

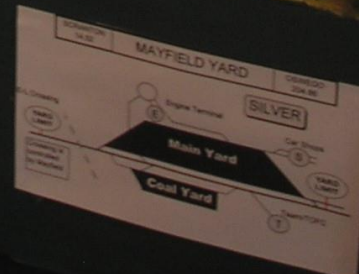
The “WHY” for Your Railroad

Layout Design
Special Interest Group



Photos by author

Steve Prevette
Burnt Hills & Big Flats RR



Why ask Why?

- This presentation is to explore the reasoning process behind the design and implementation of your railroad, to include not just the track plan, but operations.
- Simon Sinek developed the “why” for business leadership. Consider that a railroad is a business, and you have persons descending upon you railroad to run that “business.”



Simon Sinek
How great leaders inspire action
Posted May 2010

Background

(Your Railroad Name)

Scale:

Gauge: (Standard, Narrow)

Prototype: (the railroad you want to model)

Space:

Governing Rolling Stock: (Biggest planned)

Relative Emphasis: (move the V)

|_____V_____|
Track/Operation Scenic realism

|_____V_____|
Mainline Running Switching

Operation Priorities: (rearrange as required)

1. Passenger Train Switching
2. Helper District Operations
3. Mainline Passenger Train Operation
4. Long Freight Train Operations
5. Engine Terminal Movements
6. Local Freight Operations

Typical operating Crew: _____

Eye Level (Owner) ___In.

- John Armstrong's Givens and Druthers
- Though – how do you know how to answer these questions?
- What comes before this to be able to know what emphasis you want?

Some of the “Why” develops over time and experience. Early N scale BH&BF searching for a “WHY”



1982 – 1988
3 ft x 6 ft N Scale:
Photo taken in
Monterey CA, PCR
Did remain part of the
railroad until 2017.



Evolution or Revolution

- Some folks put a lot of thought and research into their railroad prior to any construction – such as Don Barnes' B&O
- For me, it was more of a 50 year evolution
 - Experience with others from Ken Nelson to many OpSIG guest operating sessions
 - There is never a “bad experience” – you just learn that this is something I don't want to do
 - Most recent evolution was DERECHO

Compromises!

- All model railroading is a compromise
 - We can cut out boring, strenuous tasks
 - We don't have to make money
 - We can simplify procedures and paperwork
 - There is never enough room!
 - We can (must?) selectively compress
 - We (hopefully) have fun!

Your Story

- Along with the “WHY”, what is the story you want to tell?

PROTOTYPE REALITY	MODEL CONSIDERATIONS
When (Era vs specific date)	Space and Scale
Where (Locale vs Location)	Budget / Time Available
Why does the RR exist	What is built to date
Strict Realism <-> Freelance	Contest Quality <-> Good enough
Financial state and size of RR	Crew size (ops and construction)

- To a certain extent, your model railroad is a theme park (Orlando clinic)

Goals for the Why

- What contributes to the “story”?
- Minimizing “back-tracking”
- Purchasing and construction decisions
- Provide focus for operations development
- Communicating the concept to your operating crews
- How does “this” all fit together as a railroad / system / experience?

EXAMPLE WHY's

- Burnt Hills and Big Flats
 - Freelance – Local Switching
- Don Barnes HO Baltimore and Ohio
 - If the B&O did it – he does it
- Robin Riley N Scale
 - A “Learning” layout



BURNT HILLS & BIG FLATS

- 1970s –
 - Family move from Big Flats to Burnt Hills NY
 - Visits to NYC & D&H nearby yards, Alco plant
 - Ken Nelson's Poco Valley
 - Local switching, one person ops
 - Two HO small layouts
- 1980s –
 - Shift to N scale for portability and fresh start
 - Coal (shifting to anthracite)

BURNT HILLS & BIG FLATS

- Refinement to NYO&W then DERECO
 - Choice of June 5, 1970
 - Application of Operations Research
 - System focus vs individual train crew
 - Balanced ops – V&O influence
 - Growth in sequential moves and a “hole in wall”
 - Train crew size growth: 3 to 7 to 12
 - Back to 6 with COVID
 - Recent replacement of original 3 by 6 section

See more at BHBF.weebly.com



Advantages of Prototype Basis

- Does limit purchases to something that fits
- Early days of mergers offer flexibility
 - Conrail, BN, BNSF, SPSF (shouldn't paint so fast)
- Holding companies
 - DERECO: owned by N&W, operated D&H and EL
 - Guilford, Pinsley, Western Carolina Railway Service Corporation, Delaware Otsego System
- Don't have to hand-letter cars
- But can run a Big Boy along SD-70's (or NKP759)

(Note: some of these advantages may be disadvantages for others)

