



If a tornado can do it...

By Linda Brown

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Prologue

Welcome! We are Team 10 (The A-Team) for the Idaho Transportation Department 2018 Leadership Summit. We applied for this opportunity to be able to showcase our recent emergence from a siloed work environment, to a very constructive, communicative, cohesive team!

Our journey started about 3 years ago when we reorganized into a cross-divisional team with specific job functions and purpose. We went from approximately 16 staff (including temps) to a lean team of 6, and still get all the pertinent work done and have great customer service!

In order to showcase our accomplishments, our team created a fun book, a children's short story! It was a blast creating and illustrating this book, and was an excellent opportunity for our team to educate our new employees on where this process started, reminisce over what has gone well and discuss possible improvements for future successes. This was an incredible display of constructive collaboration, culminating in our team winning the Leadership Summit 2018 Culture Award!!

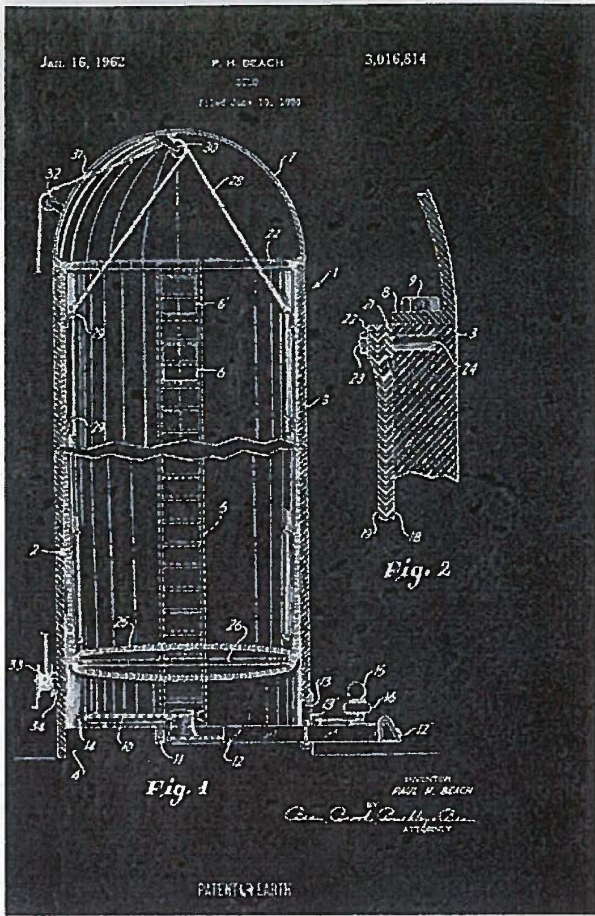
Although we did not get to present at the Leadership Summit, we would like to take this opportunity to share our accomplishments with anyone interested in hearing about it!! 😊

Some details that might help aid your understanding:

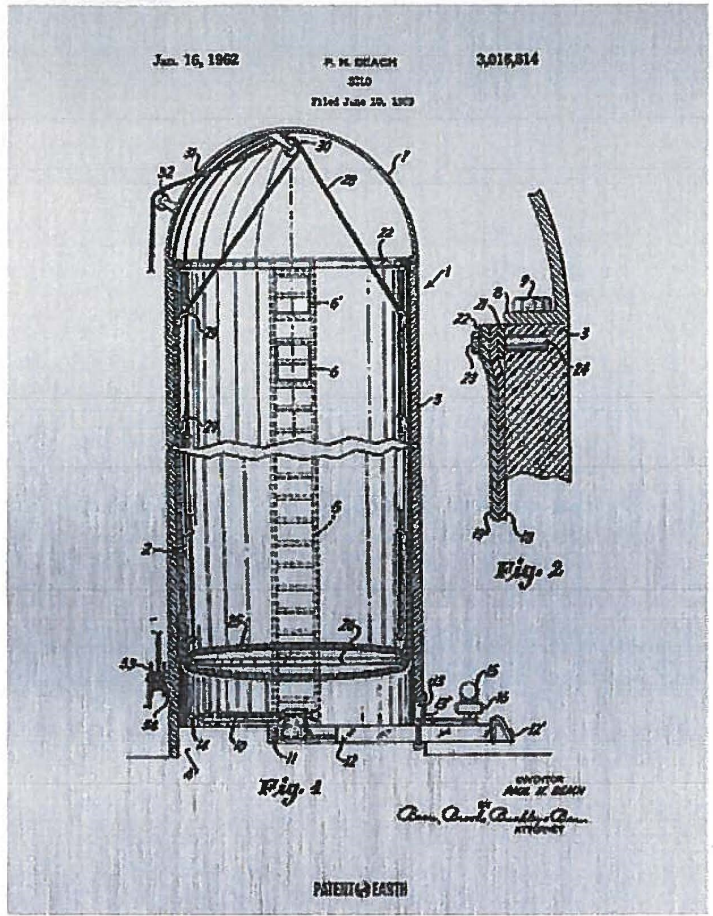
Our team makes up the administrative support function for headquarters highways divisions (both the Division of Engineering Services and the Division of Products and Plans- although we just consider ourselves Highways!).

