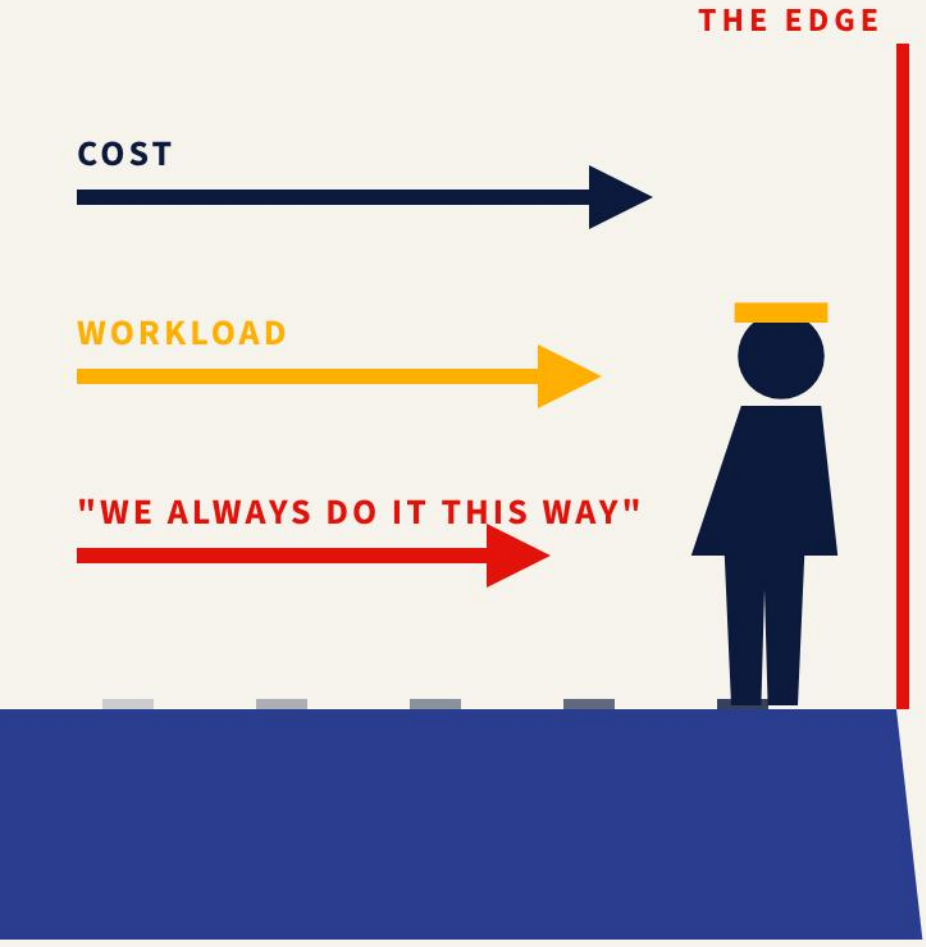


Pick one shortcut your crew always takes

Then ask what would happen if three other small shortcuts happened on the same day.

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

Why do good people drift toward an accident?

In 1997, the Danish safety researcher Jens Rasmussen published a paper that changed how many people think about accidents.

His model asks us to look beyond one careless person or one isolated decision, toward how everyday work, done by sensible people under real pressure, can drift toward a safety boundary.

This carousel explains his idea in plain words. It then asks you to look at your own site with fresh eyes.

THE IDEA

Work moves, one reasonable step at a time

Rasmussen pictured daily work as moving inside a space with three edges: the edge of **economic failure**, the edge of **unacceptable workload**, and the edge of **safe performance**.

Two forces push all the time. Management asks for lower cost and more output. People look for less effort. Both forces can move work toward the boundary of acceptable performance: the point where remaining safety margin may be lost.

Each small step makes sense on its own, and usually nothing bad happens. Other defences are still in place, so the lost margin stays invisible. The boundary may become visible only after the remaining margin has been exceeded.

THINK ABOUT IT

Three questions worth asking

1 Which procedures on your site are written one way but done another way? Do you know *why* the crew changed them?

2 When a shortcut is called safe "because nothing has happened", what does that really prove? Could it simply mean the other barriers have held, so far?

3 If three different defences each lost a little margin this year, who in your organisation would see the total?

YOUR MONDAY ACTION

Make the edge visible

1. Pick one routine task your crew always does with a shortcut.

2. Ask them to show you how it is really done, and why. Listen; do not judge. The shortcut usually exists for a good reason.

3. Ask: what if three other small shortcuts happened on the same day, on the same unit?

4. Write down one thing that would show you, early, that the task is getting close to the edge.

READ IT YOURSELF

Risk management in a dynamic society

Rasmussen, J. (1997). Risk management in a dynamic society: a modelling problem. *Safety Science*, 27(2–3), 183–213.

Look for his picture of work moving toward the "boundary of acceptable performance". It remains widely cited in safety research and is a clear starting point for this model. The arrows and three-edge graphic are AFDARA's simplified interpretation, not a reproduction of Rasmussen's figure.

TELL US

Try the Monday action. What shortcut did you find, and why did it exist?

Use this reflection alongside your site's reporting, risk-assessment, stop-work and control processes.