

Identifying and Preparing the Next Generation of Wastewater Treatment Facility Leaders – the Narragansett Bay Commission's Field's Point WWTF Experience

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(May 2, 1982 – October 28,2016)*

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Subject: Abstract for Annual Conference 2017

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If we're selected I'll need to use your elephant memory to help me put this together. OK?



NBC Established May 2 1982

**By Act of the General Assembly to take over the City
of Providence's Field's Point WWTF**



Obstacles to Success (1980's)

- Culture of failure
- Poor self image
- Collective Bargaining Agreement was too general and fell under State's master agreement
- Older worker's distrust about moving into management positions
- Was the NBC in it for the long haul?

AMSA/NACWA Influence

Leading the Workforce of Today

February 2003

- Defined Millennials (1977 to 1995), Gen X (1965 to 1976), Baby Boomers (1946 to 1964) and Traditionalists (Born 1945 and before)
- Identified value systems for each group
- Showed demographics
- Emphasized retaining good employees

Turning the Corner? (1992-2003)

- Merger with former BVDC
- Joint Collective Bargaining/CBA tailored to NBC
- Finally separated from the state
- Continuous plant improvements offered chances to participate in design
- 1995 USEPA National Award for Outstanding O&M
- Attempted to train employees in higher positions

Net result = grievances

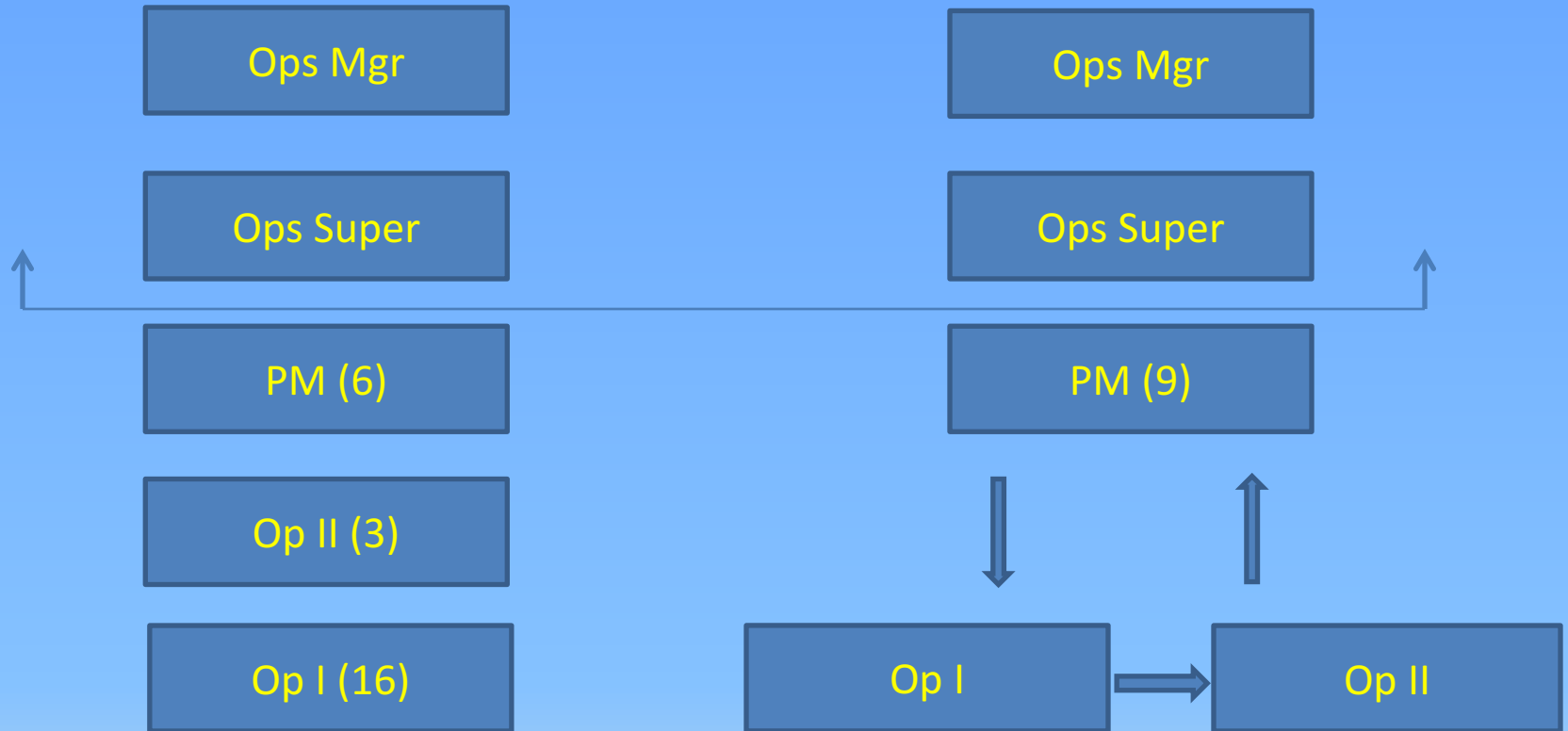
Still stuck in the past



Collective Bargaining Agreement Changes

- Operator I gets a \$500 bonus if they pass grade II
- Promotion to Op II
- Flexibility in jobs specs
- Traded upgrades for flexibility

