



## Helping Injured Soldiers and Their Families: The US Army Wounded Warrior Program

Leaders of the US Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) called on Booz Allen Hamilton, in 2008, to help strengthen assistance to severely wounded soldiers and their families through better communications and public outreach. Working closely with AW2 leaders and stakeholders, Booz Allen led new communications and collaboration initiatives, such as a revamped Web site, blogs, an educational video, and other innovative media that connected and invigorated the AW2 community. As a result, AW2 has become a trusted partner with wounded soldiers, and their families, in making the difficult transition to their “new normal.”

### Raising AW2's Profile

The Army established AW2 in 2004 to enhance the care and support of severely wounded soldiers and their families. The AW2 system of support starts from the outset of treatment, and continues through rehabilitation and transition of soldiers back into the Army or to civilian life—according to the AW2 mission: “wherever they are located, for as long as it takes.” AW2 achieved early success in helping injured soldiers who joined the new program, but its efforts were limited because it was not well known among soldiers, nor was its Web site widely used for information or resources. AW2 also lacked strong ties with public and private organizations that could potentially assist its soldiers.

To expand AW2's programs and capabilities, the Army Human Resources Command asked Booz Allen to improve awareness in the Army and related communities, and to use outreach to strengthen the support given to wounded warriors and their families.

### Using Innovative Media to Build a Collaborative AW2 Community

Booz Allen assembled a team from across the firm with expertise in strategic communications, including the Internet and new media, organizational strategy, and information technology. Key to their effort was an exhaustive survey of stakeholders—AW2 soldiers and their families, Army commanders and soldiers, and veterans and non-profit organizations—to understand their knowledge of the program, misconceptions, and needs. Armed with this information, AW2 and Booz Allen then crafted a communications and rebranding strategy aimed directly at target audiences.

No level of detail was too small in the effort to support and grow the AW2 community. In partnership with Booz Allen, AW2 redesigned its logo to heighten the Army brand and make it more attractive to soldiers. AW2's Web site was redesigned to provide the information and services requested in the initial survey, such as clearly describing who qualified for the

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program, and how to obtain services. The new site, which drew upon the latest research in usability and design, also featured a blog that allowed soldiers and their families to communicate with each other about their needs and experiences. Web site traffic rose 40 percent in the first five months after the blog was launched, and the blog quickly became a valuable tool for new soldiers and families. The program also sends a bi-monthly electronic newsletter to AW2 soldiers, providing updates on benefits and services, and additional news and experiences.

The information developed for soldiers is also used by AW2 Advocates to raise awareness in the local communities where they serve. The high quality of the Web site and other media has boosted AW2's profile, educating businesses and opening up job opportunities for AW2 soldiers.

Overall, the communications and rebranding efforts have been instrumental in strengthening AW2's image as professional, capable, and committed to helping severely wounded, injured, and ill soldiers. And the social media programs, such as the blog and enhanced Web site, have enhanced AW2's mission capabilities by enabling the program to better serve its constituent members.

## Helping AW2 Be Ready for What's Next

Booz Allen and AW2 are building on their success by incorporating new collaborative social media, such as YouTube, TroopTube®, Facebook, and MySpace, to expand the program's public outreach. These innovative efforts are not only bringing in new organizations and services to help wounded soldiers, but they also empower the soldiers and their families, giving them information and resources to shape their own destinies. The effort has bolstered AW2's ability to carry out its mission to serve severely injured soldiers and their families "for as long as it takes."

## Ready to Help You

Our work for AW2 is just one example of how Booz Allen's global strategy and technology consultants collaborate with military leaders to help them achieve mission goals. Our consulting teams draw from a wide range of capabilities in strategic communications, organizational strategy, and technology, as well as in-depth knowledge of military operations and requirements. To learn more about the know-how behind AW2's success and how we can help your team be ready for what's next, visit [www.boozallen.com](http://www.boozallen.com).

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