
17 Ideas to Launch Your Part-Time Army Career

Welcome to my free mini-course, *17 Ways to Launch Your Part-Time Army Career*. In this course, I am going to share some of my best tips on what you can do to take your Army career to the next level. This information pertains to enlisted Soldiers, NCOs, Warrant Officers, Officers and even GS Employees. I hope you will study this information in this mini-course and find one or two “golden nuggets” that you can start applying in your own career.

Please keep in mind that these are tips I learned during my 15+ year Army career. In addition, some of the tips I learned from studying successful General Officers and successful enlisted Soldiers. I hope these ideas can help you with your career as much as they did for me. Let’s get started.

1 Be the Best at What You Do, So No One Can Replace You

This is the best advice I can give anyone. From this day forward, stop being average; or good at your job, or a little bit better than your peers. *Make it a personal goal to be the best at what you do.* Be so good at your job that no one can replace you AND no one wants to replace you. Make it so hard for the person who replaces you to fill your shoes that no one will want your job after you leave. Being good at your job isn’t enough. Whatever job you have, be the best! This means you know your job inside and out, you take pride in what you do, and you have a strong work ethic. **Remember, good people are always in high demand.** Find ways to continuously improve your performance and reputation in your job. Be the person who is known to make things happen!

2 Decide EXACTLY What You Want to Achieve in Your Army Career

It’s hard to have a successful Army career if you don’t know what you want to achieve. It’s like going on a road trip with no destination in mind. *If you don’t know where you want to go, how can you expect to ever get there?* Do yourself a favor and starting today do what less than 3% of all Americans do. Set some written career goals. Take out a piece of paper and write down what you want in your career. Decide what rank you want to achieve. How many years do you want to serve? What jobs or assignments do you want? What schools do you want?

I understand you might not have all these answers right away, but set some written goals anyway. You can always update or change your goals later on down the road. The power of setting goals is that it automatically gets your subconscious brain working to help you move closer to achieving your goals. Without a goal, you are really setting yourself up for failure. It’s so much easier to achieve success when you know what you want.

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3 Develop a Unique Selling Proposition

You need a Unique Selling Proposition. This is simply “what you want to be known for.” It should be a one to two sentence statement that describes what you do and what you bring to the table. While I was in, I wanted to be the guy that could fill in on any job and make things happen, without supervision or guidance. I wanted to be the MAVERICK who could get things done.

You don't have to have the same USP I did, but you need one! Make a list of your skills, strengths and talents and think about what you have to offer the Army. Put all that into your own USP, just like I did. And then you need to communicate this USP to everyone you come in contact with. You want to make sure your words and actions match your USP. You want people to form a favorable impression of you, based upon what you want them to think. Don't leave this to chance!

4 Start Reading 30-60 Minutes Every Day

Reading is the best way to learn new skills. I used to hate reading, but once I started doing it on a regular basis, I fell in love with reading. More importantly, I learned skills that increased my value in the market place, and in the military. You should read MINIMUM 30 minutes a day, seven days a week. After all, **you feed your body, so why not feed your brain?**

You want to read topics such as military history, tactics, leadership, communication, conflict resolution, people skills and a variety of other subjects. If you can't get yourself to read, get the books in the audio version and listen to them. Do this every day and never stop. If you read a book a month during your 20 year career, that would be 240 book. Can you imagine how much more knowledge you would have from reading that many books?

5 Think from Your Boss's Perspective

Your boss is not the enemy. I understand you might not like your boss or agree with everything they say or do, but you have to understand that your boss writes your report card. If you want to get an ACCURATE and EXCELLENT evaluation report, you need to start thinking of things from your boss's perspective.

What issues are they dealing with? What problems do they have? **What can you do to make their life easier or better?** Always ask your boss “what can I do to help you or make your life easier, sir?” Help your boss. Don't look at them as the enemy. Look at them as your advocate.

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I'm not talking about kissing butt, either. There's no need to do that. But you should go out of your way to help your boss and make their life easier. That's an important part of your job. And before you are quick to form an opinion about a decision they make, try to look at things from their perspective. You might just realize they aren't so bad after all.

6 Volunteer More

From day one in the Army we are taught not to volunteer for anything. Personally, I think that's a big mistake. *You should volunteer for tough projects, tough jobs, and things your boss needs done.* The benefits of doing this greatly outweigh the drawbacks. First and foremost, you show your boss you have initiative. This is very important. Secondly, you can show your boss the skills that you bring to the table. When it comes to promotions or future assignments, this can really play in your favor.

7 Take the Toughest Jobs You Can Find

Never take the easiest jobs! Don't be a slacker and don't be known as a slacker. Instead, **you want the hardest, most demanding jobs you can find.** You want to lead the *Bad News Bears*. You want the jobs that teach you new skills and test your abilities. Study any successful military leader and you will see that they took tough jobs many times throughout their career.

