

## How a Veteran's Mission-Ready Mindset Aligns with Franchising

By Justin Ghadery, President & Chief Operating Officer, EverSmith Brands and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman, VetFran  
(an IFA initiative)

### Transition

When service members transition from military life to civilian careers, they often face a daunting question: “*What’s next?*” Many veterans are eager to apply the discipline, leadership, and technical expertise gained in the armed forces to a new professional path—one that allows them the freedom to continue serving their communities with purpose. For an increasing number of veterans, franchising presents a compelling option. And speaking from experience, franchisors continue to prioritize attracting, connecting with, and incentivizing Veterans to join their network.

So, the question is, **why is franchising a good fit for Veterans and former service members?**

Franchising combines entrepreneurship (read: “freedom to control their destiny”) with a proven system—something that deeply resonates with those who have thrived in structured, mission-driven environments, like military service. Veterans bring a unique skill set to the table, positioning them for long-term success in franchising, particularly in Business-to-Business (B2B) industries that value operational excellence (reliability and dependability), team coordination, hands-on tactical work, and accountability for relentless execution.

### Veterans and the Entrepreneurial Mindset

Military service instills qualities that align perfectly with what franchisors seek in their franchise partners: discipline, leadership, adaptability, and a drive to succeed under pressure.

- **Discipline and Structure:** Veterans are used to following standard operating procedures (SOPs) while also making smart decisions in the field. This mirrors the franchise model, where franchisees operate within established systems but are expected to demonstrate initiative in managing operations and leading their teams with unwavering composure when problems arise.
- **Leadership and Team Management:** From leading small units to managing logistics for large operations, veterans are trained to lead with integrity and motivate others. These leadership skills are crucial in running a franchise, especially in service-based and B2B sectors, where team performance directly impacts client satisfaction.
- **Problem Solving and Mission Focus:** Veterans excel at assessing risks, solving problems on the fly, and achieving objectives—often with limited resources. These traits translate seamlessly into entrepreneurship, where resilience and strategic thinking are key to long-term success.
- **Attention to Detail and Compliance:** Many franchises operate in highly regulated environments, whether that’s food safety, facility services, or fire protection. Veterans, particularly those with experience in maintenance, engineering, or logistics, bring a high level of attention to detail and a respect for safety protocols that are essential in these industries.
- **Networking and Community Support:** Veterans often have established networks within their military community and beyond, which can be invaluable for seeking advice, finding mentors, and securing business opportunities. They are also often committed to giving back to their communities, which can attract customers and build goodwill.

- **Resourcefulness and Self-Sufficiency:**

Veterans have developed a sense of resourcefulness and self-sufficiency, often taking on responsibilities and projects independently. This ability to work independently and make things happen on their own is an asset for entrepreneurs.

As veterans channel their military experience into the franchise world, they unlock opportunities to apply their skills while building businesses that align with their values and aspirations. Franchising becomes not just a career but a mission-driven endeavor that allows them to thrive and continue to contribute to their communities.

### **Why B2B Franchising Works So Well for Veterans**

While retail and food service franchises are typically the first to come to mind when seeking a franchise business opportunity, B2B (business-to-business) franchising presents an often-overlooked opportunity that's especially well-suited for veterans. Business-to-business models often operate with fewer employees, with the owner serving as an active operator. Additionally, they offer recurring revenue and emphasize and prioritize customer relationships, process control, and operational excellence—areas where veterans are strong.

Take **Kitchen Guard**, for example, one of the emerging franchise companies under the EverSmith Brands portfolio that specializes in the B2B commercial facilities sector.

### **A Franchise Built for the Veteran Skill Set**

Kitchen Guard is a commercial kitchen exhaust cleaning franchise that provides essential fire prevention services to commercial kitchens, namely restaurant owners, facility managers, and institutional kitchens. The brand offers a mission-driven approach: helping businesses prevent kitchen fires, comply with fire codes, and operate safely and efficiently.

For veterans with experience in mechanical systems, logistics, or facility operations, Kitchen Guard presents a natural extension of their expertise. But beyond technical alignment, it's the model and the mission that resonate. This company provides vital services that protect lives, livelihoods and community icons - as restaurants are often cultural landmarks of a community. Veterans often seek careers where they can continue making a difference, and the professional service Kitchen Guard provides delivers that opportunity.

Additionally, Kitchen Guard offers **exclusive franchise territories**, **low start-up costs**, and a team of **support staff** to collaborate, making it an accessible and strategic investment for veterans interested in owning their future.

### **Connecting Veterans with Franchise Opportunities**

To help more veterans explore franchise ownership, the **International Franchise Association (IFA)** created **VetFran**, a strategic initiative designed to reduce barriers for veterans entering the franchising industry. Through VetFran, over 500 member franchises offer financial incentives, mentorship, and educational tools to help veterans identify and pursue the right opportunity.

Here are some of the key benefits the **VetFran** program provides:

- **Franchise Fee Discounts:** Many participating brands offer reduced initial fees and startup costs to honor veteran service and encourage ownership.
- **Resource Library:** VetFran offers guides on evaluating franchise opportunities, financing options, and the “ins and outs” of day-to-day operations.
- **Networking and Mentorship:** Veterans can connect with fellow veteran franchisees and franchisors to ask questions, share experiences, and receive guidance and support.

Programs like VetFran are vital in helping veterans make informed decisions and avoid costly missteps in their post-service business journey.

### **A New Chapter of Serving with Purpose**

Veterans possess the grit, leadership, and operational excellence to succeed in franchising. When paired with the right franchisees, especially in one that aligns with their values and leverages their skills, Veterans thrive. Whether it's securing restaurants from fire hazards with Kitchen Guard or operating another community-serving B2B franchise, veterans bring unmatched dedication and resilience to their ventures.

Franchising is not just a business model; for many veterans, it's a continued mission.