill-building workshops that are helpful in civilian life.

A few respondents also reported command and leadership support to be a key factor for increased participation in B2B. As one respondent reported “...*(when) all levels support their fellow colleagues in the 2-day workshop, we get better attendance.*” When command/leaders support the transitioning service members, they encourage them to participate in workshop as well as give them time off from duties to attend the B2B workshops. Some respondents, on the other hand, reported that access to training resources (such as classrooms of various sizes and staff to help with the logistics to plan and offer B2B workshops on a regular basis) make it easier

to market B2B workshops and to recruit a larger number of transitioning service members to attend the workshops.

Some of the TSMs interviewed stated that the installation's ability to include the B2B workshop in its yearly calendar and its capacity to offer the workshop regularly made planning and attending the B2B workshop easier. In other words, when transitioning service members know about the workshop date early enough, they are more likely to plan to attend it.

Installation characteristics and barriers that lower participation

When asked about the military installation characteristics that lower participation in the B2B 2-day workshop, the TSMs indicated that “...*this (B2B) class has always been somewhat popular*” among transitioning service members. In recent years, however, TSMs have seen declining interest in the workshop. According to some, this might be due to fluctuating numbers of transitioning service members on base because of deployment, shortened transitioning time, and the type of military installation at which service members were stationed (e.g., if the installation is an aviation facility, training base, or education or teaching facility). For some TSMs, not having prior knowledge of a military exercise or drill limited their ability to schedule B2B workshops when transitioning service members might have competing service priorities.

A few TSMs also reported a lack of access to training resources (such as classroom and “*staff*”—contracted or permanent staff) to market and schedule B2B workshops at military installations.

A few TSMs also reported that a lack of command/leadership support for B2B affects the number of transitioning service members participating in the B2B 2-day workshops. As one respondent put it, “*It could be that their commander says ‘hey, you can’t go for two days’ or whatever. Sometimes that is some of the feedback we get from attendees, that, ‘well, I was allowed to attend the five-day transition workshop course that is mandatory, but then when it comes to the additional 2-day track, the Boots to Business, well, sometimes I have trouble being allowed to attend that course during duty time.’*”

In addition to military installations, TSMs also reported a few barriers that lowered participation by transitioning service members. These included undecided career or business interests (e.g., transitioning service members might not have an interest in starting a business or may not have decided on their career outside the military); negative perception about retirement, and conflicting personal priorities, such as medical appointments or family obligations.

Marketing strategies to increase participation

Many of the TSMs reported using different marketing strategies to increase the participation of transitioning service members in the B2B workshop. These include electronic marketing such as the Internet, email, and social media marketing (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn); broadcast marketing, such as radio and TV; hardcopy/written marketing (such as flyers), and presenting the B2B directly to transitioning service members during career fairs or through other installation programs, such as the Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) classes.

One respondent reported marketing the B2B workshop by using the testimony of B2B alumni who currently own businesses. In addition to using the Internet and social media to market B2B, TSMs also discussed the challenges that come with their use. According to some of the TSMs, transitioning service members are less likely to check their emails and social media due to base responsibilities or having limited or no access while using “installation equipment,” to emails and social media.

Proposed strategies to increase participation using marketing strategies

The TSMs acknowledged that increased investment in outreach and promotion of the B2B program would likely improve the participation of transitioning service members in the B2B workshop. According to some of the TSMs, there are still some transitioning service members who do not know what B2B is, despite efforts by TSMs in providing B2B information using different strategies. Some TSMs proposed conducting B2B briefings with installation commanders to increase their understanding of B2B. Holding

“What I have found to be the most impactful marketing tool is for me to meet with the Command at the installation at least twice a year to remind them what we are, who we are, what the program is, and to have their support...”

“It can certainly help when your Commander is aware of the various tracks and is supportive of them...very recently we've started to see more interest in the permanent staff highlighting the positive outcomes of transition service members.”

briefings with installation commanders is expected to increase both their knowledge of B2B and their support for transitioning service members to attend the program. TSMs also pointed out the advantages of SBA's involvement in marketing B2B with transitioning service members directly and educating service members about its benefits. The active participation in B2B marketing not only enhances the knowledge and understanding of B2B by transitioning service members – it also increases their participation.

Proposed strategies to increase participation using non-marketing strategies

The TSMs indicated that the B2B workshop would have increased participation potential if the workshop was open to those who already transitioned to civilian life and never had an opportunity to be part of B2B while in service. A few TSMs also suggested incentivizing B2B workshop participation, i.e. providing college credits for participants of the B2B 2-day workshops if possible, or providing lunch during workshop through Resource Partners, in order to attract transitioning service members.

Findings from Interviews with Veteran Business Development Officers (VBDOs)

Key themes that emerged from interviews with VBDOs as factors for increasing participation; installation-specific characteristics that help increase participation; barriers and installation-specific characteristics that lower participation, and other efforts and proposed strategies towards increasing participation in the B2B workshop. Each theme and subtheme are described in detail below.

Facilitators that help increase participation

From the VBDO's perspective, seven major factors were mentioned as currently in place and serving as "facilitators" for increasing participation in the B2B workshop on military installations. They are:

- Receiving support from Resource Partners, installation staff and, primarily, TSMs;
- Establishing good relationships with base personnel;
- Opening participation in the B2B workshop to spouses and family members;
- Gaining buy-in from installation leadership for the B2B workshop;
- Offering the B2B workshop several times per year;

- Installation staff engaging in enthusiastic marketing efforts to attract participants; and
- Scheduling the B2B workshop classes in advance for a full calendar year.

Conversely, the VBDOs were asked about barriers to participation in the B2B workshop. The five major barriers mentioned were:

- Having lower numbers of actual participants showing up compared to registration;
- Low quality of materials (e.g., outdated marketing materials and poor-quality program materials);
- Encountering scheduling difficulties – VBDOs encountering redundancy by use of their own registration mechanism;
- SBA’s Salesforce system and lack of efficient communication around schedule changes; and
- Transitioning service members not being able to get time off to attend the B2B workshop.

Other factors mentioned as barriers include the long distances that some VBDOs must travel to reach the bases, thereby affecting their ability and effectiveness in personal outreach. Another barrier was the short time allowed in engaging transition service members while they were transitioning. Participants reporting this barrier indicated that transitioning service members were obligated to fulfill TAP requirements, but no extension of time is granted for the additional two days needed to complete the B2B workshop. Subsequently, a few respondents indicated that having the B2B workshop in a B2B 2-day format encourages dropouts on the second day.

During interviews, VBDOs described military installation characteristics that made it easy to coordinate and carry out B2B workshops and that they feel best support (increase) participation. The characteristics cited by VBDOs included the size of the military installation (large numbers of transitioning service members on site, the availability of training space at a military site, leadership support provided to transitioning service members to attend the B2B training, and military management support for the B2B program). VBDOs also indicated that military installations with a large population of active service members have more opportunity for creating mass awareness and thus attracting participants to the B2B workshop. Another factor

that VBDOs perceived as aiding in increased participation is when the installation has activated successful clearance procedures in advance and guaranteed base access to the B2B workshop participants, including program instructors.

VBDOs were also asked what installation characteristics they perceived lower (negatively impact) participation. Five major areas were mentioned:

- Lack of leadership support for the participation of transition service members in the workshop by unit command staff and TAP managers;
- Limited staffing capacity (i.e., TAP Manager, instructor) on installation to support effective outreach for the B2B workshop;
- Base exercise, readiness drills, and job responsibilities taking precedence over the B2B workshop;
- Lack of awareness about eligibility to participate in the B2B among the younger active-duty service members, spouses and family members; and
- Type of installation characteristics that contribute to a small population sizes, specifically installations that focused on training only its base members (i.e., pilot), or also hosting government civilians and contractors.

“The unit to which the soldier is assigned may have things that come up and those take priority over the transition training.”

Although some VBDOs indicated that the granting of base access helped to support increased participation, other VBDOs indicated that base access issues overall are still a barrier for participation, not only of themselves but for the spouses and veterans who have transitioned from the military base. While not reported by many of those interviewed, three VBDOs did indicate that limited classroom capacity presented challenges in accommodating many participants. This also often deters participation by spouses and veterans.

Efforts to increase participation in the B2B workshop

Increasing the visibility of the B2B workshop is a priority for VBDOs. In discussing other efforts that can be undertaken to increase participation, VBDOs indicated they have engaged in marketing efforts such as promoting B2B: 1) within specific programs and workgroups (i.e., spouse groups); 2) at events (i.e., national conferences and TAP capstone events leading up to B2B, seminars, and veteran events); 3) on local radio; 4) through email and newsletters, and 5) on their organization's Website. VBDOs also spoke of marketing as a strategy to increase overall participation and encouraged key stakeholders of the B2B

workshop to use multiple and innovative methods to attract and retain participants. *"We have to be out there to be visible first, so I guess just a high-level, top-down approach just by making sure every installation, every transition office, every transition service manager from top down to bottom, that this program is available either through email communications, through handouts, through flyers or posters in the office, like, trifolds, something they can take away. If they see it, they may ask questions like, 'what is this workshop and what is this session?' Then they may be intrigued, and they sign up and they may be participating."*

"...We've had to work with the installation to get spouses to attend for folks that have already transitioned out."

"Getting on that base is a nightmare. I've been there for four years and every time I have to renew, if I don't have a pass that's already been worked out months and months ahead of time, I'll go through this for over an hour in the waiting room and so does everybody else...it's not a good situation for someone outside the base to be getting into a class there."

VBDOs made several suggestions to increase participation as it relates to the B2B curriculum. Specifically, VBDOs expressed concern that some modules are too advanced for participants who are just learning about entrepreneurship. One participant described their efforts to revamp the curriculum.

A few VBDOs described how they helped to enhance the students' learning experience around module content by providing additional materials to participants, including, but not limited to: business plan templates, projection spreadsheets, marketing materials, and a *National Resource Guide* designed by one VBDO staff person (*"The [original] National Resource Guide...they're out of print so I make them up on my own, and I pass this out."*). VBDOs also provided insights on how the new changes in the slide deck materials have significantly impacted course delivery.

The older spiral-bound notebook for participants to take notes that contained the slide deck has shifted to a notebook containing blank pages (in addition to module learning objectives and key takeaways). One VBDO stated, *“The active military population is used to receiving training materials with slides and space to write notes. Changing the material may result in negative word of mouth, possibly reducing [the number of] participants.”*

Other proposed strategies to increase participation included employing continuous efforts to obtain leadership support, such as the SBA exploring – on a case-by-case basis – changing the 2-day format of the B2B workshop based on installation needs and attendance patterns (i.e. removing one day and/or adding another, as relevant). Regarding supporting participation more widely, a few VBDOs suggested the following: extending the participation period past the time of transition, such as up to a one-year post transition; hosting the workshop off-base to prevent participants from encountering base access issues; and providing monetary-incentives for Resource Partners supporting the B2B workshop to provide lunch for participants.

Findings from Interviews with Resource Partners

Five themes and sub-themes emerged from interviews with Resource Partners: 1) participation in the B2B workshop over the last two years; 2) current strategies to increase participation; 3) aspects of the content and learning resources that help participants complete the B2B workshop; 4) aspects of the training content and learning resources that prevent the installation from attracting participants, and 5) other efforts and proposed strategies towards increasing participation in the B2B workshop.

Participation in the 2-day B2B workshop over the last two years

When Resource Partners were asked about participation in the B2B workshop over the last two years, they mentioned varying levels of participation by transition service members, family members, and veterans. Resource Partners spoke of seeing participation growth as going from “nonexistent to full capacity” in a short period of time and becoming “steady or constant” for ongoing participation. Participation ranged on average from 5 to 25 attendees. Resource Partners observed spouse participation in the B2B workshop in small numbers. Additional perspectives were shared on participation indicating that there is a “shift in the transitioning population.” One

Resource Partner indicated seeing a decrease in attendance due to limited transitioning. Another described the transition of younger service members as undecided about career and entrepreneurship interests. The Resource Partner described such attendees as exploring the idea of going into business rather than having already decided to go into business – *“that changes the dynamics of how you teach, when it's a less committed group.”*

Attendance was also described to be influenced by population characteristics of individual bases as well as installation requirements. When the classroom capacity allows, the B2B workshop is open to all expressing interest, including spouses and those who have already participated in a previous B2B workshop. Resource Partners indicated that few spouses are often accompanied by their transitioning service member to the workshop.

Some of the feedback provided by Resource Partners is applicable to the multiple factors or variables reported by TSM and VBDO interviewees. For example, some Resource Partners provided their perception of current strategies that help to increase B2B workshop participation. These included advanced scheduling to capture participants at various intervals while transitioning, and the hosting of B2B workshops numerous times a year – such as monthly, bi-monthly, and quarterly – to attract greater participation. Several Resource Partners mentioned that they felt the use of diverse instructors helped bring in vast knowledge and skills and kept participants engaged. As a benefit to participation in the B2B workshop, Resource Partners serving as instructors informed participants that they (or partners such as SCORE, SBDC, WBC, and VBOC) can offer follow-up sessions to further their knowledge and skills regarding entrepreneurship as well as to help participants navigate business resources once they return to their home locations.

Current strategies (other than marketing) employed to attract participants

Resource Partners described various ways to attract participants to the B2B workshop, specifically by encouraging the participation of transition service members towards lifelong entrepreneurship accomplishments. These methods included inviting past

“They will have past students come in who have succeeded in their business. It definitely inspires or motivates students to believe that they can actually do this thing which seems almost insurmountable at some points when you’re talking about all the different aspects of running a business.”

students or retired officers that were connected to the installation to share their experience of successful business ownership as well as connecting with continual resources and learning opportunities. Through in-person testimonials, participants hear and learn about the experience of business owners transitioning from the military as well as different aspects of running a business. If major topics of interest to participants are not covered, Resource Partners encourage enrollment in follow-on courses, which provide more in-depth information about specific business topics.

Aspects of the content and learning resources that help participants complete the B2B workshop

Responses varied when Resource Partners were asked about the ways in which the learning materials and activities helped transitioning service members complete the B2B 2-day workshop. Resource Partners believed that the PowerPoint presentation used to lead the course lecture provides a thorough introduction to entrepreneurship and helps participants to better relate and gain a comprehensive understanding of the course's information.

"What I do for the business plan is... a slide called the 'business model canvas'...we fill out the business model canvas because that's something that they can take with them."

Resource Partners also used supplemental strategies and hands-on activities to engage participants beyond the B2B-provided course materials (i.e., materials on entrepreneurship, step-by-step flowcharts, and articles presenting perspectives of successful business ownership). Other ways to attract participation included using class time to do hands-on activities such as business plan models and case studies with those students who expressed an interest.

Aspects of the training, content, and learning resources that may have prevented an installation from attracting participants to the B2B workshop

When asked about what aspects of the training prevented the installation from attracting participants to the B2B workshop, Resource Partners mentioned several aspects of the course that have negatively impacted participation:

- Poor instruction;
- Course was written at the college level, and
- Course materials contain little to no business

"We don't have enough interactivity. We have a couple videos. But the problem with the videos, we can never get them to play. So, you've got some really good videos that are part of this module, but the way it's set up – and I've given this at different places – we can't run the videos. And this is a group of people who learn by watching short videos. So, we have good short videos that don't play, so they miss the good videos."

case studies and/or the examples of companies provided in the slide materials are “too large and unrelatable.”

Also, they noted that students provided feedback that important content is missing from the course materials, such as detailed marketing strategies. Another factor was related to the depth of the course’s content. It was “too heavy” and ultimately “drained” participants by Day Two of the workshop.

