

HUBBARD COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
Saint Hill Manor, East Grinstead, Sussex

HCO POLICY LETTER OF 19 DECEMBER 1982

All Orgs  
All Execs  
All Staff  
All Div Heads  
LRH Comms  
HCO  
Dept 1 Hats  
Dept 3 Hats

Personnel Series 42

Org Series 62

"DOING A QUICKSILVER" FORBIDDEN

References:

HCO PL 19 Mar 71	Personnel Series 20 PERSONNEL PREDICTION
HCO PL 24 Jun 70R II Rev. 30.4.75	PERSONNEL POOLS
HCO PL 7 Jan 66	URGENT - LEAVING POST WRITING YOUR HAT
HCO PL 20 Apr 69 II	HATS, NOT WEARING
HCO PL 20 Oct 80	Personnel Series 36 MUSICAL CHAIRS
HCO PL 11 Aug 71 II	Personnel Series 22 DON'T UNMOCK A WORKING INSTALLATION
HCO PL 7 Mar 65 III	OFFENSES AND PENALTIES
HCO PL 13 Jul 74	Org Series 34 WORKING INSTALLATIONS

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There is a condition that can exist in orgs which differs slightly from "musical chairs" (the rapid transfer of personnel from post to post) but is akin to that and every bit as deadly.

We could call it a "quicksilver personnel" scene. ("Quicksilver" is another name for mercury, the silvery-white metallic element, liquid at room temperature, which is used in thermometers, barometers and similar instruments.)

Used figuratively, the term "quicksilver" means something that is quick-moving, unpredictable and as elusive as mercury, or "mercurial". Something that is mercurial is changeable, variable, volatile.

To anyone who has ever observed a drop of quicksilver or mercury in an open container or placed on a slab of glass, this will be real. One second it's here, the next second it's there. Just about all you have to do is breathe on it and it changes its position. And where it was a second ago there's now nothing.

It is miserable (if not impossible) for an executive or management body trying to run things with staff doing a quicksilver. One can hit up against some nasty surprises.

For example, an org's personnel scene may look great on the board, with posts filled, hats existing and known, production occurring and on the rise --- all is looking good when suddenly the stats crash.

An initial check may show there haven't honestly been any post transfers, per se. But dig a bit further and you're likely to find a quicksilver personnel scene. The top delivery auditor is off on a two week vacation. The Qual Sec has been fired on a recruitment tour. The Reg has gone out ethics and been suspended, unreplaced, pending some ethics handling. The Chief Officer is off on maternity leave and the CO, holding her post from above, is being the guest speaker at an event in the next city.

It happens and it happens not only in Class IV orgs but in the higher service orgs and management units where tours are essential and missions need to be fired and other situations can crop up requiring personnel.

It has shown up drastically at times in several large orgs. In one, the head of a vital Network went off on Mission and, with no one left being the senior, the stats in the area crashed. In another, the sales manager took his leave, his routine functions were ignored and sales suffered severely. And in still another org, no less than six key delivery terminals were all found to be out on regging tours in one week, some of them over a period of several weeks, at a time when delivery of paid-in-full services was backlogged!

None of these terminals had been removed or transferred or promoted. And one could say the actions being done are all covered in some way in policy, are needed, and therefore justified. But these terminals were all off post unreplaced, weren't they?

That's a quicksilver personnel scene. It's unstable.

#### Contributing Factors

Executives who issue orders that unmock working installations where production is occurring at "A" to get something done at "X" bring about such scenes.

Personnel who, like quicksilver, accommodately move off their assigned posts unreplaced to do something else at the first invitation or order, help to generate and sustain such scenes.

Seniors who permit or condone this are also a party to them.

Personnel can do a quicksilver for any of a number of reasons. For some, the chance to go off and see other people and new places may be an alluring prospect. Some are too timid to refuse a destructive order and so they comply, under protest. For others there is financial gain involved --- there are often commissions or a bonus at stake.

Tours have been used by some, apparently condoned by executives, to take longer leaves (more time off on leave per year) by combining 4 to 6 or even 8 weeks of a "regging tour" with a "leave", with the org paying both the person's fare and living expenses and no clear distinction made between the period of "tour" and the period of the "leave". (While this is part of an unstable personnel scene it is also a situation requiring a separate ethics handling in itself.)

Sometimes a staff member is made to feel, by a very convincing exec, that the action which calls for his suddenly going off post with no or inadequate replacement is actually more important than his job. Where this threatens production and there is no adequate replacement this is almost always a falsehood.