<p>Financial Technician Duties-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enter Financial Transactions in Advantage (Federal/State)• Assist Managers with Budget Preparation• Work w/BSM to Set up Encumbrances• Review 103's for Completeness & Coding• Pay IN's/Liquidate Encumbrances• Analyze Monthly Financial Reports• Data Enter Unit Allotments• Prepare Allotment Adjustments• Verify Availability of Federal Funds• Work with Division Employees to Understand Budgets and Coding• Issue PO's in Advantage• Reconcile P-Card's• Enter Requisitions into Advantage Including Capital Purchases• Track Actual Spending for Out of State Travel	<p>Administrative Assistant Duties-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track & Coordinate Travel (In/Out of State) Make Arrangements• Update Travel Guide• Order All Office Supplies for Division (Chairs, Computer parts, Office Furniture)• Maintain, Track, Surplus Inventory & Computers for Division• Timekeeper Duties, run reports, enter timesheets for employees on leave and enter adjustments• Run Leave Balance Reports for Managers• Process PASS Requests (Permission Access Support System)• Help with setting up Interviews for Managers• Enter HR Documents (PCN Changes, Recruitment 2329/2330)• Manage Division Administrators Calendar/Emails as needed• Maintain Division Org Chart on SharePoint• Reconcile Admin P-Card• Enter Requisitions into Advantage for warehouse supplies & computers• Update/Maintain Division SharePoint Site• Maintain Division Phone List• Track Phone Moves• Print Conference Room Schedules• Work with managers to set up OOST each fiscal year• Work with confidential information• Allot funds for division budget, administrator, supplies, Xerox, building utilities etc.• Enter in items for replacement in database (computers, chairs, monitors etc.)• Track division budget and OOST budget• Make sure new employees get welcome email, added to lists and org chart etc.
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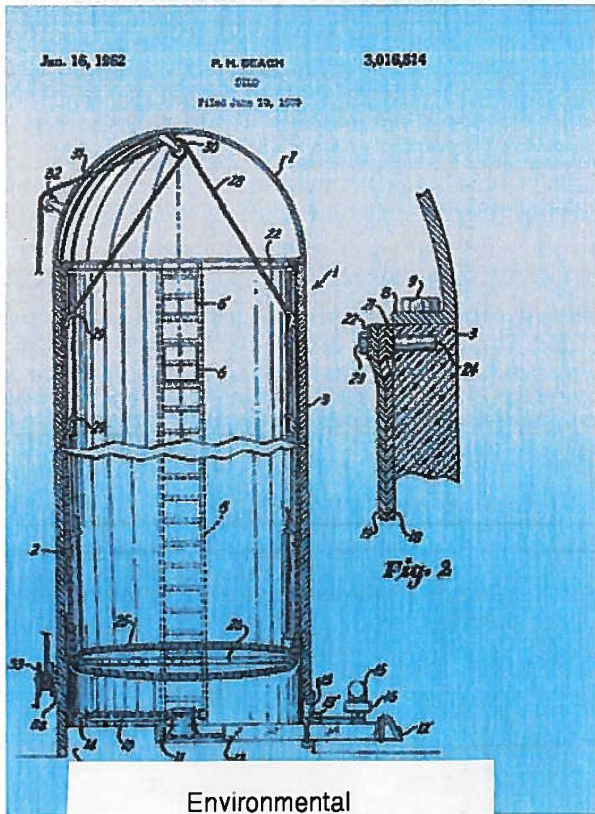
If a tornado can do it...