Regarding learning resources, some Resource Partners indicated that non-functioning classroom equipment, such as video players, projectors, and computers, affected instructional delivery. Finally, much like VBDOs, Resource Partners described changes to the slide deck materials. They said the PowerPoint booklet (slide deck) that is distributed is no longer an effective resource. The interviewees described how, in previous years, every slide from the PowerPoint presentation was printed in a booklet and provided to participants. Interviewees stated that “the booklet now consists of blank pages for students to take notes on what is being discussed by the instructor.”

Proposed strategies and other efforts to increase and attract participation

Resource Partners proposed additional strategies to attract participation. These included: 1) creating new marketing materials; 2) promoting marketing through specific programs and workgroups through different squadrons and units on the military installations, and 3) promoting B2B to spouses. Resource Partners also expressed the need to identify the most effective marketing models for the B2B workshop by exploring the best practices and marketing strategies of other bases with high participation.

In addition, Resource Partners expressed the need for implementing more interactive learning opportunities to keep participants engaged and to assess their knowledge of what is being taught in the workshop. These “interactive” strategies include implementing quizzes at the end of modules, using videos to engage discussions about course content, and using two instructors at minimum to support more engaging and interactive delivery of the curriculum. Incentivizing B2B participation was also expressed (e.g. awarding college credits) to attract participants and also put B2B participation at the forefront of the commanders’ minds.

CONCLUSIONS FROM INTERVIEWS

The support provided by the program gives transitioning service members and their spouses vital information for starting a business. It also provides detailed information about entrepreneurship and access to support services that can help ensure their entrepreneurial success. The close relationships among base personnel (TAP managers and military leadership) was a defining feature mentioned by VBDOs and Resource Partners – they strongly believe those relationships contribute to a higher participation in the B2B workshop. Specifically, coordination efforts with installation leadership and employing methods to aid in their understanding were identified as contributors to the B2B program’s success. Overall, VBDOs and Resource Partners indicated that TAP managers have been highly motivated and dedicated to ensuring increased participation, not only among transitioning service members, but also among spouses and other family members and veterans. In the same regard, such relationships manifest success in several ways. For example:

- *Participants are granted time off for participation:* Resource Partners reported seeing minimal drops in participation for those who show up for the course. VBDOs, who are very active with scheduling the workshops, are privy to registration numbers. While VBDOs indicated that the registration and actual attendance may differ, establishing close relationships with base commanders and helping them to understand the benefits of the B2B workshop support both better attendance and participation for the full two days.
- *The B2B workshop is offered frequently across installations:* TAP managers, VBDOs, and Resource Partners work closely to determine availability and set dates for the workshop that support monthly, bi-monthly, and quarterly course offerings across military installations.
- *Advance scheduling of dates for the B2B workshop supports registration and creates an opportunity to engage potential participants multiple times a year:* This scheduling format is beneficial for installations to capture participation when transitioning service members have scheduling conflicts and/or job responsibilities

that prevent attendance. It also opens participation to spouses, other family members, and veterans.

COURSE QUALITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY RATINGS

OVERVIEW OF APPROACH

This section summarizes the assessment of the surveys administered to Boots to Business participants. In order to assess 1) the extent to which the SBA CQA and DoD CQS questions appear to measure the achievement of the B2B program objectives, and 2) survey characteristics related to content validity, GEARS staff experienced in survey development and/or evaluation rated the SBA *Course Quality Assessment Survey* (CQA) and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) *Transition-Goals, Plans, Success* (T-GPS) *Course Quality Assessment Survey* (CQS). The surveys are administered to measure the effectiveness of the B2B 2-day workshop but were developed independently.

Study Objectives

The objectives of this rating comparative study were to:

- Assess the strengths and limitations of the SBA CQA;
- Identify which survey instrument (SBA CQA and/or DoD CQS) best measures the effectiveness of the *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* program for veterans;
- Identify workshop/training objectives that are not being measured by the SBA CQA survey, and
- Recommend potential survey revisions for future B2B performance measurement.

Evaluation Questions

This survey rating activity answered the following research questions:

1. Do survey items appear to be relevant to the B2B program objectives?
2. Do survey items have face validity? Specifically, does a survey item appear to measure what it is supposed measure?
3. Do survey items appear to have content validity? Specifically, does an item reflect the module or workshop content that it is supposed to measure?
4. Are the survey items clear and the instructions easy to understand?
5. How can the CQA be improved?

Ten GEARS staff with expertise and experience in program development, monitoring, technical assistance, and/or evaluation volunteered to rate the SBA CQA and DoD CQS questions. The rating activity took approximately two hours per reviewer. Five staff were members of the B2B Evaluation Team and five others were members of other program monitoring, technical assistance, and evaluation teams. This approach provided ratings of the survey items from the perspective of individuals that were familiar with the program, those who only knew the program from the brief introduction of the rater's guide, and those who reviewed either a B2B program brochure or a read a description of program objectives and modules.

Raters were asked to rate both the CQA and CQ survey questions on a scale of one to five, with five being the highest rating on the following characteristics/indicators: 1) relevance of the survey question in terms of the B2B program objectives, 2) face validity, 3) content validity, and 4) clarity of instructions of the question (see Appendix E for the rater's guide).

GEARS methods for the evaluation of the CQA survey question included the following components: 1) identifying data needed to answer the evaluation questions; 2) developing data-collection instruments, and 3) recruiting respondents/survey question raters (see Appendix F for the *CQA Survey Rater's Guide*).

ANALYSIS OF THE CQA SURVEYS AND THE RATING DATA

The data were organized in Excel and then entered into SPSS for analysis. GEARS' first step was to identify questions and/or topic areas shared by both SBA CQA and DoD CQS surveys. The second step was the analysis of the rating results using SPSS, with mean scores and standard deviations calculated for relevance, face validity, content validity, and clarity of instructions.

Prior to the CQA survey analysis, the GEARS team made a cursory examination of the SBA CQA and the DoD CQS survey questions according to the following entrepreneur domains: knowledge, skills, motivation, confidence, and interest. These domains parallel aspects of the literature and the performance indicators that will be discussed later in the analysis. Table 3 indicates that the SBA CQA has items that cover all aspects of the identified domains, whereas

the DoD CQS focuses on entrepreneurship knowledge and skills. This description of the survey has implications for the discussion to follow. It suggests that the survey may serve other purposes for the SBA and DoD in addition to measuring workshop outcome and experiences.

Table 3. Breakdown of SBA CQA and DoD CQS Items by Knowledge, Skills, Motivation, Intent, Confidence, and Interest			
Number	SBA CQA	DoD CQS	Is there Overlap?
Entrepreneurship knowledge			
1	How informed did you feel about starting a business and entrepreneurship in general? (#22)	How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives (4-9 per Module/Track) (#6) How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Knowledge Questions (4 per Module/Track)	Yes. The DoD-CQA item, however, also gathers module-specific information of the Transition GPS Program.
Entrepreneurship skills			
2	How confident were you about having the skillsets required to start a business? (CQA 22)	How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program: “Overall, the program has prepared me to meet my post-transition goals (e.g. employment, education, and/or entrepreneurship goals)”?	Yes. The item captures performance of the Transition GPS Program that includes B2B 2-day workshops.
Entrepreneurship motivation			
3	How motivated were you to start a business? (CQA22)	No survey item	No
4	How likely were you to start a business? (CQA22)	No survey item	No
5	How likely were you to start a business soon (within one year)? (CQA22)	No survey item	No
6	How likely were you to start a business later (5-10 years)? (CQA22)	No survey item	No
Entrepreneurship intent			
7	How likely were you to pursue higher education first? (CQA22)	No survey item	No
8	How likely were you to pursue employment first? (CQA22)	No survey item	No
9	How likely were you to pursue additional technical assistance first? (CQA22)	No survey item	No
Entrepreneurship confidence			
10	Did the Boots to Business	How much do you agree or	Yes, but only slightly

Table 3. Breakdown of SBA CQA and DoD CQS Items by Knowledge, Skills, Motivation, Intent, Confidence, and Interest

Number	SBA CQA	DoD CQS	Is there Overlap?
	program increase your confidence in starting or owning a business? (CQA25)	disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program: “Overall, this program enhanced my confidence in transition planning”? (CQS17)	
Entrepreneurship interest			
11	Which of the following best describes your interest in starting or owning a business now that you have completed Boots to Business? (CQA24)	No survey item	No

COURSE QUALITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY COMPARISON FINDINGS

The first step of the analysis was a careful review and direct comparison of the two surveys. This indicated that only two questions were shared by the two CQA surveys: one on learning materials, the other on enhancement of confidence in transition plan and starting a business. Although the shared questions addressed the same topic, they were worded differently. The original SBA CQA Question 16 stated: “Please rate how satisfied you are with all Boots to Business materials,” while in the DoD CQS Question 3 stated: “How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Tract that the learning resources (e.g., notes, handouts, audiovisual materials) were useful?” Both questions addressed learning resources and materials.

The second similarity between the two CQA surveys was between Question 25 of the SBA CQA survey and Question 17 of the DoD CQA survey. The SBA CQA survey stated: “Did the Boots to Business program increase your confidence in starting or owning a business?” while the DoD CQA CQS survey stated: “How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program: ‘Overall, this program enhanced my confidence in transition planning?’” Both questions addressed the increase in confidence.

The ratings provided a wealth of information on the CQA survey questions. Overall, an examination of the ratings for the CQA survey items indicated that this scale received relatively high average ratings (above four) for face validity and for clarity of instructions. However, the ratings for content validity and relevance were less consistent and tended to be lower. The SBA CQA tended to have average ratings below three for these areas and constructs. These ratings indicate that these areas and constructs require more attention and/or modification with respect to items that assess knowledge and module-specific learning. The rating of the DoD CQS has produced results similar to that of the SBA CQA, for which face validity and clarity of instruction scores are above average and relevance and content validity scores tend to be below average (see Tables 4 and 5 that presents the mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD) for each question).

Table 4. DoD CQS Original Questions and Rating Scores

Original Question/Construct	Relevance to B2B Objectives Score*	Face Validity Score	Clarity of Instructions Score
1. Facilitators were knowledgeable	M=2.76 (SD=1.02)	M=4.30 (SD=1.25)	M=4.40 (SD=0.70)
2. Facilitators interacted well with the participants	M=2.62 (SD=0.92)	M=4.10 (SD=1.29)	M=3.80 (SD=1.32)
3. Learning resources (e.g., notes, handouts, audiovisual materials) were useful	M=3.06 (SD=0.99)	M=4.50 (SD=0.85)	M=4.30 (SD=0.82)
4. Intention to use what learned in transition planning	M=3.51 (SD=0.43)	M=4.50 (SD=0.85)	M=4.20 (SD=0.92)
5. Enhanced confidence in transition planning	M=3.11 (SD=0.44)	M=4.20 (SD=1.03)	M=3.80 (SD=1.23)
6. Increase knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives (4-9 per Module/Track)	M=2.90 (SD=1.14)	M=4.00 (SD=1.41)	M=4.10 (SD=0.88)
6b. Increase knowledge of Module Specific Knowledge Questions (4 per Module/Track)	M=2.26 (SD=1.00)	M=3.90 (SD=1.37)	M=4.20 (SD=0.92)
7. Experience little to no technical difficulties while accessing or completing this Module/Track	M=1.87 (SD=1.03)	M=4.20 (SD=1.31)	M=3.80 (SD=1.55)
8. Content and activities of this Module/Track kept participant engaged	M=2.08 (SD=1.23)	M=4.10 (SD=1.29)	M=4.00 (SD=0.94)
9. Narrator's voice was clear and easy to understand	M=1.83 (SD=1.17)	M=3.80 (SD=1.62)	M=3.80 (SD=1.55)
10. Virtual content (e.g., downloadable files, hyperlinks, popup boxes) was easy to maneuver and access	M=2.03 (SD=0.95)	M=3.90 (SD=1.60)	M=4.00 (SD=1.41)
11. Use what learned in this Module/Track in transition planning	M=3.24 (SD=0.35)	M=4.50 (SD=0.71)	M=4.70 (SD=0.48)
12. Module/Track enhanced confidence in transition planning	M=2.80 (SD=0.65)	M=4.10 (SD=1.29)	M=4.10 (SD=1.10)
13. Increase your knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives (4-9 per Module/Track)	M=2.68 (SD=0.78)	M=3.40 (SD=1.65)	M=3.60 (SD=1.58)
13b. Increase your knowledge of Module Specific Knowledge Questions (4 per Module/Track)	M=2.80 (SD=1.00)	M=4.00 (SD=1.25)	M=3.50 (SD=1.72)

Table 4. DoD CQS Original Questions and Rating Scores

Original Question/Construct	Relevance to B2B Objectives Score*	Face Validity Score	Clarity of Instructions Score
14. Overall Transition GPS program, knowledge on how to access resources (e.g., counselors, online resources) to get answers to transition questions	M=3.02 (SD=0.61)	M=4.20 (SD=1.03)	M=4.00 (SD=1.25)
15. Overall Transition GPS program was beneficial in helping gain the information and skills needed to better plan transition	M=2.93 (SD=0.70)	M=4.40 (SD=0.70)	M=4.20 (SD=1.55)
16. The classroom facilities (or virtual environments) were adequate for the program	M=1.82 (SD=1.00)	M=3.60 (SD=1.26)	M=3.60 (SD=1.51)
17. The Transition GPS program enhanced confidence in transition planning	M=2.50 (SD=0.91)	M=4.30 (SD=0.82)	M=4.20 (SD=1.03)
18. Use what was learned in the Transition GPS program in transition planning	M=2.58 (SD=0.67)	M=4.60 (SD=0.52)	M=4.30 (SD=0.82)
19. The Transition GPS program prepares participants to meet post-transition goals?	M=3.70 (SD=0.62)	M=4.30 (SD=1.57)	M=4.10 (SD=1.52)
20. Individual Transition Plan (ITP) was beneficial in helping plan for transition	M=2.25 (SD=1.32)	M=4.20 (SD=0.79)	M=3.60 (SD=1.43)
21. Awareness that Capstone is the final event of the TAP to meet the Career Readiness Standards	M=2.33 (SD=1.38)	M=3.30 (SD=1.42)	M=3.60 (SD=1.51)
22. Immediate leadership is supportive of transition to civilian life	M=1.81 (SD=1.03)	M=3.40 (SD=1.26)	M=3.80 (SD=1.40)
23. Time given during military career to attend transition assistance training	M=1.56 (SD=0.85)	M=3.90 (SD=1.20)	M=3.80 (SD=1.55)

*All rating scores are on a scale of 1-5.

