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DEVELOPING VETERAN CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES AND BRANDS

After nearly a decade of war initiated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the importance of developing a culture of interaction with veterans and creating effective mechanisms for their reintegration into civilian life, considering aspects of social adaptation, physical and psychological rehabilitation, and community integration, has become a priority for the strategic development of the state. According to forecasts by the Minveterans, after the full-scale war ends, the number of veterans, their family members, persons with disabilities due to the war, and families of deceased military personnel may increase to 4 million people, which will constitute about 10% of the pre-war population of Ukraine [1].

The negative impact of the war on the Ukrainian economy, including

inflation, decreased investment attractiveness, and the outflow of small and medium-sized businesses, leads to significant losses in the workforce and a decline in its quality. Therefore, the issues of education and employment for veterans must become a priority for both the public and private sectors of the economy and society. According to preliminary research, education and employment for veterans, along with medical care and rehabilitation, are key factors that contribute to their successful return to peaceful life amidst existing political and economic challenges.

In the context of war, the increasing scale of its negative consequences and the number of affected Ukrainian citizens highlight the need for strategic and systemic changes, which have long been demanded by society, particularly in the state sector's support for veterans' reintegration into civilian life. However, Ukraine currently lacks a comprehensive and effective strategy for the reintegration of veterans into civilian life, education, and the labor market, which would create the prerequisites for the effective integration of efforts by all stakeholder groups, taking into account contemporary Ukrainian realities and the best domestic and international practices. Research results indicate that the level of satisfaction with services and the organization of support for the reintegration of veterans into civilian life has not significantly changed, with 57% of veterans negatively evaluating their experience with state assistance services.

Effective implementation of service design marketing and digital technologies will simultaneously significantly enrich and simplify interactions with veterans. Qualitative transformations and improvements in the support system for veterans' return and integration into education and the workforce should be based on the results of regular research across the entire spectrum of effectiveness evaluation, contact point audits, and processing of requests for consultation and assistance, which can provide valuable analytics based on modern and accessible CRM systems [2]. Since the transition and integration of veterans into education and the workforce is a necessary element of their full reintegration into civilian life, the strategic coordination of stakeholder initiatives and projects should accumulate harmonized research results and form large data sets on the short-term and long-term effects of initiatives (effects for veterans) in this direction.

Already in the initial phase of strategy implementation, it is worth organizing the accumulation, systematization, and structuring of monitoring research results and support requests regarding veterans' problematic issues and needs in their reintegration into civilian life. The basis for using such information can be the databases of the 'hotlines' of the Ukrainian Veterans Fund, as well as leading public organizations providing assistance to veterans: NGO 'Legal Hundred', Human Rights Center for Military 'Principle', Veteran Hub, etc., provided they are willing to cooperate. To enhance the effectiveness of veterans' client experience with assistance services, it is advisable to comprehensively

implement methodological approaches to optimizing the ‘Customer Journey Map (CJM)’ for veterans. The basic CJM model has already been used in the developments of NGOs such as ‘Legal Hundred’, the Human Rights Center for Military ‘Principle’, Veteran Hub, etc., but without auditing contact points and other subsystems for evaluating veterans’ experiences. The process of veterans’ reintegration into civilian life and self-realization should be systematically organized and begin even before service (at the recruitment stage), continue during service, especially at the final stage, and have a clear and effective conclusion after service.

International experience in developing and implementing strategies to improve support for veterans’ reintegration into civilian life using the ‘Veteran Journey’ methodic, particularly the ‘I CARE’ program, demonstrates their effectiveness (with an increase in veterans’ trust in the government agency from 47% to 70% over three years).

It is also important for the professional community to develop recommendations and mechanisms to assist veterans in promoting their brands in the domestic market and abroad within the framework of the “Ukrainian Veteran Business” brand and as part of the “Made in Ukraine” project.

REFERENCES

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