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CSD-380

Assignment 2-2

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**Key Points: Operation InVersion at LinkedIn (2011)**

LinkedIn's Operation InVersion demonstrates what might happen when technological debt accumulates to a point where it is too heavy to ignore. By 2011, just months after their IPO, LinkedIn was experiencing major deployment issues related to their outdated monolithic application called Leo. Despite attempts to expand Leo by adding memory and CPUs, the system continued to fail throughout production. Releases were delayed, troubleshooting was painful, and engineering teams were spending long nights patching and fixing rather than developing new features. Leaders realized that stability could no longer be sacrificed.

Kevin Scott, LinkedIn's VP of Engineering at the time, oversaw the decision to suspend all new feature development and begin Operation InVersion. For two months, the technical team worked completely on rebuilding infrastructure, refining deployment processes, and developing tools to make future development easier. This was not an easy decision. The company had recently gone public, and publicly suspending feature delivery posed dangers. Still, Scott and his team recognized that eliminating technical debt was vital to LinkedIn's long-term success.

The results justified the decision. Instead of waiting weeks to deploy improvements, LinkedIn engineers were able to use automated tools to test, validate, and push changes into production. The organization went from biweekly deployments to several big upgrades every day. This shift not only increased site dependability but also freed up engineers' time to focus on novel features rather than endless recovery tasks. As Josh Clemm subsequently noted, the work enabled LinkedIn to grow from hundreds to over 700 services while boosting infrastructure and developer productivity.

The lesson of Operation InVersion is pretty simple. Technical debt cannot be overlooked or treated as an afterthought. Paying it down involves concentration and, at times, unpleasant trade-offs. By halting fresh efforts to restore the foundation, LinkedIn positioned itself for long-term development and stability. The case demonstrates how investment in infrastructure and healthy work environments promotes creativity, consumer satisfaction, and company success.