Table 5. Average Ratings for SBA-CQA Items for Relevance, Face Validity, and Clarity of Instructions

Original Construct Area/Focus*	Relevance to B2B Objectives Score**	Face Validity Score	Clarity of Instructions Score
1. Satisfaction with all Boots to Business materials (CQA16)	M=2.75 (SD=1.14)	M=4.40 (SD=1.26)	M=4.10 (SD=1.66)
2. Instructors course knowledge, course delivery, and communication, and teaching style (CQA17)	M=2.20 (SD=1.31)	M=3.40 (SD=1.78)	M=3.40 (SD=1.78)
3. Level of course materials and content coverage (CQA18)	M=2.38 (SD=1.09)	M=4.20 (SD=1.32)	M=4.00 (SD=1.15)
4. Materials or content added or subtracted from the course (CQA19)	M=2.25 (SD=1.07)	M=4.00 (SD=1.70)	M=4.00 (SD=1.49)
5. Pace of course coverage or course delivery (CQA20)	M=2.44 (SD=0.91)	M=3.80 (SD=1.48)	M=3.90 (SD=1.20)
6. Accessibility and ease of use with online registration, technical support, course Website and course modules (CQA21)	M=2.25 (SD=1.00)	M=3.90 (SD=1.60)	M=4.20 (SD=1.32)
7. Feelings about starting a business, pursuing higher education and pursuing additional technical assistance before and after attending Boots to Business (CQA22)	M=3.46 (SD=1.21)	M=4.60 (SD=0.52)	M=4.10 (SD=0.99)
8. Additional input regarding the Boots to Business program (CQA23)	M=2.05 (SD=1.40)	M=3.70 (SD=1.89)	M=3.50 (SD=1.51)
9. Interest in starting or owning a business after completion of Boots to Business (CQA 24)	M=3.05 (SD=1.21)	M=4.70 (SD=0.48)	M=4.70 (SD=0.48)

Table 5. Average Ratings for SBA-CQA Items for Relevance, Face Validity, and Clarity of Instructions			
Original Construct Area/Focus*	Relevance to B2B Objectives Score**	Face Validity Score	Clarity of Instructions Score
10. Boots to Business program aid in increasing confidence in starting or owning a business (CQA25)	M=3.22 (SD=1.11)	M=4.60 (SD=0.52)	M=4.80 (SD=0.42)
11. Referral of someone to the Boots to Business program (CQA26)	M=1.98 (SD=1.02)	M=3.60 (SD=1.84)	M=4.10 (SD=1.66)

*The demographic questions in the SBA CQA survey are not included in this analysis

**All rating scores are on a scale of 1-5.

The content validity ratings for the CQA questions in terms of the eight course modules are low (below the middle rating of 3), with a low standard deviation. The low standard deviation indicates some consensus among raters as to content validity. However, the questions in the DoD CQS content validity item ratings were classified as relatively higher than the CQS questions. Their ratings still were in the middle range, but the DoD CQS had more items toward the higher end of the middle range. This is probably because the DoD CQS questions asked about modules and tracks in the survey questions (see Appendix F).

The GEARS team mapped the survey items against the B2B short-term and intermediate objectives and measured the alignment agreement with a “Yes” and “No” response (Table 6). This was done to ascertain whether the SBA CQA and DoD COS survey items effectively measure the achievement of the B2B program objectives and to determine if the survey items address the knowledge, skills, intent, motivation, and confidence relevant to the short-term, and intermediate program objectives for the B2B 2-day workshop as documented in the B2B program logic model.

Table 6. Alignment between CQA and CQS Survey Items and Program Objectives

No.	Program Objectives	Survey items		Alignment
		SBA CQA	DoD CQS	
Short-term objectives				
1	Increase service members' interest in small business ownership, including self-employment	Which of the following best describes your interest in starting or owning a business now that you have completed Boots to Business? (CQA24)	No-survey item	Yes
2	Increase service members' entrepreneurial motivation for starting a small business	How motivated were you to start a business? (CQA22)	No survey item	Yes
		How likely were you to start a business? (CQA22)	No survey item	Yes
		How likely were you to start a business soon (within one year)? (CQA22)	No survey item	Yes
		How likely were you to start a business later (5-10 years)? (CQA22)	No survey item	Yes
3	Increase service members' confidence in starting a venture	Did the Boots to Business program increase your confidence in starting or owning a business? (CQA25)	How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS program: "Overall, this program enhanced my confidence in transition planning"? (CQS17)	Yes
5	Increase service members' knowledge and understanding of federal contracting opportunities		How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Knowledge Questions? (4 per Module/Track) (#6b)	Yes
6	Increase in confidence in service member's ability to negotiate the business ownership process and challenges	How confident were you about having the skillsets required to start a business?	How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS program: "Overall, the program has prepared me to meet my post-transition goals (e.g. employment, education, and/or entrepreneurship goals)"?	Yes

Table 6. Alignment between CQA and CQS Survey Items and Program Objectives

No.	Program Objectives	Survey items		Alignment
		SBA CQA	DoD CQS	
Intermediate objectives				
1	Enroll in a B2B 8-week, online follow-up training	No survey item	No survey item	No
2	Visit an SBA District Office for counseling, mentorship, etc.	How likely were you to pursue additional technical assistance first?	No survey item	Yes
3	Visit an SBA Resource Partner such as SCORE, VBOC, SBDC or WBC			
4	Apply for SBA Capital Access programs, such as Micro Loan	No survey item	No survey item	No
5	Pursue higher education in business administration and/or entrepreneurship	How likely were you to pursue higher education first?	No survey item	Yes

The B2B program has six short-term and five intermediate objectives. When the GEARS team assessed the alignment of the SBA CQA and DoD CQS survey items with the short-term objectives, the survey items measured directly or indirectly some of those goals. Most of the survey items that measure B2B short-term objectives come from the SBA CQA. When the survey items were mapped against the intermediate objectives, it was found that there are no survey items to measure two of the B2B intermediate objectives. The alignment task clearly indicated there are gaps in the survey items that are related to B2B intermediate objectives. Tables 7 and 8 also provide detailed reviews of the CQA and CQS by B2B program objective.

Table 7. Coverage of B2B Program Objectives by DoD CQA Questions

B2B Program Objective	DoD CQA Questions Covering This Objective
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Table 7. Coverage of B2B Program Objectives by DoD CQA Questions

B2B Program Objective	DoD CQA Questions Covering This Objective
1. Increase service members' interest in small business ownership, including self-employment, as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not specifically covered , although the DOD CQA asked, "How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Tract "the content and activities of this Module/Track kept me engaged?" (CQA8)
2. Increase service members' entrepreneurial motivation for starting a small business as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not covered
3. Increase service members' confidence in starting a venture as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not exactly covered, but the DOD CQA asked, "How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program "overall, this program enhanced my confidence in transition planning?" (CQA17)
4. Increase service members' knowledge and understanding of small business ownership and expansion processes and resources, as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not specifically covered , although the DOD CQA asked, "How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives and knowledge questions (4-9 per Module/Track)?" (CQA 6 and CQA6b)
5. Increase service members' knowledge and understanding of federal contracting opportunities, as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not specifically covered , although the DOD CQA asked, "How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives and knowledge questions (4-9 per Module/Track)?" (CQA 6 and CQA6b)
6. Increase confidence in service members' ability to negotiate the business ownership processes and challenges, as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not specifically covered , although the DOD CQA asked, "How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives and knowledge questions (4-9 per Module/Track)?" (CQA 6 and CQA6b)
7. Increase in enrolling in a B2B online follow-on training	Not covered.
8. Increase in visiting an SBA District Office for counseling, mentorship, etc.	Not covered.
9. Increase in visiting a Resource Partner, such as SCORE, VBOC, SBDC, or WBC	Not covered.
10. Increase in applying for SBA Capital Access programs such as Micro Loan	Not covered.
11. Increase in pursuing higher education in business administration and/or entrepreneurship	Not covered.

A review of the coverage of the B2B program objectives by the SBA CQA survey questions found a similar situation. Among the 11 B2B program objectives, only four of them have been covered or partially covered. This includes Objectives One, Two, Three, and Six. In cases where

the B2B program objectives were covered, the SBA CQA survey questions address the relevant topics from a different angle as well. For example, B2B program Objective Three is to increase service members’ confidence in starting a venture, whereas SBA CQA Question No. 22 asks, “How confident service members were about having the skillsets required to start a business?” Similarly, B2B program Objective Six is to increase confidence in service members’ ability to negotiate the business ownership processes and challenges, while BA CQA Question No. 25 asks, “if the Boots to Business program increased service members’ confidence in starting or owning a business?” (See Table 8).

Table 8. Coverage of B2B Program Objectives by SBA CQA Questions	
B2B Program Objective	SBA CQA Questions Covering This Objective
1. Increase service members’ interest in small business ownership, including self-employment, as measured by a post-graduation survey	Which of the following best describes your interest in starting or owning a business now that you have completed Boots to Business? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am significantly more interested in starting or owning a business • I am more interested in starting or owning a business • I am neither more nor less interested in starting or owning a business • I am less interested in starting or owning a business • I am significantly less interested in starting or owning a business (CQA 24)
2. Increase service members’ entrepreneurial motivation for starting a small business as measured by a post-graduation survey	Please answer the following questions about how you felt before and after attending Boots to Business: (Answer choices: Not at all, Not Very, Neither) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How motivated were you to start a business? (Part of CQA 22)
3. Increase service members’ confidence in starting a venture as measured by a post-graduation survey	Please answer the following questions about how you felt before and after attending Boots to Business: (Answer choices: Not at all, Not Very, Neither) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How confident were you about having the skillsets required to start a business? (Part of CQA 22)
4. Increase service members’ knowledge and understanding of small business ownership and expansion processes and resources, as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not covered. Although respondents were asked, “How informed did you feel about starting a business and entrepreneurship in general?”
5. Increase service members’ knowledge and understanding of federal contracting opportunities, as measured by a post-graduation survey	Not covered. Although respondents were asked, “How informed did you feel about starting a business and entrepreneurship in general?”
6. Increase confidence in service members’ ability to negotiate the business ownership processes and challenges, as measured by a post-graduation survey	(Partially covered). Did the Boots to Business program increase your confidence in starting or owning a business? (CQA25)

Table 8. Coverage of B2B Program Objectives by SBA CQA Questions	
B2B Program Objective	SBA CQA Questions Covering This Objective
7. Increase in enrolling in a B2B online follow-on training	Not covered.
8. Increase in visiting the SBA District Office for counseling, mentorship, etc.	Not covered.
9. Increase in visiting Resource Partners, such as SCORE, VBOC, SBDC, or WBC	Not covered.
10. Increase in applying for SBA Capital Access programs, such as Micro Loan	Not covered.
11. Increase in pursuing higher education in business administration and/or entrepreneurship	Not covered.

CONCLUSIONS FROM CQA COMPARISON STUDY

Analysis of the data collected in the CQA survey question evaluation has shown that the information collected with the CQA survey questions is not enough to measure the achievement of B2B program objectives. This is the case because not all the B2B program objectives are covered, as some program objectives are not fully covered by the SBA CQA survey questions or the DoD CQS survey questions.

To accurately measure the achievement of the B2B program objectives or the learning of the course content, the CQA survey questions need to be revised based on the B2B program objectives listed in the program logic model. GEARS recommends that CQA surveys include additional questions, or be replaced by new survey questions, which specifically address the need to assess the achievement of each of the B2B program objectives. New and/or revised CQA surveys should also include questions that specifically address the content of the training courses to assess how well service members have learned and understood the course content and learning materials.

GUIDED DISCUSSION

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDED DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the guided discussion was to assess the content validity and clarity of instruction of the SBA CQA. It also helped to determine whether the survey measures short-term and intermediate B2B program objectives.

More information about the SBA CQA and the DoD CQS

SBA CQA is an entrepreneurship survey tool currently used to gather information from participants of the B2B 2-day workshops. The workshops are offered by the Office of Veterans and Business Development (OVBD) at SBA as part of the DoD Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The TAP was established to meet the needs of service members transitioning to civilian life by offering job-search assistance and other related services. The information collected through the SBA CQA describes the characteristics of the transition service members and their dependents who have participated in the B2B workshops; their experiences with the B2B workshops/trainings; their entrepreneurship motivation, and their future career or professional goals. Workshop participants complete the survey online after receiving an invitation from OVBD to be part of the survey. The guided discussion with a panel of experts completes one of the tasks in the B2B Evaluation. The guided discussion focused on answering one of the overarching questions of the B2B Evaluation: What is the level of validity of the SBA Boots to Business Quality Assessment (SBA CQA) survey? This question encompasses three distinct questions:

- What does the survey item measure?
- Is the language in the survey item clear?
- Do the SBA-CQA performance related survey items measure the B2B program short-term and intermediate performance objectives?

OVERVIEW OF METHODS

Sampling and recruitment of guided discussion participants

Purposeful sampling was used by the evaluation team to identify and recruit information-rich participants to form a discussion panel for the guided discussion. Of the potential participants who received invitation emails to participate in the guided discussion, six were recruited to form the guided discussion panel. An informational package containing a brief description of the B2B program and a list with short-term and intermediate program objectives. Survey items selected from the SBA CQA were sent to panel members before the discussion date.

Development of the Data Collection Instrument and Data Collection

During the guided discussion, information was gathered using a guided discussion protocol. The protocol was developed by GEARS under the purview of the SBA evaluation team. It consisted of a step-by-step procedure to assess the content validity of each performance related survey item.

The discussion took place on July 10, 2018 between 2:00 and 3:30 p.m. at the SBA building in Washington, DC. It was led by an experienced facilitator and a note taker who were part of the GEARS evaluation team. During the discussion, the GEARS team collected textual data on SBA CQA survey items – the content measured by each survey item, language clarity of survey items, and the importance of survey items that measure the B2B short-term and intermediate program objectives. The guided discussion was audio recorded after receiving consent from discussion participants. The discussion was then transcribed by a transcription company.

DATA ANALYSIS

The GEARS team used qualitative content analysis for the systematic analysis of the guided discussion textual data, in which the team used formal systems that included:

- Coding techniques for finding and marking themes and sub-themes in the data;
- Grouping similar kinds of information together in categories, and
- Assessing the relationships between themes and sub-themes.

This approach facilitated the exploration of patterns across the data gathered from panel members using coding categories. These categories were developed before data collection using the survey items.

The qualitative data analysis involved the following four steps:

- *Raw data management (data cleaning)*: preparing and organizing raw data into meaningful units of analysis;
- *Data reduction (chunking and coding)*: reading data several times to have a holistic sense of the data (immersion), classifying and categorizing data, writing notes in the margins, group categorizing data (chunking), and clustering categories that are similar;
- *Data interpretation*: identifying themes from clustered data, and
- *Data representation*: interpreting themes to develop narratives to answer evaluation questions.

Guided Discussion Participants

The discussion panel members were all SBA staff. One works at the SBA District Office and, as part of his duties, facilitates the coordination and implementation of the B2B 2-day workshop. Three panel members had program development, implementation, and evaluation backgrounds, and one panel member, from the SBA Office of Human Resources Solutions, who knowledge of how training programs are planned, developed, implemented, and evaluated.

FINDINGS FROM THE GUIDED DISCUSSION

The findings of the guided discussion are presented by topic below.

Findings by Survey Item

The discussion guide included one survey item related to the B2B classroom environment, five items related to B2B 2-day workshop instructors, four items that captured information on the overall implementation of workshop modules, and three items that related to the performance of B2B 2-day workshops.

During the guided discussion, a total of 13 survey items related to B2B classroom, instructors of B2B workshops, the overall implementation of B2B workshop modules, and B2B short-term and intermediate program objectives were assessed. The discussion addressed what each survey item measures (content), the clarity of language of each survey item, and the importance of each survey item in capturing the performance of the B2B workshops. Below are the summaries of the expert panel responses.

Survey items measuring the classroom environment and instructor

- *Classroom was conducive to a learning environment:* One panel member indicated that the survey item captures whether the instructor was able to create a classroom environment that facilitated learning (encouraged questions and discussions). Others indicated that the item captures physical information on classroom temperature (too hot or too cold), class room set-up, and disruptive external noises that have direct influence on the learning environment. The reviewers recommended removing this survey item from its location and placing it separately on the survey tool with clear instructions. They also suggested rewording the phrase ‘learning environment’ to ‘physical learning environment’ to eliminate ambiguity of what is being asked.
- *Displayed knowledge and familiarity with the B2B course materials:* All panel members stated that the item measures the instructor’s knowledge of the content areas of the workshop modules. One member added that the survey item also captures the instructor’s knowledge of the characteristics of the B2B 2-day workshop participants – i.e. transitioning service members and spouses. Although there was a general consensus of what the item intended to measure, one panel member indicated that the survey item also implied that the workshop participants read and understood all module materials before attending the workshop in order to judge the knowledge level of workshop instructor. One panel member also suggested replacing “course materials” with “workshop materials.”
- *Exhibited presentation skills that engaged the class:* Responses by the panel members indicated that this survey item measures the instructor’s presentation skills. To some panel members, the word “presentation” indicated providing information to workshop participants with minimum interaction, while “facilitation” referred to participants’

active involvement in the learning process. Some members suggested replacing ‘instructor’ with ‘facilitator’ in addition to substituting ‘exhibited’ with ‘displayed’ to make the item clear.

