3265 The Role That Grew Past Its Verb

People Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/3265-the-role-that-grew-past-its-verb/

[Role Drift] is [Complexity Decline] applied to people. The role that started as a clean verb — server serves, host hosts, runner runs — accumulates tasks, exceptions, and informal responsibilities until the verb is buried under the additions. The cast member is busy. The role is unrecognizable. The Guest experience is inconsistent because nobody is executing the original verb anymore — they are executing the accumulated version of it, which is different in every cast member's hands.

The cast member who reaches [Complexity Decline] in their role is not failing. They are complying with what the role has become. The server who is also responsible for the social media photo, the inventory count at sidework, the new upsell script, the allergy protocol update, and the three informal tasks the last manager added and never removed is not underperforming. They are overwhelmed by legitimate additions that compounded past the point where the original job is still executable at standard.

The alternative position is that versatile cast members are more valuable — that adding responsibilities builds capability and capability produces better Guests experiences. That position is true up to the point where the additions crowd out the original verb. Past that point, the additions do not build capability. They build compliance to a role description that no longer has a shape the cast member can hold in their head during a Saturday night rush.

People work under [Complexity Decline] requires the same subtraction discipline as product work. Every role audit asks one question: is the cast member able to execute the original verb at standard while carrying everything the role has accumulated? If not, the role has reached its tipping point. Remove what doesn't belong to the verb. Return the role to its shape. The cast member who can execute a clean verb at standard is more valuable than the cast member who executes a complicated role at approximation.

What changes tomorrow: pick one role in your building and list every responsibility that cast member carries. Circle the ones that belong to the verb. Everything outside the circle is accumulated complexity. Identify one item to remove. Return it to whoever it belongs to or eliminate it entirely. The role gets cleaner one deliberate subtraction at a time.