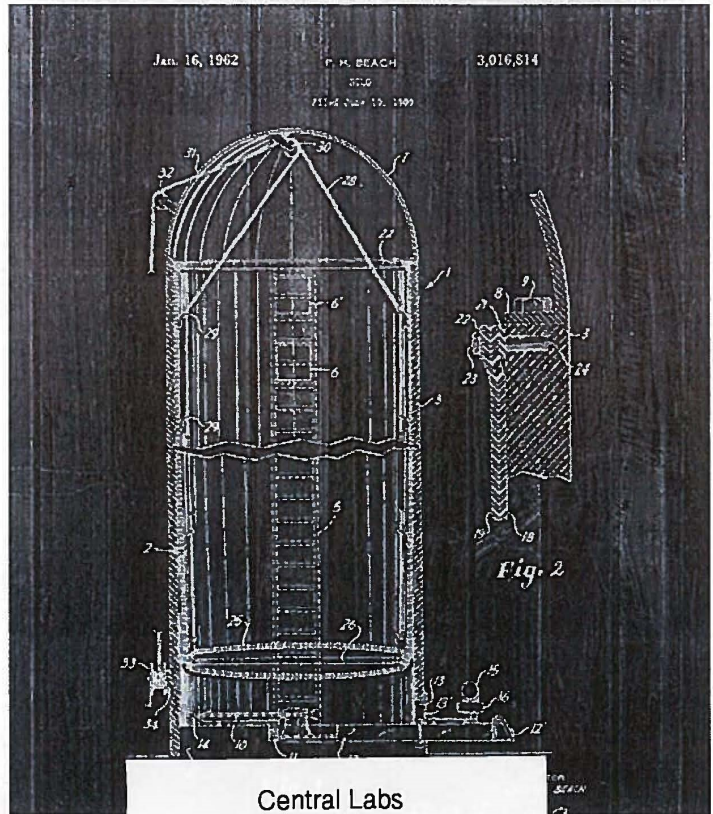
Mobility



Construction & Materials

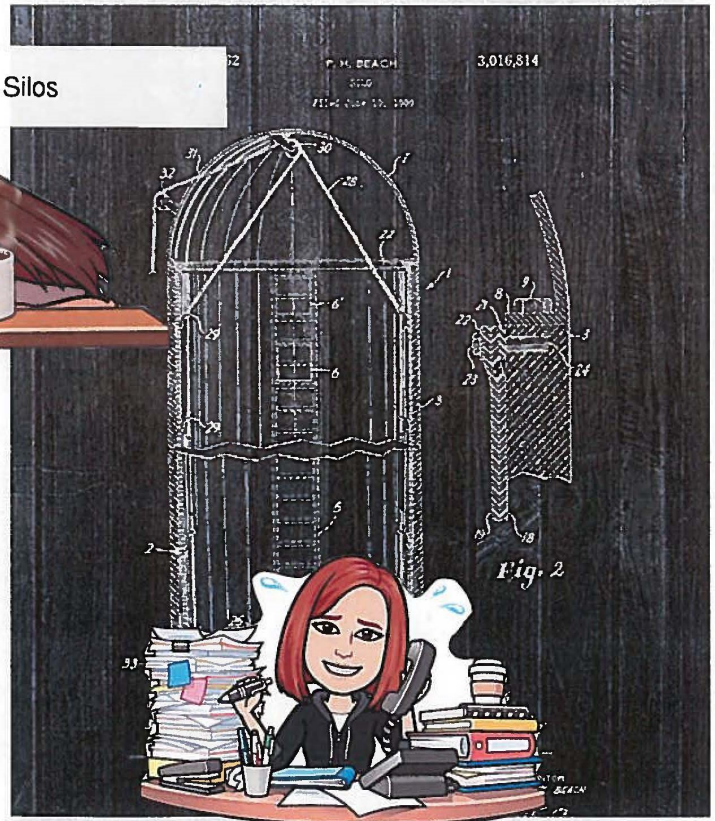
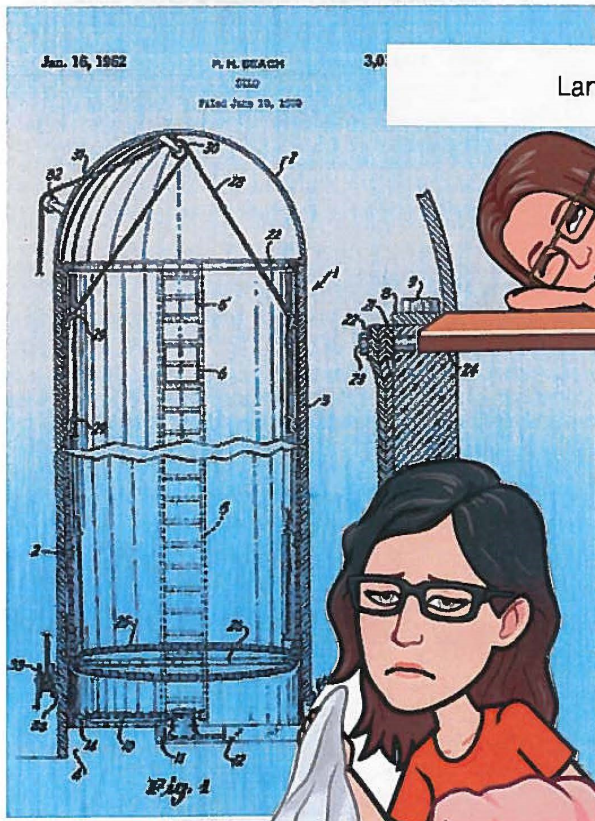


Environmental



Central Labs

In the beginning the land of headquarters highways had 16 admins snuggled securely into their little siloed units.



Some of these admins had way too much work to do and some had way too much free time. The busy little admins had no backup or real relief from their workload, they didn't even have time to be sick.

The admins with free time had no real way to communicate or help their other fellow admins, it just wasn't a thought. The busy little admins stress just grew and grew, what were they to do?

LAND OF SILOS



One day, a mysterious outsider, named *Glinda*, came to visit the land of highways. She gathered the admins many times and as she would listen to their stories, she asked a lot of hard questions that the admins had a tough time answering.