- *Used training to present course materials:* There was consensus by panel members that this survey item measures the training aids such as computers, PowerPoint slide sets, the Internet, module notebook, etc., used to present B2B workshop materials to participants. During the discussion one panel member shared his thoughts on how a change made to a training aid, in this case copies of PowerPoint slides, influenced the behavior of participants during the B2B workshops:

“...they just provide like a notebook pretty much and no slides. In my own experience, I have a lot of feedback that they [participants] wanted the PowerPoint with the bullet and the image. It reduced time from taking notes... that has changed the engagement.”

- *Communicated clearly and effectively:* Panel members agreed that this item measures the appropriateness of the language used and how clear and easy the workshop facilitator’s voice was when delivering module materials.
- *Integrated practical experience and participants' ideas into the course material:* Based on the responses by panel members, the item measures the information on personal experience of the facilitator (small business start-up) and participants’ ideas integrated with the workshop materials. Panel members suggested breaking this item into two items, since a facilitator can integrate personal experience in module curriculum but not facilitate the integration of participants’ ideas into a session module. One panelist also suggested clearly stating what ‘practical experience’ and ‘participants’ ideas’ mean – such as small business start-up experience and participants ideas on small businesses.

Survey items measuring the implementation of B2B workshop modules as a whole

Panel members’ responses on the four survey items related to the overall implementation of the B2B workshop modules are presented below.

- *Amount of materials covered:* Panel members indicated that this item measures whether content areas of B2B modules (Modules 1 to 8) had been covered. According to panelists,

the language used in this item is vague. They suggested rephrasing the item to read ‘coverage of relevant content areas of the eight B2B modules.’

- *Depth of coverage:* Discussion participants stated that this item captures the same information as the survey item ‘amount of materials covered.’ They suggested removing the item from the survey instrument.
- *Mix of topics:* Panel members indicated that this item measures various content areas of the eight modules covered. According to the panelists, responding to this item might be cumbersome for workshop participants since responding to this question requires having a good understanding of the topic areas each module covers. To some of the panelists, the information this item tried to capture is the same as ‘amount of materials covered’ and suggested removing the item from the survey.
- *Pace of coverage:* According to panel members, this survey item captures information on the time spent on each B2B workshop module. Some of the participants suggested rewriting the item as ‘time spent on each B2B workshop module.’ Panel members also stated that rewording the survey item makes the language easier to understand.

Survey items measuring the performance of B2B 2-day workshops

Out of the nine survey items that were developed to measure B2B performance, panel members assessed the content, clarity, and importance of three survey items that were at the core of the B2B program’s performance.

- *How informed did you generally feel about starting a business and entrepreneurship?* Panel members stated that this survey item was intended to capture the change in business start-up knowledge of participants after attending the B2B workshops. Some of the members indicated that this question is double barreled, i.e. it asks a question that touches on two issues (starting a business and entrepreneurship) and allows only one response. They suggested rephrasing the question as ‘How knowledgeable did you feel about starting a business?’ to make it clear what the questions is getting at. Members highlighted the importance of this question in capturing the change in knowledge level of business start-up as a result of participation in the B2B workshops and also suggested asking the question before

and after completion of each B2B module. That way, knowledge can be measured immediately after a workshop minimizing information recall bias of workshop participants.

- *How confident were you about having skillsets required to start a business?* Panel members stated that this item captures the change in participants' (business start-up) skills after attending B2B workshops. One of the members indicated that this survey item is hard to understand. He was not sure what 'skillsets' the SBA intended to measure – putting together a business plan, filling out loan application, etc. The member emphasized the importance of this question and the need to write it clearly.
- *How motivated were you to start a business?* Panel members indicated that this survey item captures the interest level of starting a business before and after workshop participation. Panel members saw this item as an important one. All agreed that 'motivation' should be clearly defined. There was also a suggestion to add an open-ended survey item that captures reasons for not starting a business within five years or less, in order to have a better sense of the obstacles B2B attendees face in starting a business. As one of the panel members put it: *“Some people I know have great interest levels to start a business but will never start a business because of the risk associated with being an entrepreneur.”*

Are the short-term and intermediate objectives being measured with existing survey items?

The survey tool includes six short-term and five intermediate objectives to measure the performance of the B2B 2-day workshops. Panel members discussed if performance-related survey items were able to measure the short-term and intermediate objectives of B2B workshops. The preliminary findings indicate gaps in measuring B2B short-term and intermediate objectives with the existing survey items related to B2B performance. These gaps are described below.

- *Short-term objectives:* Of the six short-term objectives of the B2B 2-day workshop, one of them – 'Increase service members' confidence in starting a venture' – doesn't have a corresponding survey item. The objective that focuses on service members' increased entrepreneurial motivation for starting a small business before and after the B2B participation is captured with two survey items ("How likely were you to start a business soon (within one year)" and "How likely were you to start a business later (5-10 years).")

Information on two short-term objectives (increase service member's knowledge and understanding of small business ownership and expansion processes and resources, and increase service members knowledge and understanding of federal contracting opportunities) are measured by one survey item – “How informed did you feel about starting a business and entrepreneurship in general?” The findings indicated the need to add one survey item that measures the objective, ‘Increase service members’ confidence in starting a venture.’

- *Intermediate objectives:* Panel members indicated the existence of a gap between B2B intermediate objectives and survey items developed to capture information on their achievement. The intermediate objective, ‘Enroll in a B2B 8-week online follow-up training,’ doesn’t have a corresponding survey item. Intermediate Objectives 2 and 3e are measured by one survey item, and the survey item – ‘How likely were you to pursue employment first?’ – does not have a corresponding intermediate objective it measures. The findings indicated the need to add a survey item that measures, ‘Enroll in a B2B 8-week online follow-up training.’

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE GUIDED DISCUSSION

Panel members in general indicated that most of the program objectives have a corresponding survey item that measures changes in performance because of service members’ participation in the B2B workshops. They also indicated the need to clarify the language used to describe the objectives. For example, when measuring the change in knowledge level of small business ownership before and after participation in the B2B 2-day workshop, the survey items need to identify the important knowledge areas necessary to start a new business.

As the panel members indicated, the SBA CQA needs to add survey items to measure one short-term objective – ‘Increase service members’ confidence in starting a venture’ – and one intermediate objective – ‘Enroll in B2B 8-week, online follow-up training.’ As one of the panel members clearly put it, some of the questions (survey items) ‘...need to be reworded so participants taking the survey can really give ...good data to the program office.’ Also, some of the survey items need to be broken into separate items to avoid loaded questions.

During the guided discussion, panel members also discussed the current evaluation design to capture B2B performance. All panel members asked if information on knowledge and experience of potential participants was captured before attending the B2B 2-day workshop. According to them, attributing the knowledge, skillsets, interest in business start-up, and motivation and confidence in starting a business to participation in the B2B 2-day workshop would only be possible when information on the same performance areas are available – before participation in the workshops.

Members suggested developing a short baseline survey that captures information on performance objectives/indicators to measure the true impact of participation in the B2B 2-day workshop. Members also indicated that gathering information on module knowledge before and after implementation of each B2B workshop provides OVBD with valuable information to improve the B2B program design and implementation of those modules as well as the evaluation of the B2B 2-day workshop. This information relates to classroom and instructor's knowledge and skillsets immediately after completion of each workshop module.

After examining the information gathered through the guided discussion, GEARS drew the following conclusions about the B2B survey items:

- When appropriate, panel members identified survey items that need modification to make the language of each survey item clear. Survey items important to measuring the performance of the B2B 2-day workshop were identified. In order to assess the B2B 2-day workshop, the survey tool should have survey items for:
 - Capturing characteristics of individuals participating in the B2B workshops;
 - Information on knowledge, skills, interest, motivation and intention of workshop participant to start a business;
 - Information on the conduciveness of classroom for learning, usefulness of individual workshop modules, knowledge and skillsets of instructors, and
 - Information on skillsets of workshop participants in accessing the B2B resources after completing the 2-day workshop.

- Through the guided discussion participants in general indicated that the survey instrument has survey items that capture information on short-term and intermediate objectives except for the gap identified below:
 - The short-term objective “Increase service members’ confidence in starting a venture” does not have a corresponding survey item to measure change in performance indicator/objective; and
 - The intermediate objective “Enroll in B2B 8-week, online follow-up training” does not have a corresponding survey item to measure change in performance indicator/objective.
- The performance evaluation design should also incorporate data points that capture the following information:
 - Development and implementation of a baseline tool that captures information on short-term and intermediate performance indicators before participants attend the B2B 2-day workshop. This would help assess the true effect of participation on short-term and intermediate program objectives.
 - A pre- and post-tool to measure participants’ change in knowledge of core content areas before and after their participation in individual B2B workshops.
 - A short tool that captures the reaction of participants to classroom setup and individual instructor knowledge and skillsets immediately after each workshop is completed. This would provide data to address emerging implementation challenges and improve the 2-day workshop in real time.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND LITERATURE REVIEW

OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

GEARS conducted an environmental scan and literature review (ESLR) to gather, summarize and synthesize existing information relevant to key research questions for the formative evaluation. Specifically, the ESLR identified entrepreneurship training and start-up programs, especially those programs that service veterans, and identified constructs, strategies, and best practices used to measure these programs.

Evaluation Questions

The following research questions guided the ESLR:

- What programs, program components, entrepreneurship education, and/or curricula activities exist to support transition service members and veterans into successful entrepreneurship and business venture start ups?
- What recommendations can we build upon from these programs and curriculum activities of these programs?
- What evidence-based practices and measures of entrepreneurial education show the most promising and evidence-based recommendations towards improving participation, retention, and supporting business ownership during transition?
- What factors facilitate entrepreneurship and business start-up?
- What measures of entrepreneurial education indicate best practices for program and curriculum design?
- What factors impact entrepreneurial intention?
- What course characteristics impact the entrepreneurial intention?

These questions are a subset of the two evaluation questions that framed the formative evaluation for the B2B study. They were:

1. What factors are correlated with the successful recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of participants in the B2B 2-day workshop?

2. What are the strengths and limitations of the course quality assessment survey for the B2B 2-day workshop?

OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND LITERATURE REVIEW METHODS

Database Searches

GEARS searched the Internet and databases for academic and grey literature published in the United States between January 2012 and June 2018. In particular, we searched the following scholarly databases for peer-reviewed publications during that period: *Academic Search Complete*, *Business Source Complete*, *EconoLit*, *ERIC*; *Google Scholar*, *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts*; *Legal Source*; *Primary Search*; *Regional Business News*; and *SocINDEX*.

The grey literature search included both general and targeted Internet searches for non-peer-reviewed literature such as reports, education and policy briefings, and white papers.

Both the academic and grey literature searches also included manual searches of any identified reference lists of relevant articles. When both methodologies resulted in the retrieval of similar sources, GEARS recorded such occurrences and used EndNote bibliographic software to merge duplicate sources. See Appendix G for a detailed summary of GEARS environmental scan and literature review process for this project, including data extraction, quality assurance, and search organization processes.

GEARS comprehensive literature review steps include:

1. Create preliminary terms/keywords for academic (scholarly) and general Internet searches (includes grey literature search).
2. Identify appropriate data sources and datasets for both academic search and general Internet search.
3. Identify preliminary inclusion and exclusion criteria for academic and general Internet search.
4. Identify key topic areas and create sample data abstraction tables for key areas.
5. Organize the Search Results.
6. Summarize the Research Findings and Conclusions.

FINDINGS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The search for information on entrepreneurship training programs, specifically for transition service members, reveals that there has been limited systematic research undertaken to summarize and compare these programs. Cumberland's (2017) compilation of veteran training programs from academia, the government, and private sector, show an overlap and the existence

of competing programs. However, a formal assessment and evaluation that compares the effectiveness of these programs is not available in the public domain.

Cumberland advised that “the salience of determining the quality of training programs is, and should remain, a key aspect of Human Resource Development scholarship and practice.” The approach Cumberland recommended to assess the impact of veteran entrepreneurial training is to match the various training interventions to the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) framework.

In our search, we identified several veteran-specific entrepreneurial programs, including *Bunker Labs*, *Patriot Boot Camp*, and *VETtoCEO, Inc.* These programs, like others in the literature, provide: 1) specific knowledge and competencies associated with entrepreneurship; 2) didactic and experiential learning activities; and 3) mentoring and access to ongoing resources (see Appendix H for additional programs identified in the environmental scan).

Bunker Labs provides educational programming, mentors, and events in several local chapters in cities throughout the U.S. to help veterans, active-duty service members, and their spouses start and grow businesses. Bunker Labs has one main entrepreneurship program titled **Launch Lab** (formerly known as the EPIC entrepreneurship program). Launch Lab is a 12-week, in-person course specifically designed to help idea-stage entrepreneurs develop the talents and skills required to launch a business. Business Milestones include completion of: 1) a definition of the business problem and its solution; 2) secondary and primary market research; 3) a plan for the development of the product (prototype) and/or services methodology; 4) a business plan; 5) a plan for the launch of the business, and 6) a business operations plan.

Patriot Boot Camp (PBC) is a non-profit organization founded in 2012 to provide active-duty service members, veterans, and their spouses with access to mentors, educational programming, and a robust community of experts and peers to help them innovate and build impactful businesses. PBC runs this program twice per year, in Texas and Colorado. PBC’s core program is an intensive, free, 3-day event designed to engage, inspire, and mentor veterans and their spouses, to help them start, innovate, and start the next generation of technology-focused

businesses. The 3-day program consists of education, mentoring, and pitch practice or competition.

VETtoCEO, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports veterans and transitioning military members to succeed in business ownership. This online program is offered at no cost to service members. The VETtoCEO core program is a 7-week program that supports participants who are either exploring entrepreneurship as a career path or aggressively completing their business plan. Participants apply what they learn in each of the seven modules to construct a viable business model based on the military planning model framework. They develop a funding strategy using what they learn, collaborate with other veterans with similar interests, and participate in on-going mentoring/support in starting a business (or their businesses). The modules focus on the following topics: marketing; mission and purpose; legal and organizational issues; finance; and networking and resources.

LITERATURE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Entrepreneurship training and education is delivered in many forms and to a wide range of individuals from various backgrounds. Described below are several constructs GEARS found in the literature that help understand and predict new venture initiation. These entrepreneurial constructs are intentions, passion, and self-efficacy, as well as motivation theory.

Entrepreneurial Intentions

Research indicates that entrepreneurial intentions help understand the entrepreneurship process by providing a key to understanding the “role in opening the door to the establishment of a new enterprise.” Intention implies planned behavior. In this framework, intention can be defined as a mental state moderating an individual’s attention, experience, and behavior towards realization of a certain intention and developing methods to achieve it. Intentions form as a consequence of an individual’s perceptions of social and physical environments; perceived contexts, expectations, attitudes, beliefs and choices influence the development of intentions. Moreover, these perceptions may be affected by original factors belonging to the individual’s background (Uygun & Kasimoglu, 2013).

Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) are based on two prime factors. First, starting an enterprise should be perceived as a credible action (i.e. a credible opportunity). Second, the start of a new

enterprise requires a precipitating act. Credibility requires perceived desirability and perceived feasibility or the belief of how competent the individual is to start a new enterprise and the attractiveness (intra and extra personal) of starting a venture. Propensity to act, another factor serving as a moderating effect on entrepreneurial intention, is the personal disposition to act upon one's decision (Uygun & Kasimoglu, 2013). The idea of intention and its factors – credibility and feasibility – are two constructs that may be also considered when thinking about how to conceptualize B2B program objectives related to confidence and interest in starting a business.

