Shayna Solomon

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Module 2

In chapter 6, we see how Nordstrom and LinkedIn were able to improve their effectiveness and deliver faster and higher quality due to fixing workflow issues and addressing technical debt. They focused on identifying bottlenecks and then improved processes with small but effective changes.

At Nordstrom’s, for example, the online team discovered that signing up salespeople was taking longer and generating more errors than necessary, due to unnecessary steps, such as requiring employee numbers on forms. That caused delays as managers usually did not have that information available. Upon re-evaluating their workflow, they eliminated the employee number field and automated some of the process. This simple change resulted in a four-day reduction in lead times and was far easier for the managers.

LinkedIn did something along those lines as well; they studied their workflows and from that figured out which steps were inefficient and too complicated. This allowed them to process both more quickly and to streamline the processes more efficiently. Nordstrom and LinkedIn both clearly showed the ability to step back and see the big picture, and both were able to identify systemic flaws and discover potential cracks to penetrate.

This case study teaches us some interesting lessons. First, mapping out workflows is a great way to pinpoint inefficiencies and discover what is holding up the process. Both companies used this technique to focus on the areas that would generate the most value. Second, if technical debt that is, legacy systems or overly complicated processes can be resolved, then this could lead to leaps in time and quality. They also emphasize the need to test small things. One action that jumped out: Nordstrom store decision to eliminate the employee number field. This gradual, lower-risk approach allowed them to keep testing and optimizing their processes. Finally, we saw how strong leadership and teamwork came together to drive change, encourage collaboration, and make sure everyone’s voice was heard, leading to better solutions.