

The Dynamic of the Training Triangle

The *Bermuda Triangle* is formed by the three points of Miami, Florida, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda. Over the last 300 years, hundreds of watercraft and even military aircraft have disappeared in this “triangle”.

There is another triangle that has been responsible for the **loss of countless resources and productivity** that I call the “**training triangle**”. Picture with me, if you will, the three points of an equilateral triangle and we will name them Point Alpha, Point Bravo, and Point Charlie.

Point Alpha is where the initial training or basic tenants of any enterprise, such as a military boot camp, corporate office, football spring training, a police academy, or even religious or academic training resides. Point Alpha is also where the fundamentals of the enterprise or art form are **introduced, demonstrated, and mastered to a certain degree or standard**. To the maximum extent practicable, I believe that all training should be: **Relevant to the mission; Challenging to complete; and Somewhat fun**.

As we move along the base leg of the triangle we come to **Point Bravo**. This is **where applications of the fundamentals are made** or where the tenants of the art form are practiced. It could be the **operational environment of any enterprise**, the law practice, game day, or even the combat environment. One of these “game days” on Point Bravo was January 15, 1967 when the **Green Bay Packers won Super Bowl #1** defeating the Kansas City Chiefs 35-10. Halftime score: Pack 14 Chiefs 10.

Some weeks later, in spring training, legendary Coach Vince Lombardi was said to have stood before his team and held up a football. He then famously pointed to the football and declared “**Gentlemen, this is a football!**” In so doing Coach Lombardi took his team back to Point Alpha and **the basics of the game**...blocking, tackling, and playing as a team with **passion and a game plan**.

Coach Lombardi would then lead the team, as a whole and in parts, over for a visit to **Point Charlie**. Point Charlie is where **fundamental skill levels are increased and more complex operational concepts are introduced and mastered**. The team then traveled back to Point Bravo for the regular season to practice their basic art form and newly refined skills. On occasion team members would visit Point Alpha and Point Charlie **for the singular purpose of optimizing their performance as a team at Point Bravo**. The Packers went on to win in Super Bowl #2 on January 14, 1968 defeating the Oakland Raiders 33-14.

Each year **countless resources are lost in all areas of human enterprise** simply because of the tendency to be smothered in the routines and de-energized by the status quo of Point Bravo. Initially full of energy, vision, and enthusiasm “**the locker room**” **becomes a stale, sterile, and lifeless place**. This was not happening on Coach Lombardi’s watch! He passionately led the Packers back to Point Alpha, then to Point Charlie to refine that purpose, and then to Point Bravo and their core purpose, “**Winning!**”

A problem associated with our visits to Point Charlie in that upon return to Bravo **the new skill or concept it is often not applied or practiced**. Even if applied or practiced it is **often not evaluated** for effectiveness. And so the true dynamic of the training triangle is **often squandered in meaningless “boondoggles”** and countless opportunities and capabilities are “**lost**” in the triangle. Sound familiar?

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