

Randy's World (Where Things Look Different)

Haig, I've sat here and read and reread your 9/12 email. I've also obviously read the articles in the Oregonian. I guess my ultimate reaction is one of sadness and to some degree gratitude. I'm terribly sad that the agency that I was proud to work for and represent for 31 of my 34 years, has come to what we see reflected in your Email and the Oregonian. I'm grateful that I, at least, no longer have to listen to the contorted logic the Executive Committee uses to explain poor business decisions, poor planning, poor customer relations, poor employee relations, poor (perhaps illegal) managerial selections, grossly distorted award/retention bonus systems, overstaffing and just plain fiscal irresponsibility at the highest levels. As I think about all this, I have a burning desire to list all of Randy's accomplishments, but perhaps in not as jocular a format as you have used. I guess we could start at the beginning:

1. Randy comes to BPA and almost immediately, his very good personal friend from Seattle, Judy Johannsen, is selected to fill a previously unrecognized critical BPA staffing need at the GS-15 level.
2. Randy initiates the "Competitiveness Project" shortly after standing on the stage in the BPA auditorium and saying there would be no more MEOs. He says he had seen what happened at Seattle City Light when they reorganized, and knew of the trauma and time wasted due to the MEO.
3. Because our own executives are not seen as capable of structuring for a competitive environment, Quinn Gardener (the Mighty Quinn) and his minions are hired. They are paid outrageous consulting fees, to help BPA design an organization that can be competitive with other power marketers. Randy becomes a great believer in Quinn. Quinn's work leads to the determination that BPA requires a "Transformation".
4. It turns out shortly thereafter that Quinn Gardener and his several suborganizations are under investigation by no less than 5 PUCs in other states, including California, for overbilling and conflict of interest. In California a vice-president of Southern California Edison resigns after it is disclosed that Quinn and he own a travel agency that his organization uses to book travel for SCE personnel. At the same time Quinn has been hired as a consultant to SCE by this vice-president. The California Attorney General says that they have been unable to find any indictable offences committed by Quinn and his companies. Quinn goes on a 2 year "mission" for the Mormon church in Asia.
5. To lead implementation of the "Transformation" that the consultants determine is essential, Randy selects Steve Hickok, the guy who gave us the MEO which we haven't yet finished implementing.
6. Randy and Hickok put together the "Transformation Team". No one presently at what is then the "Office" level is invited. Volunteers are asked for, and when I (Deputy Assistant Administrator for OM&C) volunteer, I am told by my supervisor that I was turned down because

more women and minorities are needed on the team. Vickie VanZandt is selected for the team.

7. After the Transformation team does it's work (the members run around wearing buttons saying, "I have faith. I believe"), Randy states that all managerial positions are changing so much that all supervisors and managers will have to reapply for their jobs. He assures us that everyone will be placed in positions with "meaningful work". He says that the reapplication process must start at the very top, so all the executives must apply for jobs as well. Randy states that he will be making all the final decisions about the executive positions. Since there will be 3 new SES positions as a result of several pending retirements, all GS-15s are offered the opportunity to apply. There is actually no formal application process for these supposedly "competitive" executive positions. Rather we are all asked to submit a one page summary of our qualifications. Randy acknowledges that he knows little about most of the applicants, but assures us he will use our personnel files to find out about the background and experience of those he doesn't know.

8. Anticipating Randy's need to review SES applicants' qualifications, the Director of Human Resources has all the GS-15 personnel files brought to his office so that he can respond immediately when Randy asks about any particular applicant. Randy never asks for a single file.

9. Randy interviews some, not all, of the applicants the afternoon before announcing his supposedly "merit based" selections. Miraculously, Judy Johannsen, his personal friend, and Vickie VanZandt, both of whom have approximately one year of experience at the GS-15 level, are found by Randy to have "merit qualifications" exceeding those of approximately 30 white males, many of whom have more than 10 years at the GS-15 level. Things do look different in Randy's World.

