Robert Dylan Bean

3/30/2025

Professor John Woods

Assignment 2.2

The case study on Operation InVersion at LinkedIn shows how important it is to deal with technical debt before it gets out of control. After LinkedIn’s 2011 IPO, the company was struggling with unstable deployments and slow development. Their main system, called Leo, was old and causing problems, making it hard to release new updates. Even though they had already started breaking parts of it into smaller services, Leo was still a bottleneck.

By 2011, things got so bad that LinkedIn engineers had to work late nights just to keep the site running. Kevin Scott, the VP of Engineering, decided to pause all feature development for two months and focus entirely on fixing the system. This effort, called Operation InVersion, was risky, especially for a company that had just gone public. But in the end, it was worth it. LinkedIn’s new setup allowed them to release updates much faster (three times a day instead of every few weeks), making development smoother and more efficient.

The biggest lesson here is that ignoring technical debt only makes things worse over time. LinkedIn had to completely stop adding new features just to clean up past issues. If companies regularly fix problems as part of their daily work, they can avoid major breakdowns like this. In the end, Operation InVersion helped LinkedIn scale its systems, making future growth much easier.

References:  
Chapter 6: The DevOps Handbook: How to Create World-Class Agility, Reliability, & Security in Technology Organizations Second Edition; Gene Kim, Jez Humble, Patrick Debois, John Willis, & John Allspaw; IT Revolution Press; 2016