Compounding marginal gains of motivation as an operational strategy

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# ABSTRACT

In a sector where operational efficiency is often pursued through technological upgrades and process optimisation, the impact of human motivation remains significantly undervalued. As future technical professionals, we have significant potential to influence profits through the development and implementation of new technologies, but subsequently the power to completely undermine this via destructive relationships with operational personnel. This presentation will explore how workforce behaviour can significantly undermine operational improvements, and how strategic incentive structures can be used to create marginal gains that can accumulate significantly.

Workforce behaviour and engagement can produce powerful gains that compound over time, without the need for new expensive equipment or processes - by intrinsically or extrinsically motivating the people on the ground, small behavioural shifts can be the make-or-break factor for new initiatives. Unhappiness and unproductivity in the workplace cost the Australian economy approximately $220 billion annually; subverting the development of unproductive operational archetypes and influencing workforce attitudes are often understated facets of successful integration of new technologies.

No amount of technical optimisation can succeed without human alignment - and unfortunately, engineers aren’t known for being the best at that. But in order to extract the full value from innovation, we must treat motivation not as a side consideration, but as a core component of operational strategy.