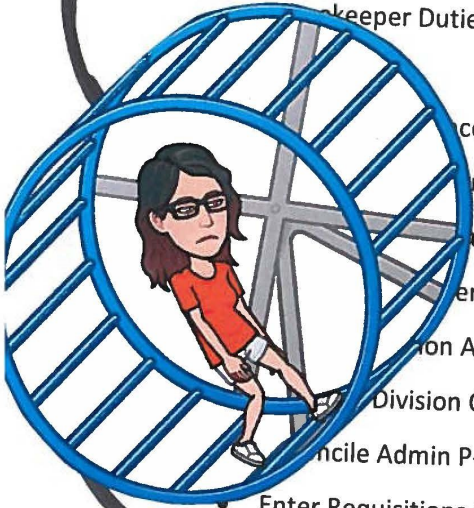


Administrative

Travel (In/Out of State) Make Arrangements

Reservations for Division (Chairs, Computer Parts, Office

- Maintain, Track, Surplus Inventory & Computers for Division
- Janitor/Janitor Duties, run reports, enter timesheets for employees on



Expense Reports for Managers

Access Requests (Permission Access Support System)

Setup Interviews for Managers

System Updates (PCN Changes, Recruitment 2329/2331)

Update Division Administrators Calendar/Emails as needed

Update Division Org Chart on SharePoint

Reconcile Admin P-Card

Enter Requisitions into Advantage for warehouse supplies

Update/Maintain Division SharePoint Site

Maintain Division Phone List

Track Phone Moves for Michelle C.

