



BERNIE STONE

BERNIE'S SUCCESS STORY

ABOUT

Bernie Stone is a retired military officer who entered the Army in college through the ROTC program and went on to serve just over 20 years. After leaving active duty, he spent 3 years earning his MBA, following one of his passions and redefining the next stage of his career. After a short stint in a corporate sales role, Bernie realized he wanted to define his own value and serve customers his own way. That led to Bernie's relaunch as an entrepreneur, starting not just one, but two companies.

In addition to running two businesses, Bernie is still serving his community in and around Des Moines, Iowa in a variety of volunteer roles. He is a board member for Polk County Health Services, a city leader for Bunker Labs Des Moines, and offers mentoring to entrepreneurs through SCORE, Techstars Iowa, FedTech, xTech and Veterati.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT IF YOU HADN'T TAKEN THE 3-YEAR BREAK AFTER EXITING MILITARY SERVICE?

If someone would have told me they see my value and wanted me to be a part of their team, I might have gone to work for them. It reminds me of the mantra about closed doors leading to other, open doors. If I would have gone to work right away, I wouldn't have learned about brewing beer or earned my MBA, and maybe wouldn't have started my companies. The break gave me time to reflect and redirect.

DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER VETERANS WHO DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT AFTER LEAVING MILITARY SERVICE?

I know of an officer in the Army who was on track to become a General. But then he decided that he wanted to take a different direction, so he left the military and became a high school teacher. He changed his life completely just so he could make an impact in the way that he wanted to. People do that all the time, like parents who decide to step away from their career to focus on their family. It's a powerful choice about where you're going to spend your time and resources and where you want to make the most impact.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE UNREALIZED PASSIONS OR ARE CONTEMPLATING A CHANGE IN CAREER?

Passion is no substitute for preparation or education. In order to be empowered to achieve your dreams, you should go out and seek education or experience so you can do those things better. You can literally do anything you set your mind to if you make a plan and put in the work. Just be sure to take care of yourself along the way, and that might mean working with a therapist like I do. You can't take care of yourself or others if you are working too hard and break down, so make your mental health a priority.

RELAUNCH STATS

Length of Career Break  3 years

Nature of Career Break  Transition out of Military service

Time to Relaunch  3 years

CAREER TRAJECTORY

Pre-Break Employer and Job Title

U.S. Army
Military Officer

Employer and Job Title at Point of Relaunch

Self-Employed Entrepreneur

Current Employer and Job Title

President at Strategic Scouts Consulting and Managing Partner at Strategy Holdings

To read Bernie's full success story, visit [iRelaunch's Success Story Archive!](#)