10. We later find out that 2 weeks to ten days before the executive selections were announced, and a week before the applications were due, Randy told Jim Jones which executives were going where, and Vickie VanZandt announced to her secretary after a meeting with Randy and George Bell, "They're offering me a job; I guess I better apply on it". The merit process at work in Randy's World.

11. Randy selects Sue Hickey, the ex-Rajneeshee, as Chief Operating Officer. Sue, while head of the Conservation Office was responsible for negotiating and signing such landmark contracts for BPA as Tenaska and the "Conservation Power Plant". These contracts will eventually cost BPA well over \$100M due to provisions which place all the risk of failure to proceed on BPA. She has also spent more than \$1.3 M in the previous year on "organizational development" (hiring consultants) in her organization. This "organizational development" includes a rafting trip on the Deschutes as part of her "team building" work. On a proportional basis, had all the other Offices performed as she did, BPA would have spent over \$10M in one year on "organizational development". None of this seems important to Randy who has publicly vowed to "make a real change in the look and diversity of the Executive Committee". Obviously, what constitutes the good business judgement

most of us would look for in a Chief Operating Officer looks different in Randy's World.

12. Immediately following the executive selections, Randy, Sue and all executive selectees leave for a week of "Collaborative Work Team" training. Surprisingly every SES level person, other than those retiring, has been found by Randy to have exactly the qualifications required to fill the "all new" jobs created by the "transformation". An amazing tribute to the verasility of BPA's executive corps.

13. Even more surprising though, is that the person found best able to guide the BPA executives toward "collaborative work teams" turns out to be Jesse Jean Reeder. She is the past Superintendent of EWEB who was recently fired by the Board of Commissioners. Coincidentally, she is a personal friend of Sue Hickey from her days as a Rajneesh.

14. Following the sterling example set by Randy during the executive "merit" selection process, a "collaborative" process is established for the selection of all the GS-15, 14, and 13 positions. People will submit their applications based upon what are essentially generic vacancy announcements. The executives and managers will evaluate the candidates for positions and "collaborate" on the job filling in such a way that all positions will be filled, no one is demoted and every one will have a job with "meaningful work" at their grade level. Needless to say, some people feel this may violate several merit principles, since both the most and least desirable candidates must be apportioned to organizations based upon "collaboration" between supervisors, rather than selected based on merit. Oh well, in Randy's World "merit" looks different.

15. During the selection of GS-14s, selecting officials, like myself are given extremely short timeframes to complete their selections before getting together with other selecting officials and the executives to "collaborate" on the final selections. My own case is not extreme, but somewhat typical. I am given 3 working days to make 7 selections from 32 candidates for GS-14 positions. I am in a new job and don't know most of the applicants. For 2 days I conduct job interviews for 30 minutes each. There is essentially no time to narrow the field or speak to other supervisors, as they are in the same situation. This is the process I am forced to use due to the time constraints imposed by Randy's schedule for completion of the "Transformation". This is how BPA, under Randy and Sue, chose to select people for some of the most important jobs in the agency. The same "rush to judgement" is forced to occur for selections at all levels.

16. After the slecting officials have made their determinations, we all "collaborate" with the executives to iron out any conflicts. Obviously, some of the best people have been selected by several supervisors, while others, some of whom are already GS-14s haven't been selected at all. This is handled by what amounts to "horse trading" of candidates by selecting officials and pressure to select certain individuals by the executives. It appears to be a gross distortion of the intent of the Merit Promotion System we are all required by law, including Randy and Sue, to use for determining who is to be promoted, but this is Randy's

World.

17. At one point during "collaboration", Sue Hickey comes into the room where selections are being made for Corporate Services. She notices that everyone has been placed with the exception of one friend of her's. She points at the woman's name and says, "Remember! I have a personal interest in that one". Sue Hickey implementing the Merit System process as she has learned it from Randy.