It is true that missions need to be fired. Tours are vital to income and delivery. Staff sometimes do need to go off post temporarily for handling of one type or another. Events are valuable in terms of promotion, goodwill, PR and sign-ups, and for certain types of these key personnel or trained tech delivery personnel may be required. Emergencies do arise. Personnel are entitled to annual leave. And speed of operations is important.

On the plus side, we do have capable and versatile staff who are willing to extend themselves, when needed, to make things go right. We have demanding, fire-breathing executives who are out to handle situations and open up new fields for delivery which, in itself, is a good thing. And many of these go about it standardly.

But the senior or exec at any level who endangers on-going delivery and production and/or unstabilizes a producing personnel scene to get these things done is simply advertising to one and all that he can't predict and plan and organize or get others to do so. Control is lacking here as well as just plain common sense. The kindest thing one could say about such an exec is that he is short-sighted. And "quicksilver" is a rather mild term for the staff member who steps so easily off his post and leaves a hole in the line-up with no thought of the consequences.

One could say that everyone has personnel problems. BUT that is no WHY.

#### Handling "Quicksilver Personnel" Scenes

The first policies missing in application are those covering replacements and hat turnovers.

BECAUSE IT IS A "TEMPORARY" ABSENCE, NO ONE IS DEMANDING REPLACEMENT AND TURNING THE HAT OVER TO SOMEONE WHO CAN COVER THE POST COMPETENTLY.

But policies exist in abundance on this subject. HCO PL 29 Aug 70 I, Personnel Series 1, PERSONNEL TRANSFERS CAN DESTROY AN ORG, points up the outnesses which can destroy an org faster than any others. HCO PL 7 Jan 66, LEAVING POST, WRITING YOUR HAT, covers the staff member's responsibility for a post he is vacating under any circumstances. HCO PL 20 April 69 II, HATS, NOT WEARING emphasizes the staff member's responsibility for knowing that he is the Qual Sec, or Reg, or the post title for the post and functions he has accepted. HCO PL 11 Aug 71 II, Personnel Series 22, DON'T UNMOCK A WORKING INSTALLATION, cites the main reason we have ever had slumps in orgs.

The personnel policies are there. But very often, where a "quicksilver personnel" scene is permitted, BECAUSE SOMEONE PULLS OFF A SUCCESS IN ONE AREA, EVEN THOUGH STATS IN HIS OWN AREA MAY CRASH, THE EXISTING ETHICS POLICIES THAT COVER SUCH A CRASH OR THE COLLAPSE OF AN AREA MAY BE OVERLOOKED OR DELIBERATELY IGNORED.

So how do we handle "quicksilver personnel" scenes?

The answer is to add some teeth to the existing policies:

1. AN ABSENCE FROM POST FOR EVEN A TEMPORARY PERIOD OF AS LITTLE AS HALF A WEEK IS AN ETHICS OFFENSE, UNLESS SOMEONE IS NAMED AND THERE AS A REPLACEMENT WHO HAS HAD THE POST PROPERLY TURNED OVER TO HIM AND WHO CAN COVER THE POST COMPETENTLY.
2. IF SUCH ABSENCE WITHOUT COMPETENT REPLACEMENT OCCURS AT ALL, AN IMMEDIATE COURT OF ETHICS MUST BE CALLED ON THE STAFF MEMBER WHO LEAVES HIS POST UNFILLED OR INADEQUATELY COVERED, AS WELL AS ON THE SENIOR OR EXECUTIVE ORDERING, CONDONING OR PERMITTING IT.
3. IF IT OCCURS AND RESULTS IN STATS CRASHING IN A COURSE, A DIVISION, DEPARTMENT, SECTION, UNIT, AREA, ZONE OR ORG, A COMMITTEE OF EVIDENCE MUST BE CALLED WITH ALL INVOLVED NAMED AS INTERESTED PARTIES.

The charges are:

CONDONING OR CONTRIBUTING TO CIRCUMSTANCES OR OFFENSES CAPABLE OF BRINGING A COURSE, SECTION, UNIT, DEPARTMENT, ORG, ZONE OR DIVISION TO A STATE OF COLLAPSE.

and:

NEGLECT OF RESPONSIBILITIES RESULTING IN A CATASTROPHE EVEN WHEN ANOTHER MANAGES TO AVERT THE FINAL CONSEQUENCES.

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With this policy made known and enforced, there is a cure for those who do a "quicksilver" and for executives and seniors whose out-planning and out-prediction bring about quick-silver personnel scenes.

L. RON HUBBARD  
FOUNDER

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