Print Conference Room Schedules

Work with managers to set up OOST each fiscal year

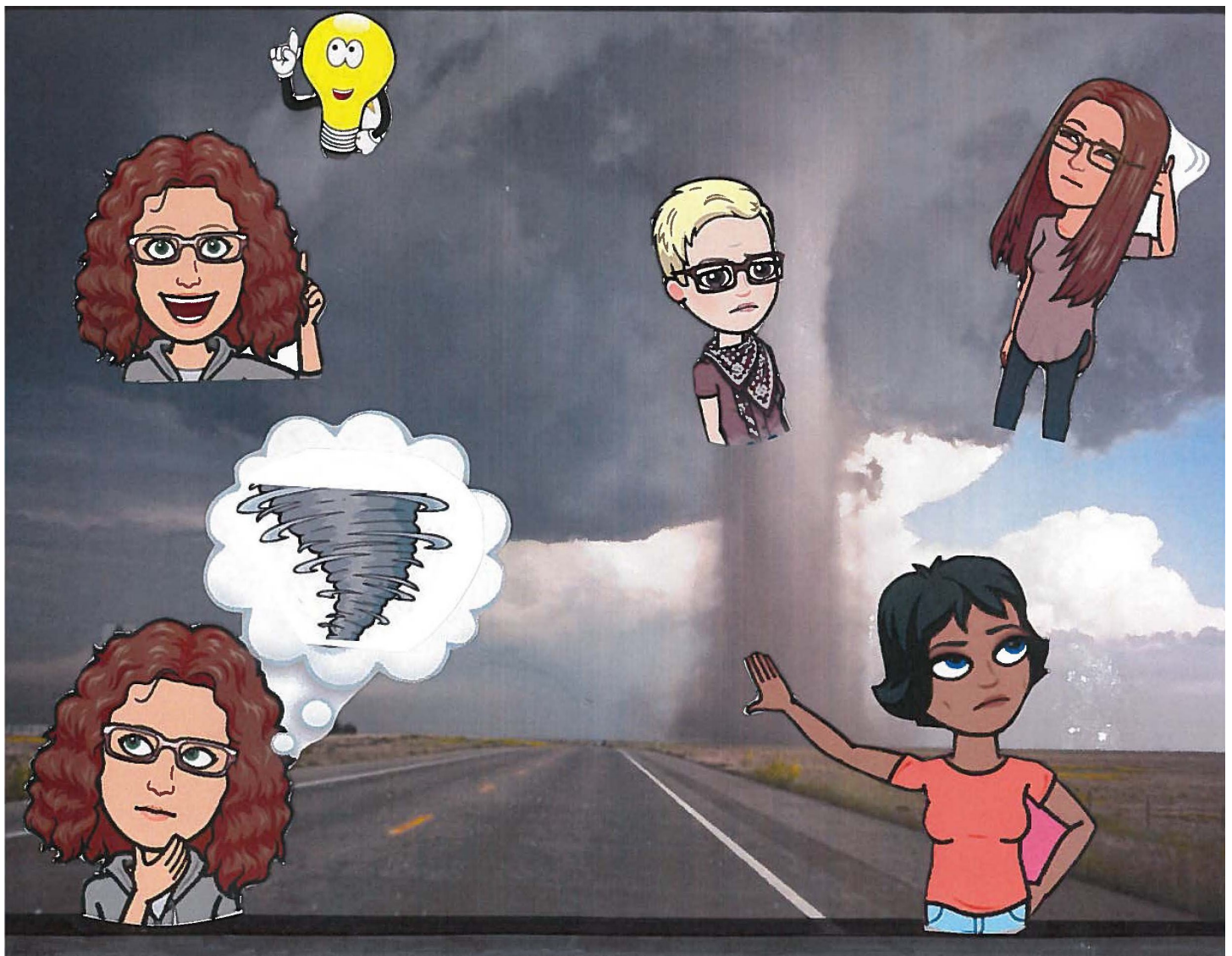
Work with confidential information

Work on division budget, administrative



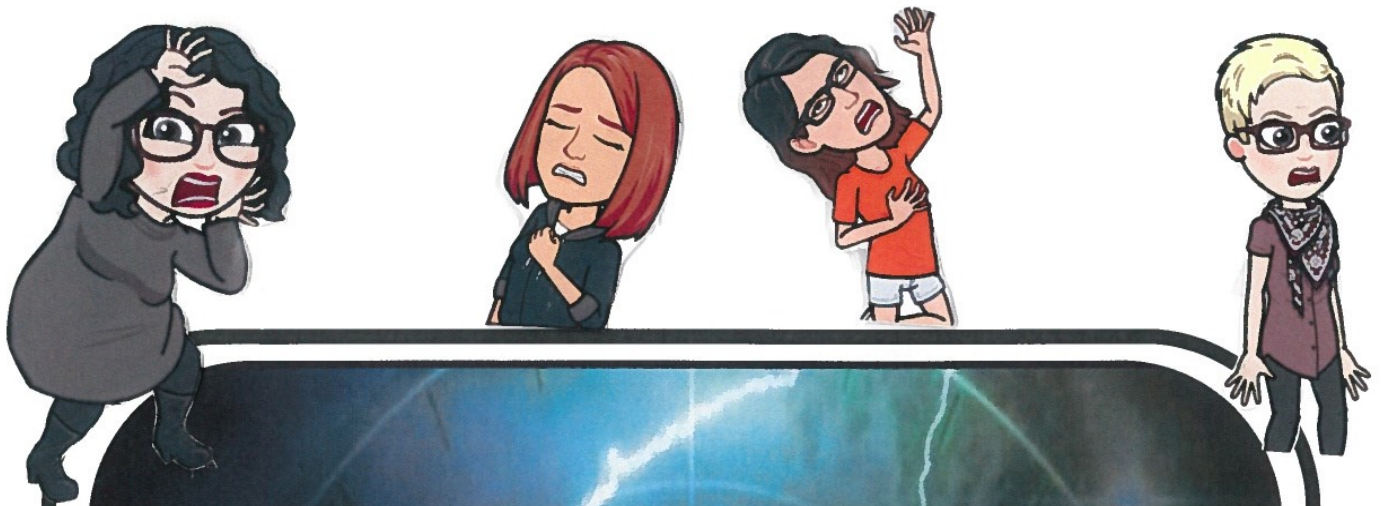
On top of all their other numerous daily tasks, Glinda asked the little admins to look at what they accomplished during their busy days and how much time all those hard tasks took. Glinda noticed similar problems among the little admins that they couldn't see from inside their deep dark silos.

She also noticed tasks that the little admins were doing, that really shouldn't have been part of their jobs. What was Glinda to do? Hey girls, what do you think Glinda should do??



During this dark, confusing time, there were many admins leaving the land of highways, some were retiring and some went off to new lands of opportunity, soon there were only 3 little admins left, oh my!

With staffing levels at an all-time critical low, the little admins process was finally broken. Glinda had some whirlwind ideas and saw this moment as a chance to make a disruptive change. What do you think is going to happen girls? Let's find out!



Glinda gathered what remained of the little admins and shared her growing tornado ideas with them. The little admins were very scared of these tornado ideas at first, and the looks of shock and fear were very clear on their little faces. She tried to reassure them that although change is sometimes uncomfortable, in the long run, it could be a really good thing. Glinda let them talk out their feelings and fears about the new ideas, and had them help her come up with a new process.