18. At the end of the "collaboration", Sue Hickey calls us all together and announces how disappointed she is in us because we have not selected more women and minorities. She says this in spite of the fact that women and minorities have accounted for more than 40% of the promotions, while representing approximately 15% of the eligible candidates. This is "diversity" management in Randy's World, and clearly follows the example he has set during the executive selections.

19. As a result of the wholesale promotions during this process, BPA now has 50% more GS-15s, 33% more GS-14s and 25% more GS-13s. Randy announces to congress, DOE and the world that BPA has significantly reduced the supervisory ranks. This is true on paper, but what he doesn't say is that BPA now has many more people at what used to be supervisory grades, but without the attendant responsibilities. This is personnel management in Randy's World. To some of us, it just looked like a gross distortion of the Merit System to achieve someone's diversity goals. Not to mention it was probably illegal.

20. Immediately following the "transformation", the executives determine that literally every supervisor at BPA should receive "Collaborative Work Team" training so that they can become as effective at working together as the executives are. Since supervisors and managers are encouraged to take the course with those they supervise, many senior people find themselves in the course two, three or more times. BPA pays for each person, each time, of course, but money is no problem when you are learning to "collaborate" in Randy's World.

21. Then another big surprise occurs. Out of all the consultants out there, Jesse Jean Reeder, Sue's old friend from her past, miraculously is the one selected to receive this rather large training contract. I do not know, but have been told by a person in Finance, that BPA has spent \$3.6M with Jesse and her associates. Oh well, what are friends for anyway?

22. Now that we are ready to transform, it seems that a tremendous amount of moving of offices is required. Over the next couple of years, we move the equivalent of everyone in the main building more than once. This poor planning and short term thinking by the Executive Committee results in BPA incurring millions of dollars in moving costs. However it does make for permanent employment at Rose City Moving, the company BPA has contracted with to do the actual work of moving people. This is probably thought of as another of BPA's "public benefits" by the executives living in Randy's World.

23. Immediately after the "Transformation", Sue and the executive committee determine that in order to be a properly egalitarian organization, senior management and executives will no longer be given parking places in the main building. Because we are all equal, these parking spots will be apportioned by a lottery system. Randy makes a point of mentioning that we are all on one team, and he will be taking part in the lottery like everyone else. He feels the worst example he could present, would be for him, as the leader, to accept special treatment. Randy's participation in this process lasts 6 months, and then he is "forced" to accept a parking spot again. Here he is modeling "leadership" in Randy's World.

24. The year after the "Transformation", things are not looking so good. Customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and almost all measures of BPA's success are down. Because of this, and the tight financial situation, the executives announce there will be no bonuses at BPA, and to show their solidarity with the organization, they have asked DOE to give them only the same "success share (\$400)", that the rest of the agency will receive. This sounds really good, but they forget to mention that the previous year, the great work they did to plan and accomplish the "transformation" caused them to provide themselves with \$6,000 each as a bonus for their accomplishments. Keep in mind that it is their "transformation" that has resulted in the much lowered survey ratings that has caused every one else to not get an award. Things do look different in Randy's World.

25. Somewhere during this period after the "transformation" is started, but before it is completed, Randy, Sue and the executives decide that what is really needed now is for BPA to "reengineer". In another big surprise, a group that has ties to Quinn Gardener is selected to help us. In Randy's World, you stay with a winner.

26. This group of consultants comes in, looks at BPA, and tells us that we could certainly benefit from reengineering, and they will be happy to help for a few hundred thousand dollars (what a surprise). What follows is more studying and training on how to do reengineering. The basic ideas are not bad at all. The consultants stress one cardinal rule. Basically they say reengineering to be successful must be done by function and in manageable sized bites. Attempting to reengineer more than than two functions simultaneously is a recipe for failure. Ignoring the advice and training for which BPA has paid several hundred thousand dollars, Randy, Sue and the executives decide to reengineer nearly all the functions in Transmission and Sales. Randy knows best.

