# The Value of the Military Skill Set â€“ Part IV

## Description

Part IV â€“ â€œPoint Papersâ€•Â•

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Communications skills. For all the words we have, and the many languages available, many problems seem to boil down to problems with getting our point across.

One thing I was called upon to do regularly when I was in the middle and upper ranks was to write â€œPoint Papers.â€•Â• Not all the people I worked with had to do this, but it was s particular skill exercised when in staff assignments, large and small.

What is a point paper? A point paper is a single sheet of paper, used to encapsulate complex issues and what the best course of action was for the purpose of communicating this to executive level leadership. It generally consists of three sections:

1) Background
2) Discussion
3) Recommendation(s)

Once completed, the document was usually reviewed by several other people in the chain of command and then corrections or changes were made before presentation to the commander. The goal at this final presentation was usually to be in and out in about 5 minutes, having skillfully communicated the essential points of the issue, and a supporting the best course of action to be taken. Sometimes the requirement was to present more than one alternative plan, but at other times, to present what was best from your research.

The skills developed in being able to get good at writing point papers involve being able to absorb the available information on an issue, determine the genesis of the situation, communicate what state it is in now, then evaluate the best way to tackle the situation for success, and to condense this to the point a senior manager knows what is required in order to make the right decision and get back to the other tasks at hand. In many cases, there was usually a time constraint on the person doing the research and writing, due to the operational needs at hand. A good point paper writer is a quick study and has an eye for significant detail, a great analytical mind, as well as the ability to be brief.

Need someone like that? Scan resumes for assignment to major staff position in any service, then ask if theyâ€™ve had the pleasure of drafting point papers.

**Category**

1. Leadership
2. Military

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