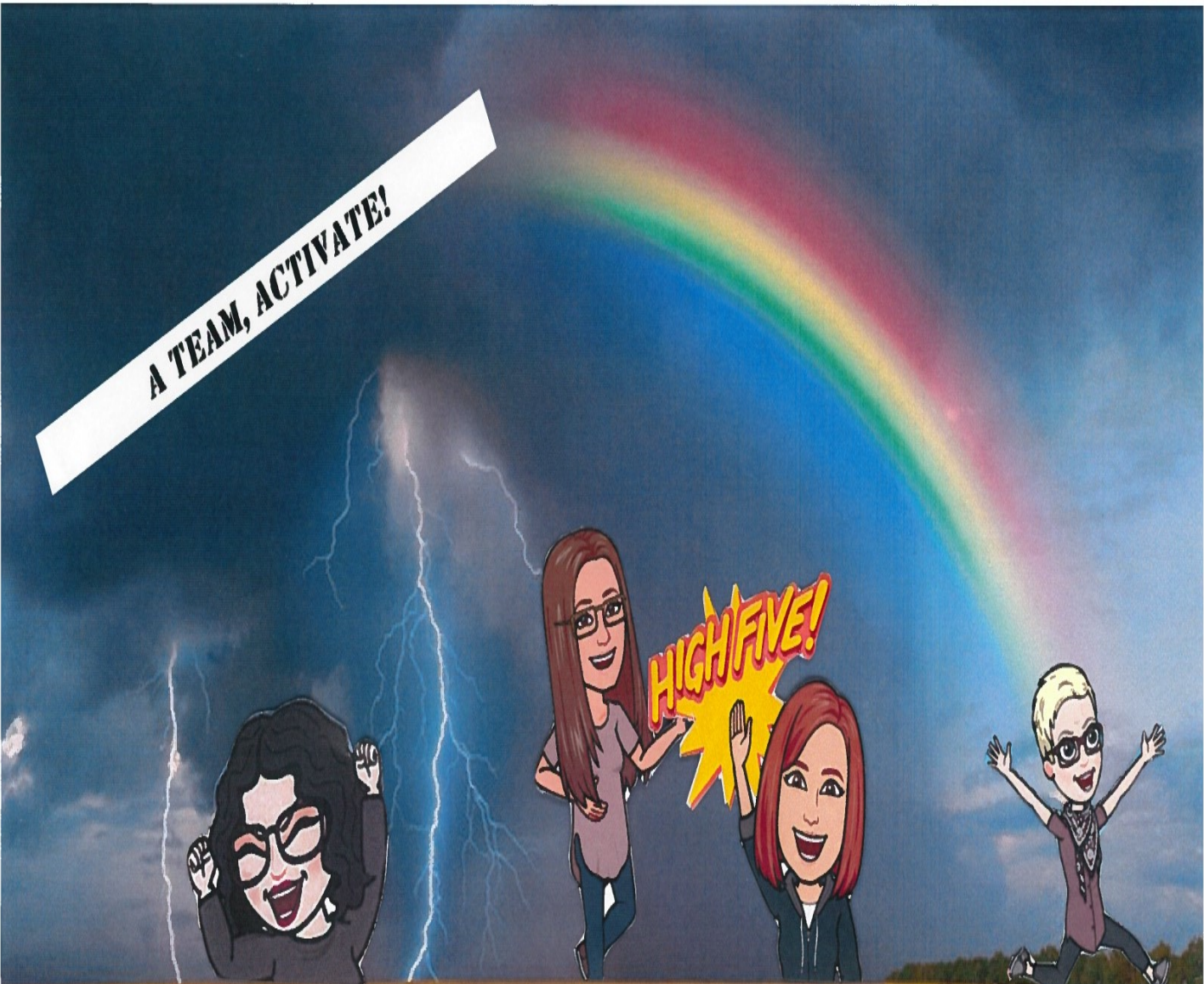


The scared remaining admins, agreed with Glinda that something needed to change. They were very unsure of the new big tornado ideas, but gathered their courage and trusted that Glinda was there to help them with every step along the way.

Some of the big ideas included separating the workload into 2 separate functions, admins and financial techs, and breaking down those deep, dark, scary silos.

She helped them to see if they worked together as a team, and did not stay in their silos, they could use their magical knowledge and skills to help all of the land of highways.

A TEAM, ACTIVATE!



HIGH FIVE!



Cautiously, the little team began to grow and become stronger. They soon realized that even as a small team, working together, they could accomplish big things!

They became the A-Team!