Mayfield PA June 5, 1970



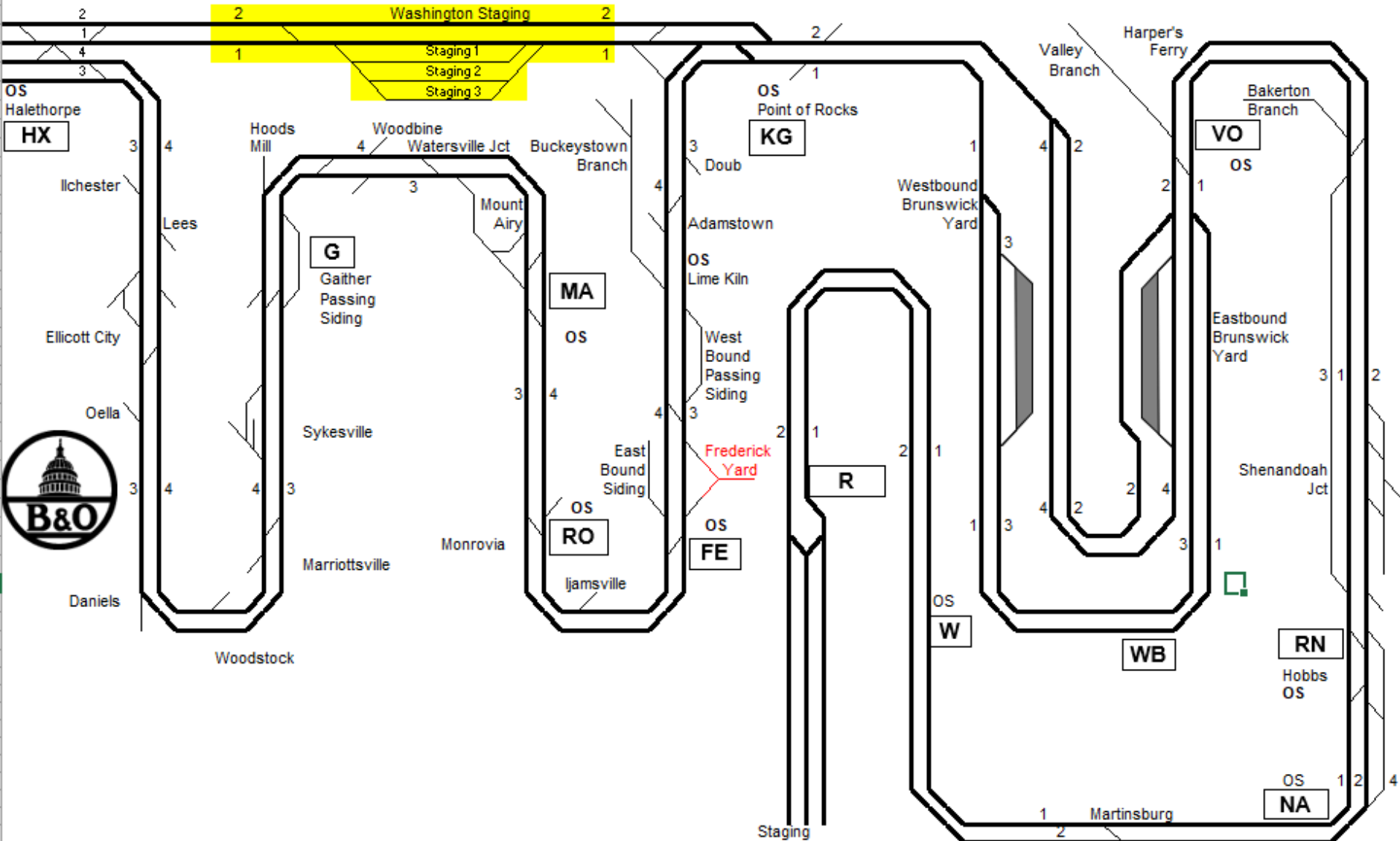
"Plausible" mix of equipment and logos . . . If . . .

BALTIMORE & OHIO

- Don Barnes: Exacting Replica of the B&O in 1949
 - I chose operations so my layout would have a purpose and would involve multiple operators.
 - Chose the B&O in the area in which I grew up because of familiarity with the area and railroad.
 - 3D printing of buildings, site visits and interviews
 - I chose HO scale because a greater variety of equipment was available on the market.
 - I chose to model a large layout to involve many operators and a variety of train operations.
 - Operations plan from 1949
B&O historical documents

Baltimore and Ohio

Baltimore and Ohio Baltimore and Cumberland Divisions - circa 1949



CHICAGO BURLINGTON & QUINCY

- Robin Riley's Hannibal Division
 - As child did HO, later father and son in N
 - Moved to SC, and searched track plans to fit
 - Chose CB&Q as an after-thought
 - Learned from the Ops group, incorporated staging
 - “Learning environment” for new operators
 - “Fear” of screwing up on established layouts
 - Embrace errors, with discussion
 - Lower stress with a simpler operations
 - Involve crew in the planning and setup of the session scenario and evolve with time



Hannibal Division,
CB&Q
Photos by Robin
Riley

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- If we “had it to do over again” we probably would not do the same thing
- We leap before having enough experience
- But do not want “paralysis by analysis”
- May have multiple layouts in your life with major shifts of “WHY”
- If everyone built to exactly the same “WHY”, model railroading would sure be boring . . .