3260 Role Drift

People Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/3260-role-drift/

Role Drift is what happens after incomplete Role Transfer runs long enough.

It does not announce itself. It accumulates. The hire stops making decisions inside their domain because the operator keeps retrieving them. The hire stops taking initiative because initiative gets overridden. The hire stops owning the territory because the territory keeps being entered without invitation. Over time the hire recalibrates — not consciously, but accurately — to the actual authority they hold, which is less than what was formally granted. That recalibration is Role Drift.

The operator who caused it rarely sees it as their doing. What they see is a hire who has stopped performing at the level the role requires. The hire who used to take initiative and now waits to be told. The lead who used to make calls and now escalates everything. The kitchen manager who was supposed to own the back of house but keeps checking in before deciding.

That is not a development failure in the hire. That is the hire accurately reading the environment the operator built. The environment said: your authority is not real. The hire believed it. Role Drift is the accumulated correct response to an incorrect signal.

The diagnostic: if the operator finds themselves doing work that belongs to the hire's domain, that is not helpfulness — that is the evidence of Role Drift already in progress. The operator is not filling a gap. They are confirming the signal that produced the gap.

Pairs with: [Role Transfer], [Control Snapback], [The Four Override Patterns], [Authority To Execute], [The Real Accountability Model], [The Scapegoat Model]