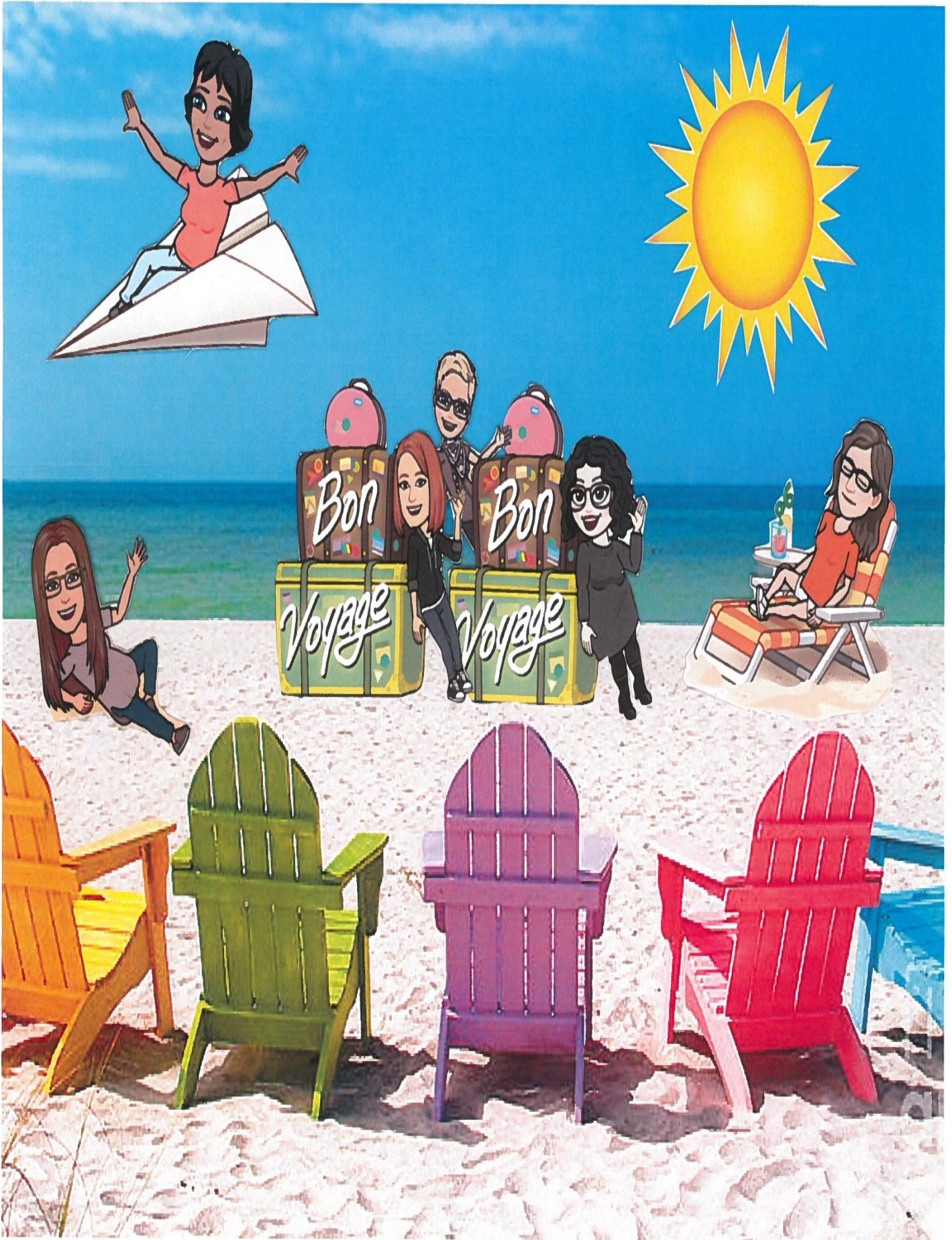
With the whole team now travelling down the same path, they were very excited to tell everyone else in the land of highways about the big new tornado ideas. Not everyone was excited to hear about the new ideas though. Isn't that sad girls?

Many people have had a hard time with the new changes and wanted things back to the way it used to be. The A-Team has asked them to have heart, stay courageous and keep an open mind and they will take care of them as best as they can.