Entrepreneurial Passion

Several researchers indicate that passion has been described as a key driver of entrepreneurial action (Anderson, 2013; Cardon, Gregoire, Stevens, & Patel, 2013). Entrepreneurial passion (EP) is described as an element in entrepreneurship that can foster creativity as well as enhance recognition of new patterns for the discovery and exploitation of opportunities. This multi-dimensional construct identifies three domain roles specifically aligned to the activities of inventing, founding, and developing the related passion.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Researchers have indicated that the self-efficacy of entrepreneurs is an important construct for understanding entrepreneurial success (Drnovs'ek, Wincent, & Cardon, 2009). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) involves the individual beliefs in the ability they themselves have to successfully perform various roles and tasks related to starting a business, regarding their capabilities for attaining success, and for controlling cognitions to successfully perform challenging goals during the business start-up process. ESE has been defined as the entrepreneur's task-specific self-confidence and/or as the ability to master the necessary cognitive, memory processing, and behavioral facilities to deal effectively with the environment.

ESE is grounded in the socio-cognitive approach that simultaneously examines the dynamic interaction between the individual and the environment by explaining what cognitive, motivational, and affective processes are implicated in an individual's decision to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, the socio-cognitive approach describes how these

processes are shaped by environmental and market factors. However, the current literature does not indicate measurements for ESE's two dimensions: the type of goal beliefs (task/outcome) and the type of control beliefs (positive/negative) that exist in the context of business start-up processes.

Motivation Theory

Motivation theory (MT) has also been employed to understand individuals' career decisions to become entrepreneurs. Based on perceived benefit and cost, individuals are either pulled or pushed toward a career in entrepreneurship. Research exploring this factor provides limited insight into studying students' motivations for entrepreneurship; the manner in which they expect to utilize it during the course of their careers, and the timeline for doing so. Questions derived from MT might include: Does entrepreneurship education accelerate near-term venture creation and economic development? What is the payoff from entrepreneurship education? And when venture creation does not occur, why are students continuing to study entrepreneurship and how do they intend to use it?

Effects of Entrepreneurship Training Programs on Military Veterans

A small amount of literature explains several constructs that might help to understand and predict new venture initiation among military veterans. Kerrick and colleagues (2014) explored the effects of an entrepreneurship training program that provided military veterans a 10-week structured education course as well as access to established business owners who served as mentors. Utilizing a pre- and post-test, the researchers measured entrepreneurial passion and use of formal networks in military veteran entrepreneurs to determine how the entrepreneurial training program influenced veteran small-business owners. The results showed an increase in entrepreneurial passion and networking frequency among participants at post-test. Participants were introduced to additional resources and encouraged to access their networks for support in developing comfortability connecting with civilians through frequent communication with business partners, family, and friends. Participation in the training program was associated with broadening (or the broadening of) formal networks and learning to better utilize skills developed during their military service.

In a 2016 study, researchers adopted a pre-/post-survey design to measure military veterans and civilians attitudes on an entrepreneurship education program. Utilizing data collected on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, passion, and networking frequency, Kerrick and colleagues (2016) compared the impact of a community entrepreneurship program for non-military individuals and military veterans. The researchers defined entrepreneurial self-efficacy as the extent to which an individual believes she or he can successfully perform the various roles and tasks related to starting a business. In this study, EP was described as the ability to raise capital and is a key driver of entrepreneurial action. The researchers viewed EP as a key tenet in entrepreneurship, as it supports business owners by promoting creativity, strengthening recognition of new systems for the realization and utilization of opportunities. Networking was defined as the supportive relationships entrepreneurs establish and access to obtain guidance, advice, and information related to their business venture, from either elected officials, friends, family, or other individuals working within the economic development or business sector.

Attitude was measured with respect to ESE, EP, as well as changes to the amount of consultations/frequency of discussion/advice regarding participants' startup business that occurred within their networks. The measures used in the survey instrument included basic demographic information and an ESE question section. The 5-item scale, meant to measure ESE in specific entrepreneurial task domains, were: 1) identify new business opportunities, 2) create ways to improve existing products for a new business, 3) create products or services that fulfill customers' unmet needs, 4) develop a new business, and 5) think creatively in business. Networking frequencies were measured on a 4-point reverse scale. Participants were provided pre- and post-test surveys to determine their scores. Military veterans increased their entrepreneurial passion after training. They were also significantly more likely to launch their business during, or one year after, completing the training educational program.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite the level of theorizing around EI, EP, ESE, and motivation, the literature review indicates that limited studies show how to measure these factors. Furthermore, there is no definitional consensus of how these factors are significantly influenced by entrepreneurship education. Ambiguity colors understanding what are considered best practices or evidence-based

meaningful outcomes, contemporary entrepreneurship programs, as well as how and when they should be measured.

Apart from the broad array of measures described above, Tang, Lai & Chou (2016) argue that entrepreneurial spirit, knowledge, and skills, as well as socioecological environments, are crucial for understanding entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education should emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial awareness, knowledge, skills, and practices. They also considered entrepreneurial motivation and environments to be crucial for entrepreneurs.

Overall, there is lack of consensus in defining the knowledge domain of entrepreneurship or how it should be taught – ranging from a set of terms, skills, and acquired competencies, to the development of an entrepreneurial mindset. As described herein, a broad array of measures for entrepreneurship education have been proposed.

Intentions spur cognitive processes to channel beliefs, perceptions, and other exogenous factors into the intent to act, then to the action itself. The literature indicates that studies have used short-term measures such as self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention to examine the impact of entrepreneurship education programs. Researchers indicate the need to tailor evaluation criteria to educational levels, program goals, the target audience(s), and stakeholders (Duval-Couetil, 2013).

The literature focusing on military populations reveals limited studies measuring these factors of entrepreneurship education. Kerrick's research identified attitudinal and behavioral changes and differences in military veterans and civilian participants based on pre- and post-surveys conducted during a community entrepreneurship training program. All participants began the program with higher than average ESE and both groups increased their ESE, indicating that entrepreneurial education had a positive influence on entrepreneurial self-efficacy. When examining EP pre- versus post-survey results, civilian and military veteran EP scores increased significantly overall, and veterans' EP scores rose even higher than those of civilians. Researchers attributed these results to military veterans gaining more information that assists them with their business startup, as well as gaining affirmation and motivation from the class via

networking, community integration, and mentoring provided. Lastly, for networking frequencies, military veterans had statistically significant higher levels of business networking frequency pre- and post-survey than the civilians; this may be attributed to the opportunities of the entrepreneurship training program and to the business mentors military veterans are introduced to, as well as the veterans becoming more comfortable with discussing their business startups with family, friends and others.

During participation in an entrepreneurship business startup training program, goals and objectives are pre-set for course makeup and delivery and goals are set by individual participants, along with their attitudes and beliefs being impacted. The need and demand for entrepreneurship education and training continues to grow, although evaluation outcomes regarding behaviors – entrepreneurial intent and action – are not frequently measured or tracked.

In a review of literature, van Ewijk, 2018, identified several ongoing knowledge gaps that exist in the field of entrepreneurship education related to:

- *Objectives*: no studies are known to them that focus exclusively on the objectives of entrepreneurship education programs or courses (7 references);
- *Impact*: there are no studies that investigate what all the possible outcomes of entrepreneurship education are, as most studies used predetermined outcomes. Of those studies, most focus on entrepreneurial intentions as the propensity to start a business. However, there appears to be an absence of a common impact assessment framework in entrepreneurship education and there are no uniform criteria to measure impact (13 references);
- *Audience characteristics*: there are too few studies that focus on the characteristics of the audiences, the students of entrepreneurship education, and how these characteristics influence both course design and impact, whether as a predictor or as a moderator (10 references);
- *Content*: there are no clear criteria for evaluating the content and teaching practices in a ‘good’ entrepreneurship course or program or to determine what is considered ‘best practice’ (12 references), and

- *Instructors and institutional context*: there is a lack of (comparative) research that evaluates how educational policies at the regional, national, and supra-national level promote or influence entrepreneurship education. Also, too little is known about how resources available for students affect the impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions and behavior (8 references).

The programs described in the environmental scan provide a practical process for the development of entrepreneurship in a learning environment. Entrepreneurship education and training with the objective of providing practical skills through complementary activities might yield the most influence for increasing entrepreneurial intent, passion, self-efficacy, motivation, and behaviors.

Although programs retrieved in the environmental scan and the theoretical perspectives described in the literature do not identify salient measures that evaluate student outcomes, there appear to be some essential components across the programs that play a role in delivery: 1) a “taught” component, with one or more modules/sessions; 2) a “business-planning” component, with technical assistance and guidance on not only developing a specific business idea but sustaining the business long-term; 3) an “interaction with practice” component, which can include diverse instruction, and invited speakers and testimony from past participants, and 4) “business resources support” (Potishuk & Kratzer, 2017).

With more evaluations of entrepreneurship programs and exploration of intended outcomes, evidence-based and measurable indicators can be developed to determine future actions towards entrepreneurship education and to understand entrepreneurial outcomes of transitioning military servicemen and veterans.

Also, apart from theoretical perspectives, other factors that shape entrepreneurial ventures – such as the ability to obtain financing, the availability of public or private sector small business programs, and the accessibility to continued resources – need to be further investigated to understand the inclusion and exclusion of constructs to measure best practices in

entrepreneurship education and the motivations and risks entrepreneurs are willing to take (risk propensity [Popescu et. al, 2017]), as well as challenges to entrepreneurial action.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We posed two overarching questions with respect to the formative evaluation of the Boots to Business *Introduction to Entrepreneurship* 2-day workshop. Collectively, the results of the interviews, course quality assessment ratings, guided discussion, and the environmental scan provided some answers and laid the foundation for future investigation.

What we learned is that the TAP program provides a dynamic opportunity to continue outreach and engagement of transitioning service members into the “entrepreneurship” track – helping them learn strategies for starting a business as well as helping them move into business ventures without much limitation. We found that establishing good relationships among key stakeholders together with military installation personnel – i.e., commanders, transition service managers – is a primary facilitator for successful recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of participants in the B2B 2-day workshop.

Base Commanders that support the program serve as gatekeepers, ensuring there are efficient stakeholders in place that help successfully promote, initiate, execute and sustain the B2B workshop across installations. The TAP program, TAP Managers, VBDOs and Resource Partners all play a role in increasing the visibility of the B2B program through diverse marketing strategies and mechanisms (i.e., social media, written materials (such as flyers), B2B workshop presentations, etc.).

Also, greatly impacting retention and satisfaction are installations that not only support spouses and family members, but implement direct marketing to these groups if necessary.

Entrepreneurship training and education programs vary in composition and delivery (e.g., face-to-face, classroom, online, etc.) but, in essence, the successful recruitment, retention, and satisfaction of participants has interrelated parts. The B2B workshop is an elective ‘creating a functional environment of learning.’ Thus, for the successful implementation of all related activities of the B2B program, important stakeholders (TAP managers, TSMs, VBDOs, and Resource Partners) must together prioritize accommodating facilities and functional equipment; pre-scheduling workshops; streamlining registration; employing diverse marketing strategies;

engaging diverse and credible instructors; using quality pedagogies and delivery, and ensuring base access issues receive attention in a way that facilitates participation.

Resource Partners have met this need head on by continuing to bring innovative strategies that provide students with “real-world” applications through hands-on learning and modeling (i.e., business plan development, case studies).

The TSMs, VBDOs, and Resource Partners all stressed the need to increase the visibility of the B2B program through diverse marketing strategies and mechanisms. With mass outreach, the SBA also has the opportunity to provide updated marketing materials to military installations to ensure clear and consistent messaging.

Ultimately, the SBA has the possibility to increase investment in outreach and promotion of the B2B program through: 1) the TAP program at military installations, 2) enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the command/leadership about the B2B 2-day workshop, and 3) assessing the experience of transitioning service members in the B2B workshop, such as the course quality assessment.

An entrepreneurship education program should be based on rigorous scientific assessment. As such, it is important to advocate for a more rigorous assessment of the B2B course. Empirical evidence on how entrepreneurial training impacts the attitudes of attitudes is also limited. Course quality assessment should include measures to address internal and external factors that influence transitioning service members in launching a new business venture.

We found that survey items explore the level of knowledge, depth of course content, pace of instructional delivery, course registration process and technical assistance, attitudes, and how the course influences transition planning and venturing into business startup. The course quality assessment survey questions in both DoD and SBA surveys received relatively high average ratings for face validity and clarity of instructions, but ratings for content validity and relevance for both surveys were low.

Data indicated that information collected with CQA survey questions are not enough to measure the achievement of the B2B program objectives, since some program objectives are not fully covered by the survey questions. There were also limited questions that specifically address the content of the training course within modules. This limits the understanding of what specifically, by module, has the most impact for business startups.

The constructs mostly discussed in the literature that help understand and predict new venture initiation include: entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and motivation theory. The literature indicated that entrepreneurship education and training with the objective of providing practical skills through complementary activities might yield the most impact for increasing entrepreneurial intent, passion, self-efficacy, motivation, and actual transition into venture creation and business startup (behavior).

A gap exists in fully “evaluating the effectiveness” of the B2B workshop. GEARS encourages a more rigorous assessment of the B2B workshop as an “entrepreneurial education program” unique to military transitioning service members. To accurately assess the achievement of the B2B program objectives or the learning of the course content, it is suggested that CQA survey questions be revised based on the B2B program objectives listed in the B2B program logic model. The CQA surveys should also include adoption of constructs that seem promising with the addition of adapted questions, or replacing some existing questions with new survey questions that specifically assess how well service members have learned and understood the course content and learning materials. Questions should also be considered that explore the sustainability of the B2B 2-day workshop.

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APPENDIX A: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION STEPS AND B2B LOGIC MODEL

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

The evaluation framework has adapted constructs of the Precede and Proceed Planning Model (Green & Kreuter, 2005) and the CDC evaluation framework (CDC, 1999), which includes the steps below.

Step 1: Assessment of the Predisposing, Reinforcing, and Enabling Factors

Assessment and understanding of the predisposing, reinforcing, and enabling factors related to the transitioning service members may help B2B program staff to improve the process and implementation of the training course, which will in turn attract participation of service members and increase their level of satisfaction with the B2B 2-day workshop. As Green and Kreuter (2005) stated in the program planning model of Precede and Proceed, **predisposing factors** are any characteristics of a person or population that motivate behavior prior to or during the occurrence of that behavior. They include a service member's knowledge, beliefs, values, and attitudes related to entrepreneurship.

- **Enabling factors** are defined as factors that make it possible (or easier) for individuals or populations to adopt new behavior or a new venture. Enabling factors for transitioning service members would include resources social support, peer influence, policy support, and convenient access to training that encourage and enable transitioning service members to participate and complete the B2B training.
- **Reinforcing factors** are those factors that reinforce the new behaviors and new venture. Some of the reinforcing factors would include peer success in small business start-ups and opportunities for new jobs and ventures that will be available as a result of participating in the B2B 2-day workshop.

Step 2. Engaging Stakeholders

The GEARS B2B evaluation team has actively engaged SBA stakeholders as appropriate, which has helped the GEARS evaluation team to understand the B2B program better. The engagement process also helped the evaluation team to identify the most appropriate evaluation questions to be answered by the formative evaluation and to refine these evaluation questions.

Step 3: Describing the Program

A logic model has been developed to describe the B2B program that focuses on B2B program activities and strategies used to achieve the expected short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. As a theoretical framework, the logic model also describes the reasons and assumptions of certain B2B program activities being implemented (see the logic model presented below).

Step 4: Focusing the Evaluation Design

The design of the B2B evaluation will make full use of the existing data and will use mixed methods to collect new data to help answer the evaluation questions. The collection of new data will be composed of three series of in-depth interviews.