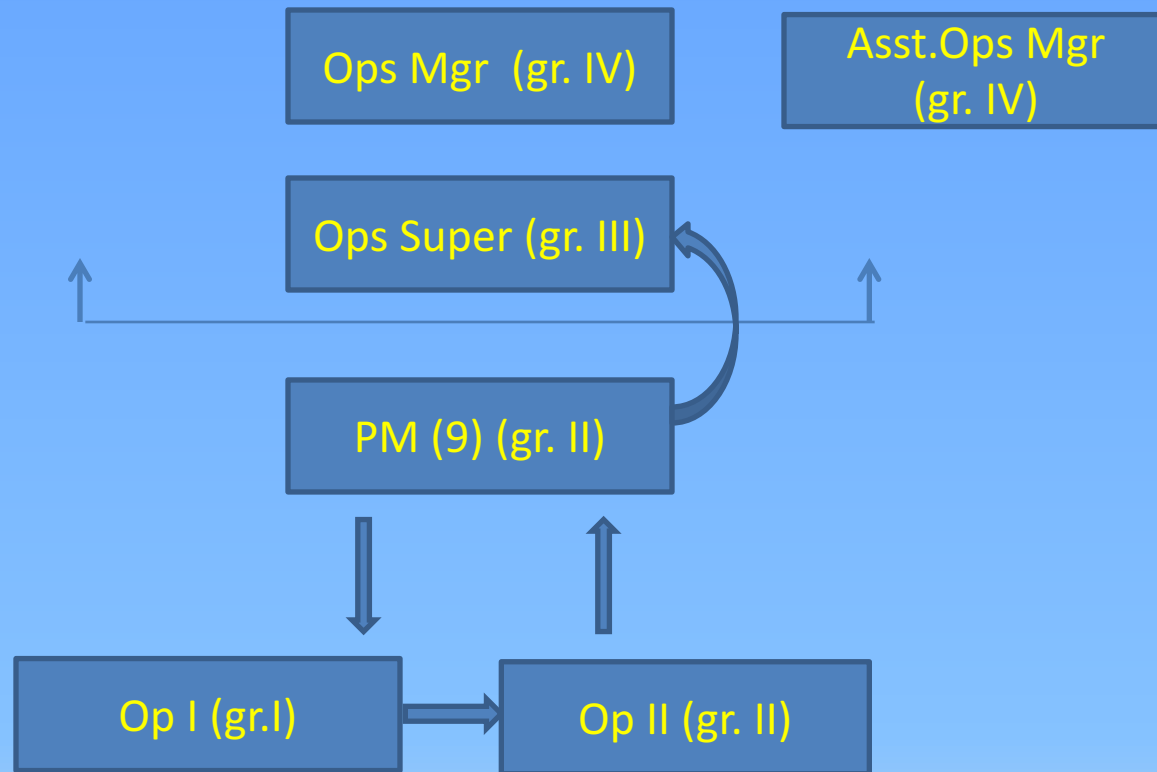
Organization Changes



Better use of three day rule

- Allows us to temporarily move someone into a higher position
- Does not restrict us by seniority
- We elected to move Process Monitors (union) to Operations Supervisor (non-union)
- Gives each side an opportunity to try things out

How we used the three day rule



Changes to Operator Certification Program

- Principles and Practice course
- Frequent Superintendents Meetings
- More frequent testing
- OIT certificates
- “When and if” grade III
- Re-assessment of responsible charge

**RI Operator Boot Camp: A
Management Succession-Planning
Program
(Sept. 2008)**

Program Goals

- A focus on self-starting candidates with recognized potential for management
- Building candidates' knowledge base, confidence and contacts
- Providing a wide range of training such as basic engineering, microscopic evaluation, process control, budgeting, labor relations, media exposure and regulatory relations
- Using local, home-grown, and often volunteer experts as trainers

How did it work out? (2007-2014)

- Three Operations Supervisor positions (one internal/two from outside)
- Two Maintenance Supervisors (one internal/one from outside)
- More internal candidate interest
- Net effect = we're getting closer

Paving the Way for the Future (Coaching)

- Paying attention to just who the young leaders were
- Communicating that we had key people retiring in the next ten years
- Communicating that people from outside NBC are knocking on the door
- Doing honest annual reviews (appraisals)
- Educate staff on certification regs

NBC Takes over management of BP

July 2015

- Operations Manager (two internal)
- Assistant Operations Manager (one internal/one from management firm)
- Five Operations supervisors (three internal/two from management firm)
- Two Process Monitors (internal)
- Two Maintenance Managers (two internal)
- Two Maintenance Supervisors (one internal/one outside)

How did we do?

Fourteen(14) positions – ten (10) internal

Keys to Success

- Cooperative relationship with Unions
- Improved Operator Certification Regs
- Operator Boot Camp
- Getting supervisors to coach
- Create opportunities to succeed
- Employee Reviews – where can they improve?