8 Don't Be Intimidated By Successful People; Hire Them!

Never EVER be intimidated by a superstar. Rather than being jealous of other up and comers, do what you can to hire them and get them on your team. Surround yourself with a bunch of winners and you have nowhere to go but up. Remember, it's the people that work for you that ultimately determine whether you get fired or get promoted. It's just your boss who delivers the news.

So do everything in your ability to hire talented people on your team. When you get them on your team, give them clear instructions, make sure they have the resources they need, and then stay out of their way. Don't micro-manage them. Take care of them. Put them in for awards, send them to schools and help them get promoted. All of these things add to your value.

9 Start Building Your Network

You need to build your network. People hire and promote people they know, like and trust. Some people in the ARNG and USAR call this the "Good Ole Boy" network. The

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truth of the matter is that this network exists. Every organization has many networks within it. You already have your own network with people you know, like and trust. And you probably go out of your way to help these people.

To have a real successful career, you need to expand your network. You need to connect with people of influence inside and outside your chain of command. You need to build what I call *strategic relationships* with people of influence who can get things done. Once again, I'm not talking about kissing butt. I'm referring to strategic relationships.

10 Learn how to Manage Your Time Effectively

Most of us "part-time" Soldiers have to do our job in 2-3 days per month. That means we need to manage our time effectively. You need to master time management or it will master you. This means you need to set priorities and always focus on the most important things first. If you want to get promoted, you need to know how to do things in order of importance.

11 Complete Your Military Schools As Quickly as Possible

This should be fairly self explanatory, but don't wait until the last minute to complete your military schools. Do your mandatory schools as quickly as possible. And try to complete at least one resident or distant learning course each year. This shows you are serious about your military education and enjoy learning. Never miss a promotion or duty assignment because you don't have the schools you need. Be proactive.

12 Treat Your Subordinates and Peers Like ROYALTY

Treat everyone you come in contact with as good as you would your own mother. Treat people with respect, regardless of their rank or what they can do for you. The way you treat people that can't help you is a true reflection of your real character. Plus, you never really know who you are talking to or what level of influence they might have. Think of yourself as a servant to your people rather than your subordinates' job as serving you.

13 Attend All Social Events and Mandatory Fun

I know it. You might hate mandatory fun just as much as I do. But at the end of the day, you need to do it. Attend all social events (dining in and out, NGUAS, Gala, etc.), whether mandatory or not, and whether paid or not. It's part of being a leader. More importantly, your leaders will be watching you to see if you do it. Not attending events

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could definitely backfire and get you labeled as the “rebel” or “non conformist” title, something you don’t want.

14 Never Put Yourself in a Situation Where Others Have Dirt On You

Don’t try to be buddy-buddy with everyone you work with. ALWAYS keep a distance between your peers, boss and subordinates. Never get so close with them that you do something stupid and they have dirt on you. For example, don’t go out drinking with your boss or subordinates and get stupid drunk. You will only regret that later on.

15 Never Talk Badly of Anyone

Never, ever bad mouth anyone. If you have a problem with someone, let them know, or keep it to yourself. The one person you piss off today might become your boss a few years down the road. Plus, when you talk badly of others it makes you look bad. People will wonder what you say about them when they aren’t around. *Learn to master your emotions and keep your opinions to yourself.*

16 Diversify Your Experience as Much as Possible

One of the biggest mistakes I see Soldiers make is having limited job experiences. As an Officer or NCO, you need a wide variety of jobs. Do jobs in different MOS’s, different units, different career fields, etc. If you are NCO, get some time in a line unit, as an instructor, a recruiter, trainer, and other things. Get a second branch or MOS. The more experiences you have, and the more things you can do, the more opportunities you will have to get promoted and advance your career.

17 Always Know EXACTLY What You Need to Do to Make the Next Rank

You should always know what jobs, what schools and how much time you have until you are eligible for the next rank. You should determine exactly what you need to do at your current rank to get promoted at minimum time in grade to the next rank. Come up with a clear action plan to make sure you get everything done ahead of time, so you are positioned for career success. Manage your career or it will manage you.

Final Thoughts

In summary, these are just 19 simple things you can do to take your part-time Army career to the next level. I hope you will keep this report saved on your computer and refer to it at least once a month. More importantly, I hope you APPLY what you learn. Remember, no one else cares about your career as much as you do.

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About the Author



Charles Holmes is a former Army Major. He is the creator of **Part-Time-Commander.com**, one of the most popular military websites in the world for ARNG and USAR Soldiers. He lives in Florida with his wife, Rachel.

[Read more about Charles.](#)

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