Step 5: Gathering Credible Evidence

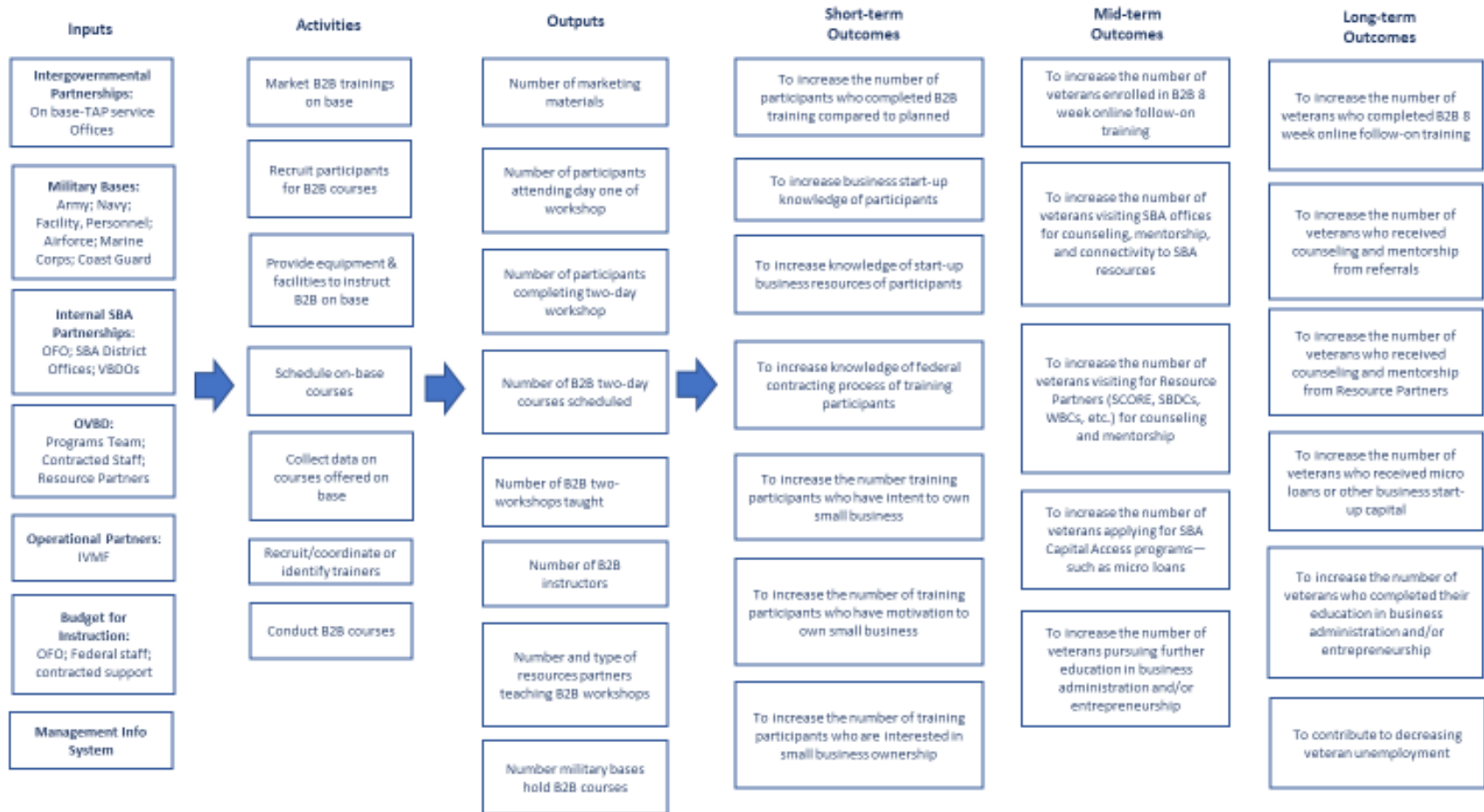
To gather credible data and candid answers to the proposed interview questions, the GEARS evaluation team will assure the respondents that their feedback cannot be traced back to any individual. To achieve that goal, the evaluation team will inform respondents up front that no personally identifiable information will be entered in the data analysis or evaluation report and all the information collected will be analyzed in the aggregate. Moreover, the GEARS evaluation team will assure respondents up front that all the interview data will be destroyed and removed from GEARS' secured data system.

Step 6: Ensuring Appropriate Use and Sharing Lessons Learned

In collaboration and consultation with the COR, efforts will be made to ensure that both findings of the evaluation and lessons learned during the evaluation will be used to inform decision-making and implementation of future actions.

B2B LOGIC MODEL DESCRIBING THE EVALUATION-RELATED COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

The logic model presented below only contains the information that is relevant to the current B2B evaluation.



APPENDIX B:
**PROTOCOLS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH TRANSITION SERVICE MANAGERS,
VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS, AND RESOURCE PARTNERS**

TRANSITION SERVICE MANAGERS

(The protocol will be sent to the respondents ahead of time so they can be prepared)

INTRODUCTION SCRIPT:

First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. As you know, the Boots to Business (B2B) program of the Small Business Administration (SBA) has tasked the Global Evaluation & Applied Research Solutions (GEARS) to evaluate the B2B program.

The purpose of the current evaluation is to identify the facilitating factors and barriers in the B2B program that influence the participation of transitioning service members in the *Boots to Business (B2B) Program Two-Day Introduction to Entrepreneurship Training Workshop* (B2B 2-day workshop).

The findings from this evaluation will hopefully provide critical insights to inform improvements in the B2B program. Utilizing the actionable insights to be obtained from this evaluation, more transitioning service members will benefit from the B2B program.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. The information collected will be analyzed in the aggregate so that no personally identifiable information of any individual staff will be entered in the analysis or the evaluation report. Please answer the questions as completely as you can.

Thanks so much for your feedback! Your input is important in helping the SBA improve the B2B program.

If we could have your consent, we would like to audio-record our discussion so that we can fully capture your input. The recording will be destroyed as soon as we complete the summary of our discussion. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. If not, let's begin our interview.

A. Introductory Questions

1. How long have you been working in your current role in the B2B program? How many staff members are there in your team?

B. Specific Questions

1. What are the characteristics of a military installation that helps to increase participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
2. What marketing strategies can help a military installation to increase participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
3. What are the characteristics of a military installation that may lead to lower participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
4. What are the barriers that may prevent a military installation from having high-level participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
5. What strategies are currently being used to increase participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop? (If you can, please tell us if these strategies have been proposed by the SBA or have been initiated by the military installation)
6. What additional strategies can be implemented to increase participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
7. What strategies are currently used to attract transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
8. What additional strategies can be implemented to attract transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?

Thank you so much for your input!

VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

(The protocol will be sent to the respondents ahead of time so they can be prepared)

INTRODUCTION SCRIPT:

First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. As you know, the Boots to Business (B2B) program of the Small Business Administration (SBA) has tasked the Global Evaluation & Applied Research Solutions (GEARS) to evaluate the B2B program.

The purpose of the current evaluation is to identify the facilitating factors and barriers in the B2B program that influence the participation of transitioning service members in the *Boots to Business (B2B) Program Two-Day Introduction to Entrepreneurship Training Workshop* (B2B 2-day workshop). The findings from this evaluation will hopefully provide critical insights to inform improvements in the B2B program. Utilizing the actionable insights to be obtained from this evaluation, more transitioning service members will benefit from the B2B program.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. The information collected will be analyzed in the aggregate so that no personally identifiable information of any individual staff will be entered in the analysis or the evaluation report. Please answer the questions as completely as you can. Thanks so much for your feedback! Your input is important in helping the SBA improve the B2B program.

If we could have your consent, we would like to audio-record our discussion so that we can fully capture your input. The recording will be destroyed as soon as we complete the summary of our discussion. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. If not, let's begin our interview.

A. Introductory Questions

1. How long have you been working in your current role in the B2B program? How many staff members are in your team?

B. Specific Questions

1. Based on your experience, what facilitating factors have helped a military installation to increase participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
2. Based on your experience, what barriers have prevented a military installation from increasing participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
3. What are the characteristics of a military installation that lead to higher participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
4. What are the characteristics of a military installation that lead to lower participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
5. Based on your experience, what other efforts can be made to increase participation in the B2B 2-day workshop?
6. Do you have any suggestions that may help increase participation of transitioning service members in the 2-day workshop? (if yes, please describe).

Thank you so much for your input!

RESOURCE PARTNERS

(The protocol will be sent to the respondents ahead of time so they can be prepared)

INTRODUCTION SCRIPT:

First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. As you know, the Boots to Business (B2B) program of the Small Business Administration (SBA) has tasked the Global Evaluation & Applied Research Solutions (GEARS) to evaluate the B2B program.

The purpose of the current evaluation is to identify the facilitating factors and barriers in the B2B program that influence the participation of transitioning service members in the *Boots to Business (B2B) Program Two-Day Introduction to Entrepreneurship Training Workshop* (B2B 2-day workshop). The findings from this evaluation will hopefully provide critical insights to inform improvements in the B2B program. Utilizing the actionable insights to be obtained from this evaluation, more transitioning service members will benefit from the B2B program.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. The information collected will be analyzed in the aggregate so that no personally identifiable information of any individual staff will be entered in the analysis or the evaluation report. Please answer the questions as completely as you can. Thanks so much for your feedback! Your input is important in helping the SBA improve the B2B program.

If we could have your consent, we would like to audio-record our discussion so that we can fully capture your input. The recording will be destroyed as soon as we complete the summary of our discussion. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. If not, let's begin our interview.

A. Introductory Questions

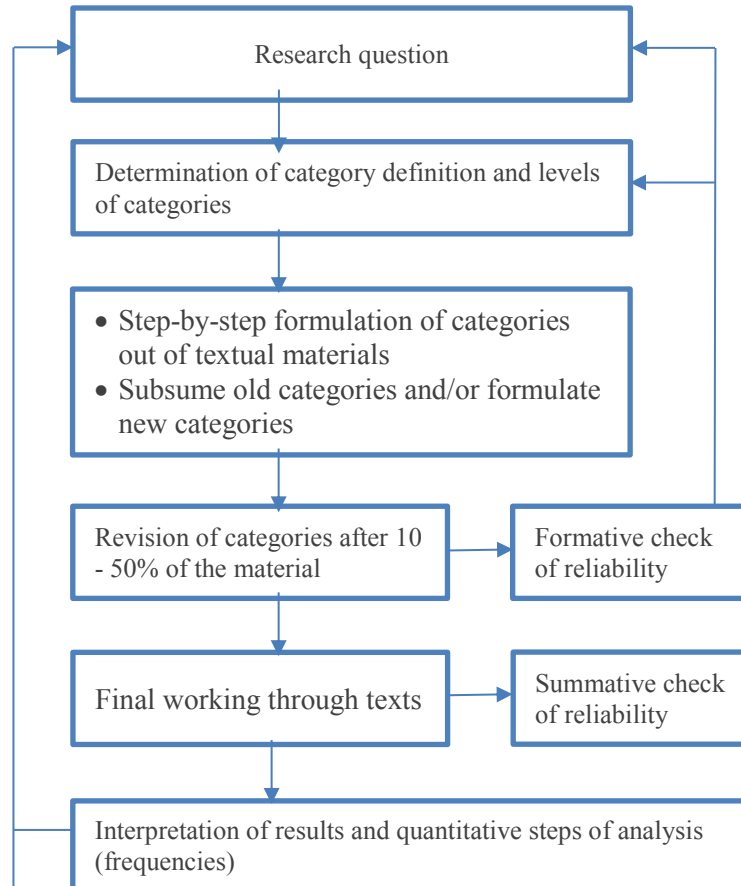
1. How long have you been working in your current role in the B2B program? How many staff members are there in your team?

B. Specific Questions

1. What is the situation of participation like in the 2-day workshop in the last two years (high or low)?
2. What has been done to increase participation of transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
3. How did the learning resources (*PowerPoint, visuals, teaching aids, etc.*) help the transitioning service members complete the B2B 2-day workshop?
4. How did content of learning materials and activities help the transitioning service members complete the B2B 2-day workshop?
5. What aspects of the training may have prevented a military installation from attracting transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
6. What aspects of the learning resources have prevented a military installation from attracting transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
7. What aspects of the content of learning materials and activities have prevented a military installation from attracting transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
8. What strategies are currently being used to attract transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?
9. What additional strategies can be implemented to attract transitioning service members in the B2B 2-day workshop?

Thank you so much for your input!

APPENDIX C:
STEP MODEL OF INDUCTIVE CATEGORY DEVELOPMENT (MAYRING, 2000)
(CONTENT ANALYSIS APPROACH)



Source: Cohen, D. & Crabtree, B. (2006). "Qualitative Research guideline Project." July 2006.
<http://www.qualres.org/HomeConv-3802.html>.

APPENDIX D:
**FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH TRANSITION SERVICE MANAGERS,
 VETERANS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS, AND RESOURCE PARTNERS**

Themes/Categories Related to TSM Interview Data		
Themes/Categories	Number	Percent (%)
Installation characteristics that increase participation	14/25	56.00%
Installation size	5/14	35.71%
Type of military installation	3/14	28.57%
Access to training resources	7/14	50.00%
Command/leadership support	5/14	35.71%
Installation characteristics and barriers that lower participation	14/25	56.00%
Population fluctuation	12/14	12.71%
Lack of leadership support	6/14	42.85%
Access to training resources	3/14	21.42%
Type of installation	12/14	12.71%
Lack of access to social media	4/14	28.57%
Other barriers to increased participation	7/25	28.00%
Undecided career or business interest	7/7	100.00%
Negative perception about retirement	1/7	14.26%
Conflicting personal priorities	6/7	85.71%
Marketing strategies employed to increase participation	21/25	84.00%
Electronic marketing	7/21	33.33%
Social media marketing	18/21	85.71%
Broadcast marketing	2/21	9.52%
Hardcopy/written marketing	5/21	23.81%
Presentation	12/21	57.14%
Proposed Strategies to Increased Participation	12/2	48.00%
Marketing strategies	7/12	58.00%
Conduct leadership briefings about B2B	2/12	16.67%
Market B2B directly to spouses	3/12	25.00%
Increased B2B marketing by SBA	3/12	25.00%
Increase B2B marketing through social media	5/12	41.67%
Non-marketing strategies	8/25	32.00%
Incentivize participation	3/8	37.00%
Bring awareness of local business resources for participants	2/8	15.00%
Open B2B workshop to veterans residing outside base	3/8	37.00%
Use success stories	4/8	50.00%

Themes/Categories Related to Veteran Business Development Officers Interview Data		
Themes/Categories	Number	Percent (%)
Facilitators that help increase participation	23/30	76.00%
Establishing good relationships with base personnel	17/23	73.91%
Gaining buy-in from installation leadership personnel	14/23	60.86%
Offering the workshop multiple times per year	10/23	43.47%
Opening participation to family members and veterans	16/23	69.56%
Receiving support from Resource Partners	23/23	100.00%
Installation staff marketing efforts to attract participants	13/23	56.52%
Scheduling the B2B 2-day workshop classes in advance	10/23	43.47%
Integrating the B2B 2-day workshop with TAP	4/23	17.39%
Supporting past participants and veterans sharing of business success stories with students	6/23	26.08%
Partnering with a local university to support the workshop	1/23	4.35%
Specifically targeting active-duty servicemen who are very close to transitioning	2/23	8.69%
Installation characteristics to increase participation	10/30	33.33%
Type of military installation with considerations of location, active-duty population size, branch type, and mission	10/10	100.00%
Ensuring participants including program instructors have base access to access the B2B 2-day workshop	6/10	60.00%
Barriers that contribute to lower participation	15/30	50.00%
Lower numbers of participants in attendance vs. higher number of registrants	15/15	100.00%
Outdated marketing materials	9/15	60.00%
Poor-quality program materials	6/15	40.00%
Encountering scheduling difficulties	9/15	60.00%
Lack of efficient communication around schedule changes	5/15	33.33%
Transition service members not being able to get time off	5/15	33.33%
Distance of bases limits the ability to engage in outreach	3/15	20.00%
Participants being engaged at a short transition period	1/15	6.67%
Having the B2B 2-day workshop as a 2-day format	1/15	6.67%
Installation characteristics that lower participation	13/30	43.33%
Lack of leadership support for transitioning service members' participation in the B2B 2-day workshop	13/13	100.00%
Type of installation (size, location, number of facilities, etc.)	9/13	69.23%
Base exercise, readiness, drills, and job responsibilities take precedence over the B2B 2-day workshop	6/13	46.15%
Insufficient staff, staff turnover, and poor-quality staffing	8/13	61.53%
Lack of awareness about eligibility to participate in the B2B Workshop among the younger active-duty service members spouses and family members	2/13	15.38%
Base access for VBDOs, spouses, and veterans who have transitioned from the military base	8/13	61.53%