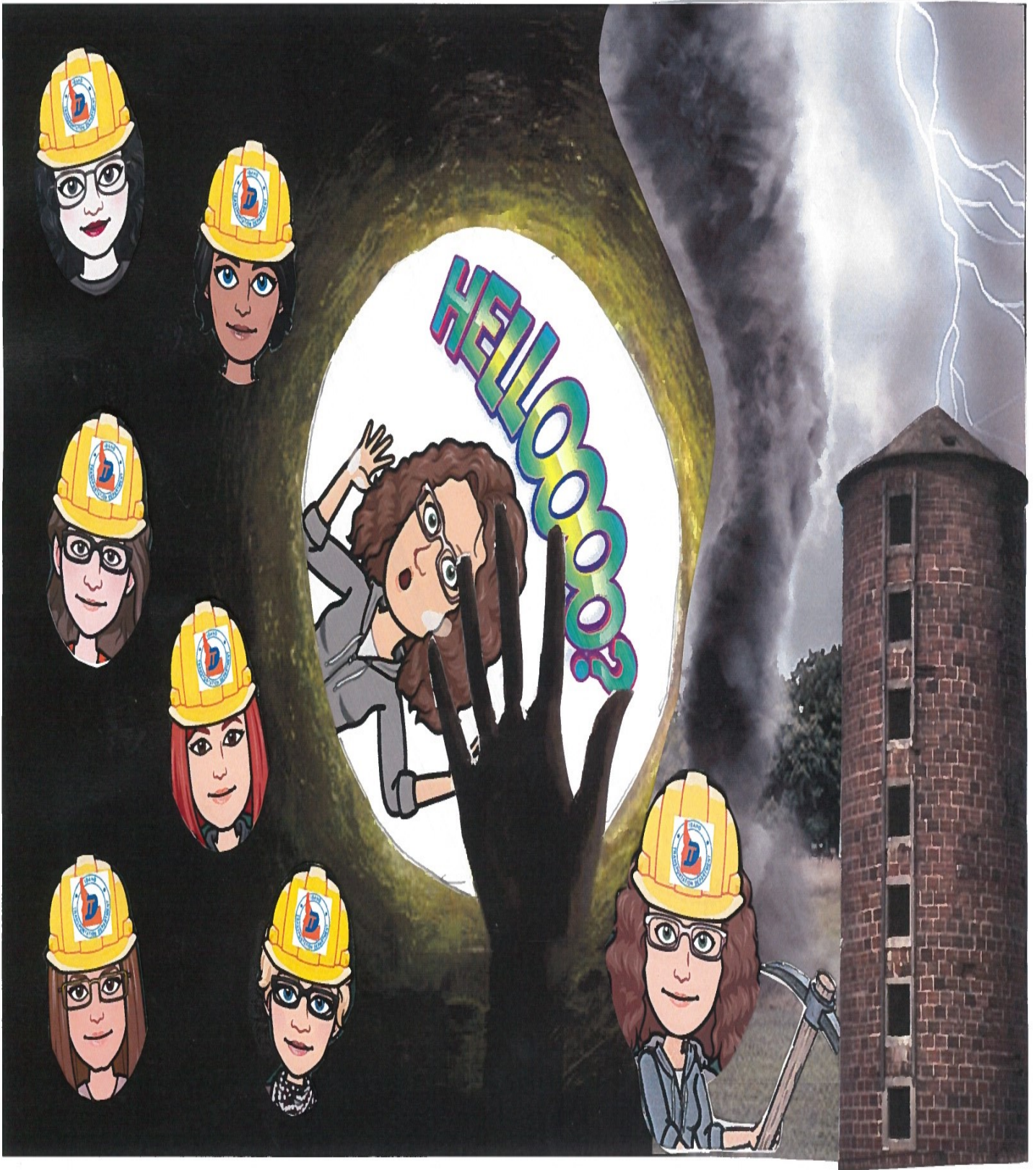


With these new changes, and serving all of the land of highways, determining unit priorities is very challenging. Making sure everyone is happy all the time really is a fairy tale, but they work really hard to do their very best.

Glinda is very proud of her team's growth and the many good things that have come from her tornado ideas, both successes, stumbling bricks and new opportunities to learn and grow.



The A-Team has found that their stress levels are greatly reduced. Multiple team members can go on vacation or be sick and not have to come back to a mountain of work. They are also working on making sure the appropriate work is done by the right people. The whole team helps each other out and the work stays consistent.



Now that Glinda has freed her A-Team from their silos, the team is starting to see the bigger picture. They are seeing other deep, dark silos within the land of ITD and they would love to help others break down their silos too!



If a tornado can do it... so can you. Try breaking down a silo today!

The End

Epilogue

Thank you for sharing in our journey! We enjoyed the opportunity to share this experience with you. Please enjoy some of the cold hard facts listed below.

- **Problem Statement:** We had disjointed administrative support throughout highways headquarters. Staff was very siloed, some had too much work (to the point that stress levels were making individuals extremely sick), some not enough and no one was cross-trained to help each other out.
- **Goal:** Our goal was to create an environment where the work could be done more efficiently and staff could take time off and have time to attend trainings without the workload backing up and smothering them when they returned, while still providing excellent customer service.
- **Methods:** We spent a lot of time discussing our concerns and brainstorming ideas that might work better for our situation. Once staff got to a critically low level (through attrition), we implemented a pilot program. We reclassified positions to attract the right type of talent for the workload we desired. We also 'pooled' our resources, to help leverage the talent and ability of a small amount of staff, to help a large amount of customers in the most effective manner possible. This 'pooling' meant that we pulled staff out from each individual unit they were located in, we 'openly' centralized them to help encourage communication, but also purposefully kept staff in each building to be readily available to help customers, and we cross trained staff in each function to be able to help with any payments or administrative tasks from anywhere in highways (including the districts). We also centralized our communication into one email box per function, so that it doesn't matter in which building staff is located, or if someone is out sick or on vacation, anyone can help any customer out.
- **Countermeasures:** This is an evolving process. We re-evaluate our design and job functions on a continual basis. When we hire new staff, we openly accept and value their views of our process and tasks, and welcome constructive criticism and process improvement suggestions.
- **Outcomes:** We hired our first staff into this new design on November 23, 2015 so we have been running on this new design for almost 3 years, and I would say this is working far better than the prior design. Although we still have some units who would love their own admin, I believe most would say that this new design has been a success. Staff is much more efficient, they work excellent as a team, they learn new things from each other daily, and have the freedom to take time off and enjoy trainings that ITD offers. Ultimately, we ended up reducing staff by 60% and have a much more efficient 'product', without sacrificing customer service. We have discovered that communication is KEY!! We have also discovered that when you work outside of silos... it makes you more aware and more eager to help others stuck inside them!
- **Action Items:** We have tweaked the design multiple times throughout the years and have no problem evaluating new process improvements... we all know that nothing in life is perfect and this is a living, breathing process that will change with workload levels, staffing levels, interconnected process changes with other groups along with anything else that might come our way.

We are very excited about where we started, where we currently are, and where we hope to be in the future! We are happy to discuss our journey or answer any questions you may have about our process.

The A-Team!

If a tornado can do it is a true story about breaking down work silos. This book was a collaborative team effort.



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