27. During the period of "reengineering", one of BPA's top sales managers has taken her staff to Sun River for a little skiing and recreation during the week. Unfortunately they have neglected to fill out leave slips and have claimed BPA per diem. When this is discovered, the sales manager writes an explanation wherein she says she does not apologize for what she and her staff have done, but rather she states that they have worked so hard they deserve a break (unlike the rest of the agency, I guess). Eventually this incident makes the local TV and the national news. BPA is literally disgraced

on national TV. In a less enlightened and diverse organization, some people would see such behavior as falsifying government records, fraud and demonstrating a complete lack of judgement or trustworthiness in a person holding a position of high trust. Not so in Randy's World. The woman is "disciplined" by being given less time off than she spent at Sun River, and in less than a year she is the recipient of more than \$11,000 in bonuses for her extraordinary accomplishments. Forgiveness is important in Randy's World.

28. As part of the "Transformation", Randy has selected George Bell to head the Transmission Group. It is a job Bell says he did not ask for, and one that he is not qualified for through experience by any other measure. During the second summer of George Bell's tenure as Transmission Group Vice President, BPA has the two largest transmission outages in the history of the entire western United States. The weather has been hot and the second, and worst, outage is initiated by a line sagging into an untrimmed danger tree on a right-of-way near Portland. Somehow, Randy and Sue forgot that George Bell was the the Portland Area Manager two years before, and that he had used money budgeted for transmission line maintenance to hire more employees. As a result his area had at one point 18,000 uncut/untrimmed danger trees. This was pointed out by the then Assisant Administrator for Operations, Maintenance and Constuction. It resulted in George being talked to about the issue during his performance appraisal, but didn't keep Randy from making him Transmission's leader. Obviously executive management selection criteria are different in Randy's World.

29. Randy declares that the outages were due to "engineering errors", and when George Bell retires, BPA celebrates "George Bell Day". I suppose that presiding over the largest outage in BPA's history due to mismanagement of your resources in your previous position qualifies one for honors in Randy's World. The same sort of logic sure seems to have worked for Sue Hickey.

30. By way of contrast, when the "Transformation" was underway, five of the Assistant Administrators were due to retire soon. In order to move them out quickly, Randy offered them the "opportunity" to "telecommute" from home for their remaining months. Basically they were asked to go home and write a report while still receiving their SES salary. A nice way to treat people who have given their entire careers to BPA and not presided over such debacles as Tenaska and the largest outage in BPA's history. What Randy did with those five former executives was insulting, demeaning, morally incorrect and probably illegal. If it doesn't actually violate the Federal Personnel Regulations, sending people home to do phony work at SES salaries certainly violates the intent of the regulations. But, what the heck, Randy knows best. Those pesky rules are for others to follow.

30. Another of Randy's achievements should not be overlooked. Using Randy as an example of "creative rule following", Steve Hickok cooked up a cute little scheme to reward the "best and brightest" who work for him. Ruth Bennet, the architect of the Sun River ski trip must be a prime example of Steve's "best and brightest" based on the awards

he has showered on her. He purposely overbudgeted his staffing needs, then didn't fill positions as they became empty. He then used the money he had originally budgeted for salaries to give very large awards to the "best and brightest". This all occurred during a time that other managers and executives were being told to save money in any way possible. Once again we have special treatment for "special" people in Randy's World, and nobody held accountable for what was at worst a sneaky deception, and at best blatant favoritism. Randy understands the need to "bend the rules" now and then.

31. While the jury's not in yet (no pun intended), one of the finest firsts for BPA under Randy has to be the age discrimination lawsuit. For what appears to be the first time in history, a Federal Magistrate has certified a class action lawsuit against the federal government for age discrimination. This means that a disinterested third party has looked at what occurred during BPA's "transformation" and found it so egregious on its face that he was willing to certify a class action. Once again, Randy has taken the agency to new heights of achievement. Thanks to Randy's personal example and his excellent choice of executive personnel, BPA is leading the way again. This time as the most blatant example of age discrimination in the federal government. In Randy's World it's just one first after another.