Themes/Categories Related to Veteran Business Development Officers Interview Data		
Themes/Categories	Number	Percent (%)
Limited classroom capacity does not accommodate a large number of participants	3/13	23.07%
Efforts to increase participation in the B2B workshop	4/30	13.33%
VBDO promoting B2B within specific programs and workgroups	2/4	50.00%
VBDO promoting B2B at events (i.e., national conferences)	4/4	100.00%
VBDO promoting B2B on a local radio show	1/4	25.00%
VBDO promoting B2B through email and newsletters	1/4	25.00%
VBDO promoting B2B on agency webpage/Website	2/4	50.00%
Proposed strategies to increase participation	15/30	50.00%
Increasing the visibility of the B2B 2-day workshop by using innovative and multiple methods to market the B2B Workshop	15/15	100.00%
Enhance or change content of modules including presentation materials	8/15	53.66%
Employ continuous efforts to obtain leadership support	3/15	20.00%
SBA to explore a case-by-case basis for changing the format of the B2B 2-day workshop per installation needs and attendance (removing one day and/or adding another day)	4/15	26.67%
Extending the participation period past the time of transition	1/15	6.667%
Hosting the B2B 2-day workshop off-base to prevent base access issues	1/15	6.667%
Providing monetary incentive to resource partner agency to be able to provide lunch to participants	1/15	6.667%

Themes/Categories Related to Resource Partner Interview Data		
Themes/Categories	Number	Percent (%)
Participation in B2B in the last two years	7/9	77.77%
Non-existent to full capacity in a short time	1/7	14.28%
Steady or constant for ongoing participation	7/7	100.00%
Changing transitioning population	2/7	42.85%
Observances of spouse participation	3/7	00.33%
Various participation levels due to installation's population size and the installation's requirements	2/7	28.57%
Current strategies employed to increase participation	7/9	77.77%
Hosting the B2B Workshop numerous times per year	5/7	71.43%
Using diverse instructors	1/7	14.28%
Advanced scheduling of the B2B 2-day workshop	2/7	28.57%
Resource Partners offer follow-up sessions	7/7	100.00%
Resource partners help navigate business resources	2/7	28.57%
Current strategies employed to attract participation	2/9	22.22%
Inviting past students or retired officers that were connected to the installation to share their success stories	2/2	100.00%
Connecting participants with continual resources and learning opportunities (including the follow-on course)	2/2	100.00%
Aspects of the content and learning resources that help participants complete the B2B 2-day workshop	7/9	77.77%
PPT presentation provide thorough introduction to entrepreneurship	6/7	85.71%
Using supplemental materials to cover course content	7/7	100.00%
Using hands-on activities (e.g., business plan models and in-class case studies)	2/7	28.57%
Aspects of the training, content, and learning resources that prevent installation from attracting participants	7/9	77.77%
Ineffective PPT presentation- Poor instructional delivery	2/7	28.57%
Course written at college level	1/7	14.28%
Unreliable information in course materials	1/7	14.28%
Missing details on important topics (i.e., marketing)	1/7	14.28%
Content contains little to no business case studies	1/7	14.28%
Using supplemental materials to cover course content	7/7	100.00%
Non-functioning classroom equipment	4/7	57.14%
Too much information in modules	3/7	42.85%
Ineffective PowerPoint slide deck materials	6/7	85.71%
Proposed strategies and other efforts to increase and attract participation	2/9	22.22%
Marketing strategies		
Create new marketing materials about the B2B 2-day workshop	2/2	100.00%
Market B2B through different squadrons and units on	2/2	100.00%

Themes/Categories Related to Resource Partner Interview Data		
Themes/Categories	Number	Percent (%)
installations		
Market directly to spouses	2/2	100.00%
Explore and determine best practice marketing models from installations achieving high participation	1/2	50.00%
<i>Non-marketing strategy</i>	1/9	11.11%
Incentivize participation (i.e., award college credits)	1/1	100.00%

APPENDIX E: CQA SURVEY RATER'S GUIDE

A GUIDE FOR RATING CQA SURVEY QUESTIONS USED TO ASSESS THE BOOTS TO BUSINESS (B2B) TRAINING COURSE

Boots to Business (B2B) is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as part of the U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD) Transition Assistance Program (TAP). B2B provides participants with an overview of business ownership and is open to transitioning service members (including National Guard and Reserve) and their spouses.

Currently, two surveys assess Veterans' experiences with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD), *Boots to Business (B2B) Program Two-Day Introduction to Entrepreneurship Training Workshop*. They are the *SBA Course Quality Assessment Survey (SBA-CQA)* and the DoD's *Course Quality Assessment Survey (DOD-CQA)*.

Your assistance is requested to review and rate the relevance of each of the CQA survey questions in relation to the B2B program objectives. The goal is to ensure that the survey questions provide the best and most accurate information to measure the achievement of the B2B program objectives. You will also be asked to rate each survey question on its face validity, content validity, and clarity of instructions.

For the **rating of relevance** between each survey question and each program objective, you will use a five-point scale, where 1=Completely irrelevant, 2= Somewhat irrelevant, 3= Neutral, 4= Somewhat relevant, and 5= Completely relevant.

For the **rating of face validity, content validity and clarity of instructions**, you will also use a five-point scale, where 1=No Validity or Clarity, 2=Low-level Validity or Clarity, 3=Mid-level Validity or Clarity, 4=High-level Validity or Clarity, and 5=Highest-level Validity or Clarity.

Should you have any questions, please contact Dr. Barry Zheng (bzheng@getingears.com) or Doriane Sewell (dsewell@getingears.com). They will be happy to answer any questions.

When you have completed your ratings, please save both files and email them to Barry Zheng at bzheng@getingears.com.

Thank you for your assistance with this most important project.

APPENDIX F:
DOD CQS AND B2B CQA SURVEY QUESTIONS

DOD CQS SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track that the facilitators were knowledgeable?

2. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track that the facilitators interacted well with the participants?

3. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track that the learning resources (e.g., notes, handouts, audiovisual materials) were useful?

4. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track “I will use what I learned in my transition planning”?

5. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track “this Module/Track enhanced my confidence in transition planning”?

6. How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives (4-9 per Module/Track)

- 6b. How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Knowledge Questions (4 per Module/Track)

7. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track “I experienced little to no technical difficulties while accessing or completing this Module/Track”?

8. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track “the content and activities of this Module/Track kept me engaged”?

9. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track that the narrator's voice was clear and easy to understand?

10. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track that the virtual content (e.g., downloadable files, hyperlinks, popup boxes) was easy to maneuver and access?

11. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track “I will use what I learned in this Module/Track in my transition planning”?

12. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about this Module/Track “this Module/Track enhanced my confidence in transition planning”?

13. How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Learning Objectives (4-9 per Module/Track)?

- 13b. How well did this Module/Track increase your knowledge of Module Specific Knowledge Questions (4 per Module/Track)?

14. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “I know how to access resources (e.g., counselors, online resources) to get answers to transition questions I may have in the next several months”?

15. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “overall, this program was beneficial in helping me gain the information and skills I need to better plan my transition”?

16. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program that overall, the classroom facilities (or virtual environments) were adequate for the

program?

17. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “overall, this program enhanced my confidence in transition planning”?

18. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “overall, I will use what I learned in this program in my transition planning”?

19. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “overall, the program has prepared me to meet my post-transition goals (e.g. employment, education, and/or entrepreneurship goals)”?

20. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “my Individual Transition Plan (ITP) was beneficial in helping me plan for my transition”?

21. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “I am aware that Capstone is the final event of the TAP where my commander or his/her designee verifies that I have met the Career Readiness Standards”?

22. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “my immediate leadership is supportive of my transition to civilian life (e.g., attending TAP courses, attaining Career Readiness Standards”?

23. How much do you agree or disagree with the statement about the overall Transition GPS Program “I have been given the time I need during my military career to attend transition assistance training”?

SBA CQA SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1. Response ID

Q2. AUTHORIZATION (You read the authorization introduction)

Q3. You voluntarily agree to participate. You are at least 18 years of age

Q5. First Name _____, Last Name _____

Q6. Boots to Business date completed (mm/dd/yyyy)

Q7a. Please select the Boots to Business course you most recently completed:

Introduction to Entrepreneurship (2-day course)

Foundations of Entrepreneurship online (8-week course)

Reboot

Q7b. Please choose the state or territory where you most recently took your Boots to Business course: (answer choices: a drop-down list of 59 states and territories)

Q7c. Please choose the installation where you most recently completed your Boots to Business course: (answer choices: a drop-down list of 221 installations)

Q8. Service: (Answer choices: a drop-down list of 12 from “Air Force” to “Navy Reserve”)

Q9. Age Range: (Answer choices a drop-down list of 4 age ranges)

Q10. Gender: (Answer choices a drop-down list of 3: Male, Female, and Not Stated)

Q11. Ethnicity: (Answer choices a drop-down list of 3: Hispanic or Latino, Non-Hispanic or Latino, and Not Stated)

Q12. Race (please select one or more): (Answer choices a drop-down list of 7: American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, and Not Stated)

Q13. Please select the status that best describes you at the time you completed the course — If you are a service member who is married, please select your status and Dual Military Spouse: (Answer choices a drop-down list of 7: Dependent Spouse, Other Dependent, Veteran, Service member, Dual Military Spouse, Service Disabled Veteran, and Transitioning/Retiring Service member)

Q15. Describe the level of communications you received about Boots to Business prior to attending: (Answer choices: Way too much communication, Too much communication, About right, Too little communication, and Way too little communication)

Q16. Please rate how satisfied you are with all Boots to Business materials: (Answer choices: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, and Very Dissatisfied)

Q17. Instructors (Please select the Boots to Business course you most recently completed — Foundations of Entrepreneurship online (8-week course) (answer choices: Very Dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Neutral, Satisfied, Very Satisfied)

Classroom was conducive to a learning environment

Displayed knowledge and familiarity with B2B course material

Exhibited presentation skills that engaged the class

Used training aids and materials to instruct course material

Communicated clearly and effectively

Integrated practical experience and participants' ideas into the course material

Q18. Regarding Boots to Business overall, please select the most appropriate response to the items below. (Response choices: Way too little, Too little, About right, Too much, and Way too much)

Amount of material covered

Depth of coverage

Mix of Topics

Q19. Please briefly describe what materials or content you would like to see added or subtracted from the course.

Q20. Pace of coverage: (Answer choices: Way too fast, Too fast, About right, Too slow, and Way too slow)

Q21. Please select the most appropriate response to the items below. (Response choices: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither, Agree, and Strongly Agree)

The online registration was easy to navigate.

Technical support was readily available.

The course Website was well organized.

Q22. Please answer the following questions about how you felt before and after attending Boots to Business: (Answer choices: Not at all, Not Very, Neither)

How informed did you feel about starting a business and entrepreneurship in general?

How confident were you about having the skillsets required to start a business?

How motivated were you to start a business?

How likely were you to start a business?

How likely were you to start a business soon (within one year)?

How likely were you to start a business later (5-10 years)?

How likely were you to pursue higher education first?

How likely were you to pursue employment first?

How likely were you to pursue additional technical assistance first?

Q23. Other than the information covered already, do you have any additional input regarding the Boots to Business program?

Q24. Which of the following best describes your interest in starting or owning a business now that you have completed Boots to Business?

I am significantly more interested in starting or owning a business.

I am more interested in starting or owning a business.

I am neither more nor less interested in starting or owning a business.

I am less interested in starting or owning a business.

I am significantly less interested in starting or owning a business.

Q25. Did the Boots to Business program increase your confidence in starting or owning a business?

Q26. Would you refer someone to the Boots to Business program?

APPENDIX G.

METHODOLOGIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN AND LITERATURE REVIEW

CONDUCTING AN ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF EXISTING PROGRAMS FOR TRANSITION SERVICE MEMBERS

Create a template to capture data. Before start of the environmental scan, the GEARS Team develops an extraction template in Excel to capture data. The GEARS Team conducted Google Web searches to identify other programs that support transition service members and veterans into entrepreneurship in the U.S. The process for creating an inventory of resources is below.

Create an inventory of existing resources and programs. Upon conducting searches, the GEARS Team drafted of program in an Excel spreadsheet that identified program data in the following categories:

- Program Name
- Purpose/
Objective
- Location/Host
- Audience/Eligibility
- Program Structure
- Business Topics Covered
- Program Cost
- Program Link
- Lead/Point of Contact

GEARS' scan of existing resources for this project include the following activities:

- Create a template to capture data reflecting specific categorical criteria for inclusion in the search.
- Create an inventory of existing resources/programs to highlight key points of programmatic features.
- Organize Search Results.

Organizing Search Results. After review of sources, the results of the environmental scan will help identify relevant resources and programs that support entrepreneurship for transition service members and veterans through various resources, program models, and methods and tools.

CONDUCTING A LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review consists of both an academic literature search and a grey literature search.

Academic and Grey Literature Search Terms

To identify related articles, reports and other relevant materials, search terms guiding both the academic literature and grey literature searches include:

- Business models for veterans
- Business programs for veterans
- Constructs and indicators used to assess entrepreneurial programs
- Constructs and indicators used to assess entrepreneurship
- Entrepreneurial education measures
- Entrepreneurial educational outcomes
- Entrepreneurship education and military professionals

- Entrepreneurship for transitioning military servicemen
- Entrepreneurship outreach to military professionals
- Entrepreneurship passion and veterans
- Intentions towards sustainable entrepreneurship
- Measures of entrepreneurship education
- Measuring success of entrepreneurship intention among veterans
- Military transition and entrepreneurship
- New veterans to entrepreneurship
- Shifting from military to business owner
- Shifting from military to civilian
- Strategies for targeting military veterans to start business
- Teaching entrepreneurship to military professionals
- Theory of planned behavior and entrepreneurship intentions
- Veteran business opportunities
- Veteran entrepreneurial among military professionals
- Veterans and small business startups
- Young veterans and business startups

ACADEMIC AND GREY LITERATURE DATA SOURCES

Searches were performed on articles published between January 2012 and present, with parameters for the U.S. in majority of searches. The *academic literature search* involves searching scholarly databases: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, EconoLit, ERIC; Google Scholar, Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts; Legal Source; Primary Search; Regional Business News; and SocINDEX.

The *grey literature search* includes both general and targeted internet searches for non-peer-reviewed literature such as key reports, education and policy briefings, and white papers. Both the academic and grey literature searches also include manual searches of any identified reference lists of relevant articles. Where both methodologies result in retrieval of similar sources, GEARS records such occurrences and uses EndNote bibliographic software to merge duplicate sources.

