# 100 Concept Drift

Perspective Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/100-concept-drift/

There's a version of erosion that doesn't announce itself at all. I call it concept drift — the slow, invisible migration of a restaurant away from its original identity.

It's not a dramatic pivot. It's the accumulation of small compromises: a menu item added because a vendor offered a deal. A service standard relaxed because staffing got tight. A design element neglected because nobody noticed it aging. A price point adjusted to chase a demographic you weren't built to serve. None of these decisions feels consequential in isolation. But they compound. And over time, the operation no longer resembles what it was built to be — and nobody in the building can point to the moment it changed, because there wasn't one. There were hundreds.

Concept drift is most dangerous in restaurants that have been open long enough to confuse familiarity with identity. The operator believes the concept is intact because the name is still on the building. But the Guest is experiencing something the original concept never intended to deliver — and has no loyalty to the version that's quietly replaced it.

This is the blind spot applied to the brand itself. You can't correct what you can no longer see — and concept drift is invisible to the people living inside it every day.

The question that catches it: does the experience you're delivering today match the promise you made on day one? Not the promise on a website — the promise embedded in every decision you made when you built the concept. If you can't answer that question confidently, the drift has already started.

Cross-fundamental note: connects to 1.X — The Success Syndrome (the Success Syndrome is active standard erosion; concept drift is passive identity erosion — the Success Syndrome is how you stop executing the concept; concept drift is how the concept itself stops being the concept) and 2.X — The Product Is Never Finished (concept drift is what happens when the operator mistakes "done" for "permanent" — the product that isn't continuously tended drifts toward something it was never meant to be).

## What Changes Tomorrow

Tomorrow, compare tonight's actual Guest experience against the promise you made on day one. Concept Drift happens through small compromises, invisibly, one at a time. Name the first place where today doesn't match the original promise, and correct it before it becomes the new normal.