GEARS comprehensive literature steps include:

1. Create preliminary terms/keywords for academic (scholarly) and general internet searches (includes grey literature search).
2. Identify appropriate data sources and datasets for both academic search and general internet search.
3. Identify preliminary inclusion and exclusion criteria for academic and general internet search.
4. Identify key topic areas and create sample data abstraction tables for key areas.

Developing and Refining Information Extraction Tool. After identifying relevant content for the literature review, the Team will develop a draft extraction tool that contains clearly defined variables, such as the broad search terms to identify information.

Quality Assurance Techniques. The GEARS Team develops formal article extraction guidelines, documentation, and coding forms as part of the literature review work plan, so the searches can be replicated, and SBA can determine whether there are any missing variables required for a comprehensive search of information. The research team randomly selects a subset of articles for consideration and categorizes them according to the criteria approved by the COR and B2B and a subsequent process to then categorize a few of the articles to ensure inter-rater reliability of 90 percent is achieved. Any disagreements will be discussed by the GEARS Team and resolved by consensus. The Team will discuss the results of this activity, revise the extraction tool based on discussions, and submit the revised tool and data dictionary to the COR for review, should it be necessary. Any articles extracted during the tool development phase will be revised and abstracted according to the approved tool.

Organizing Search Results. The GEARS Team reviewed up to 60 documents to determine their relevancy to the identified criteria. The GEARS Team uses the EndNote bibliographic software tool to organize reference sources, including full-text articles. Through EndNote, GEARS organizes reference sources, including full-text articles. EndNote's capabilities support capture of various fields from sources retrieved: name of the searched bibliographic database and full citation information, article availability (abstract, extract, full article), keywords, and the link for the abstract or full-text. The results from the search of each database are checked for duplicate citations resulting in development of one reference list and custom reference groups, where needed. GEARS organizes the entire body of literature into reasonably homogenous groups of articles based on derivatives of key search terms to present the results of our review in a uniform, systematic fashion.

APPENDIX H:
RESULTS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF EXISTING PROGRAMS FOR
TRANSITION SERVICE MEMBERS, ACTIVE-DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS,
AND SPOUSES

Program Name	Program Description
<p>Bunker Labs</p>	<p>Bunker Labs provides educational programming, mentors, and events in several local chapters in cities throughout the U.S. to help <i>veterans, active-duty service members, and their spouses</i> start and grow businesses.</p> <p>Bunkers Labs has one main entrepreneurship program entitled: Launch Lab (formerly known as the EPIC entrepreneurship program). Launch Lab is a 12-week in-person course specifically designed to help idea-stage entrepreneurs develop the talents and skills required to launch a business.</p> <p>Business Milestones include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideation – Complete a definition of the business problem (or business opportunity) and its solution. • Conceptualization – Complete secondary and primary market research including competitive analysis, determining the market value of the business.. • Creation – Create a plan for the development of the product (prototype) and/or services methodology in order to prove that the business concept is viable. • Evaluation – Complete the business plan with marketing plan, sales plan, management team, and financial <i>pro forma</i> to determine if there is a viable business. • Preparation – Create a plan for the launch of the business, including all required business relationships. • Commercialization – Create a plan for the operations of the business, including all business disciplines. <p>Most programs are free for veterans; however, costs vary by city/state.</p>
<p>Dog Tag Bakery</p>	<p>Dog Tag provides experiential training at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, to <i>veterans with disabilities as well as their spouses and caregivers</i> local to the DMV or at least willing to relocate for the duration of program, have a mindset toward entrepreneurship, and ready to begin a career in the civilian workforce. Dog Tag seeks to build a bridge to business employment and a productive civilian life for the veterans and military families. Dog Tag is a five-month fellowship, offering an education at Georgetown University and real-life work experience in our small business venture, Dog Tag Bakery.</p> <p>The fellowship program provides seven courses in Business Administration from the School of Continuing Studies at Georgetown University. Participants complete scheduled rotations within different areas of the bakery and nonprofit. They also participate in a learning lab series with guest speakers discussing lessons learned to run a business, workshops in the power skills for business success, and specialized courses on telling your story. They also engage in networking opportunities with business leaders both inside and outside of the program. Fellows earn a Certificate in Business Administration from Georgetown University’s School of Continuing Studies. Courses include information on: Accounting, Management, Communication, Corporate finance, Marketing, Business policy, and Entrepreneurship principles.</p>

Program Name	Program Description
	The program is offered at no cost to participants.
Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities	<p>The Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities program provides training in entrepreneurship and small business management to post-9/11 <i>veterans with service-connected disabilities</i> with a passion for starting your own business <i>as well as military family members who serve in a caregiver role</i> to a veteran with a service-connected disability.</p> <p>The EBV is operated by the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University (IVMF). The program is offered by a consortium of schools that includes Syracuse University, The Florida State University, the University of California at Los Angeles, Texas A&M University, Purdue University, the University of Connecticut, Louisiana State University, Cornell University, Saint Joseph’s University, and the University of Missouri.</p> <p>Three separate programs are offered: the traditional EBV program, the EBV accelerated (for veterans who have had a business with 5 or more employees for 3 years), and the EBV-F (for veterans' families). Specifically, the EBV program has three phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 – is a 30-day instructor-led, online course focused on basic skills of entrepreneurship and the language of business. • Phase 2 – is a 9-day residency at an EBV university, where students are exposed to over 30 accomplished entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship educators from across the U.S. The residency includes more than 80 hours of instruction in the “nuts and bolts” of business ownership. The residency is intense and designed to both educate and motivate. • Phase 3 – involves 12 months of support and mentorship delivered through the EBV Post Program Support, a robust, comprehensive network of mentors, resources and national partnerships. <p>The program curriculum is designed to take participants through the steps and stages of venture creation, and challenges and opportunities associated with being a veteran business owner. The program is offered at no cost to eligible participants.</p>

Program Name	Program Description
Patriot Boot Camp	<p>Patriot Boot Camp (PBC) is a nonprofit founded in 2012 to provide <i>active-duty service members, veterans, and their spouses</i> with access to mentors, educational programming, and a robust community of experts and peers to help them innovate and build impactful businesses. PBC runs this program twice per year, in Texas and Colorado. PBC’s core program is an intensive three-day event designed to engage, inspire, and mentor Veterans and their spouses, to help them start, innovate, and scale the next generation of technology-focused businesses. The three-day program consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 – Education: Participants receive advice, recommendations and lessons-learned from world-class speakers and industry leaders. In the afternoon, participants are broken up into group breakout sessions to gain in-depth knowledge in specific areas. • Day 2 – Mentor Sessions: Participants meet one-on-one in 30-minute sessions with business leaders from around the nation. These mentors will help participants build networks, provide feedback, and give recommendations on how to grow a business. • Day 3 – Pitch Practice/Competition (half day): Select participants will be given the opportunity to showcase what they’ve learned to the entire cohort. All participants will be given the chance to practice their pitch. <p>PBC provides participants with free education and training in entrepreneurial and business skills, as well as mentorship from successful leaders from the entrepreneurial, military and business communities, at no cost to participants.</p>
Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship	<p>Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship (V-WISE) provides entrepreneurial training to <i>female veterans</i> through the Institute for Veterans and Military Families and is located at Syracuse University.</p> <p>V-WISE targets honorably discharged women veterans of any military branch and service era, including National Guard and Reserve components; active-duty women service members of any military branch, including National Guard and Reserve components; and women spouses/same-sex life partners of above (including widowed spouses/partners). Participants complete three-phase program including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 – 15-day online course. • Phase 2 – 3-day entrepreneurship training event. • Phase 3 – Ongoing mentorship, training, and support opportunities for graduates launching or growing their business. <p>Topics taught in the course include but are not limited to: business concepts, financing, guerrilla marketing, human resources, legal challenges, profit models, opportunity recognition, business planning, financing, economics, marketing, access to capital, business law, and social media.</p> <p>There is a cost associated with this program. Participants are responsible for a one-time \$75.00 registration fee, their transportation to and from the hotel, parking fees when applicable, and dinner on the second evening of the conference. The program is funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration and the generous philanthropic support of corporate and foundation partners nationwide.</p>

Program Name	Program Description
Veterans Entrepreneurship Jumpstart Program	<p>The Veterans Entrepreneurial Jumpstart program provides tools, training, and mentorship to enable <i>disabled veterans</i> to start their own businesses. The program is located at the Saint Joseph’s University’s Office of Veterans Services and targets all honorably discharged veterans or current National Guard and Reserves members are eligible to apply. Participants participate in three phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase I – (September 2018): Veterans participate in a self-study curriculum with instructor-led feedback. The purpose is to provide the necessary grounding in business fundamentals and to formalize a business plan. This phase lasts four weeks. • Phase II – (October 20-28, 2018): This nine-day residency exposes veterans to a broad training curriculum. The residency includes: classroom discussions, guest lectures from successful entrepreneurs, and opportunities for experiential learning; one-on-one work with trained mentors enables veterans to further develop and refine their business plan and a Venture Pitch competition is used to assess all business plan submissions. The program concluded with a Reception/Graduation ceremony on Saturday, October 27, 2018. • Phase III – (Starts after Phase II): Veterans receive ongoing mentorship and a suite of support services for 6 months after completing the on-campus Phase II residency. <p>The program is offered at no cost to veterans.</p>
Veterans Entrepreneurship Program	<p>The Veterans Entrepreneurship Program provides entrepreneurial training to <i>service-disabled veterans</i> interested in starting or growing a small business. The program is located at several locations: Spears School of Business at Oklahoma State University, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and University of Florida.</p> <p>VEP applicants must meet the following criteria: Have been honorably discharged from active-duty (or are currently in the administrative process of separating), demonstrate a strong interest in entrepreneurship and small business ownership or management, and have a business concept in mind or have an existing business in a growth stage prior to the program. Preference is given to applicants who are identified as disabled by the Veterans Administration based on a “service-connected” disability.</p> <p>The program occurs in three phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase I – Concept Development & Self Study (May 21 - June 25, 2018) During this initial five-week period, selected delegates will participate in a self-study curriculum developed by UTC College of Business. This will include reading materials and an online assessment module moderated by our entrepreneurship faculty. This phase will enable delegates to work on the further development of their business concepts and prepare for the on-campus boot camp experience in July 2018. Those with existing businesses will work on understanding and shaping relevant business issues. • Phase II – VEP Boot Camp (July 21-29, 2018) Like a military boot camp, this 8-day residency at the UTC Campus in Chattanooga, TN is intense, rigorous and demanding. It is an opportunity for hands-on learning and interaction with faculty, guest entrepreneurs, business experts and peer delegates. The boot camp exposes VEP participants to the “nuts and bolts” of business ownership through experiential workshops and lessons from world-class entrepreneurship faculty representing nationally ranked programs around the country. • Phase III – Mentoring & Venture Development (August 2018 - May 2019) Delegates are provided with 10 months of ongoing mentorship from

Program Name	Program Description
	<p>entrepreneurship experts at the UTC College of Business and online peer-to-peer networking. This phase of the VEP will enable delegates to get specific feedback regarding their ventures, provides access to professionals who can answer specific technical questions, and offers hands-on support.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship-related topics covered in this program include: The Entrepreneurial Experience; Opportunities & Great Business Concepts; Breakthrough Thinking; Understanding the Entrepreneurial Mindset; Risk-Taking, Resource Leveraging, and Guerrilla Behavior; Developing the Perfect Pitch; Bringing Your Business Plan to Life; Business Plan Workshop; Understanding Customers; Which Numbers Really Matter?; Operations; Entrepreneurial Pricing; Microsoft Excel for Business; Bootstrapping Your New Venture; Forms of Business Organizations; Marketing for Small Businesses and to the Government; Protecting Intellectual Property and Branding; The Wonderful World of Digital; The Art of Negotiating; Entrepreneurial Accounting; Cash Flow and Financing Your Venture; Financial Warning Signs and Avoiding Minefields; Personal Selling; Social Entrepreneurship; and Selling Your Ideas: How to Pitch.</p> <p>The program is offered at no cost to participants.</p>
VETtoCEO	<p>VETtoCEO, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports <i>veterans and transitioning military members</i> to succeed in business ownership. The online program is offered at no cost. The only requirement is for each participant to provide their DD214 if a veteran or their ID card if still Active, Guard, or Reserve military.</p> <p>The VETtoCEO core program is a seven-week program that supports participants who are either exploring entrepreneurship as a career path choice or aggressively completing their business plan. Participants apply what they learn in each of the seven modules to construct a viable business model based on the military planning model framework.</p> <p>They develop a funding strategy using what you learn about different types of funding sources and learn how to develop a complete set of financial projections for your business, collaborate with other veterans with similar interests that may lead to partnering opportunities, and participate in on-going mentoring/support in starting your business. The modules focus on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M1: Orientation and Marketing I – Knowing Our Market • M2: Marketing II – Focusing Our Business • M3: Mission – Mission and Purpose • M4: Execution – Legal and Organizational • M5: Finance I – Building our Financial Plan and Projections • M6: Finance II – Sources of Funding • M7: Command & Signal – Networking, Additional Resources, Next Steps

Program Name	Program Description
VIP START	<p>VIP START is a 3-day, 27-hour comprehensive certification program designed for veteran-owned businesses that want to enter or expand their business growth into the federal marketplace through best business practices. VIP START does not focus on teaching how to start a business; rather, it focuses on how to do business with the government.</p> <p>Specifically, VIP START targets an owner, principal or C-level executive for a veteran-owned business having been in business for at least one year. In addition, the company must have generated revenue in the past year; and the company has an owner or executive that is working full-time as a W-2 employee.</p> <p>The program curriculum covers the elements that need to be in place in order to do business with a PRIME or Government. These include Strategic Planning in the Federal Market; Accounting/Budgets/ Developing rates Compliance; Cyber Security; Contracting – Sub-Contracting/ RFP/ RFI; Operational Program Controls; Financing/Capital Management/Banking; Human Resources Management; Business Insurance; and Marketing, Business Development, and Proposals.</p> <p>VIP START is offered at no cost to participants.</p>
VIP GROW	<p>VIP GROW is a 3-day, 27-hour comprehensive certification program designed for veteran-owned small businesses to increase their ability to win government contracts. Facilitated by subject matter experts, participants receive hands-on market-based instruction that helps establish best business practices for Federal Government contracting.</p> <p>Specifically, VIP GROW targets an owner, principal or C-level executive for a Veteran-owned small business; having been in business for at least two years, with at least three full-time employees; and the company has experience performing on Federal Government contracts as a prime and/or sub-contractor to a prime.</p> <p>The program curriculum focus is on reducing risk to the veteran-owned company, their customers and teaming partners. Topics covered include: Accounting/Budgets/Developing Rates; Compliance; Contracting – Teaming, Joint Ventures, RFI; Financing/Capital Management; Human Resources; Insurance; Marketing – Proposals & Capture; Management; and Program Management/Internal Controls.</p>
VIP INTERNATIONAL	<p>VIP INTERNATIONAL is a 3-day, 27-hour comprehensive certification program designed for veteran-owned small businesses that want to enter and/or expand their federal and commercial contracting opportunities overseas. It uses real-time, market-based instruction tailored to accelerate success in winning, executing, and maintaining international OCONUS and commercial contracts.</p> <p>Specifically, VIP INTRENATIONAL targets a graduate of VIP, having been in business for at least three years with a minimum of three full-time employees; company has experience performing on Federal Government contracts as a prime and/or sub-contractor to a prime, and be an owner, principal or C-level executive for a veteran-owned small business. The program curriculum topics cover: Contract negotiation strategies, including commercial; Cross-cultural business implications; Compliance and logistics; Marketing - proposals and business development; Program management/Internal controls; and Managing human resources.</p> <p>VIP INTERNATIONAL is offered at no cost to participants.</p>