

SAVE US FROM THE NEW SHINY

Motivating People To Work On Less Exciting Systems

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EVERYONE WANTS TO WORK ON THE NEW SHINY THING

- Why do we do this to ourselves?
- Intrinsic Motivation
- Extrinsic Motivation



THE NEW SHINY

- Greenfields
- Exciting and glamorous
- Fun!
- Resume building
- Promotion opportunities

THIS OLD CODE

- Runs your business
- “Legacy”
- Deep Crow
- Unexciting
- Unrewarded



INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

“You do the work because it is internally satisfying or because you enjoy the work. You would do it even if they didn’t pay you.”

(Psychology Today)

How do you create intrinsic motivation to work on things that aren't “internally satisfying”?

- Some people genuinely enjoy this
- Remodeling houses
- Restoring antiques
- Making something excellent
- Finishing vs starting
- ...but not everyone on your team is in this bucket, nor should they be

WHY SHOULD I CARE

- What can I learn from this?
- Every scar tells a story
- Little need for scale on new systems
- Optimization is a game, and who doesn't like to win?
- Learn from great engineers who worked on it before you...or terrible ones
- Impact on your organization

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Reward driven.

HOW TO MESS IT UP

- Only promote people for new things
- Only praise people for new things
- Make it an oubliette



HOW TO REWARD PEOPLE

- Saying thank you
- Peer, bonus, and other rewards
- Career advancement
- Team rotations

THIS IS WHERE YOU BECOME SENIOR

- Older systems are typically larger, more complex, have more scale
- Learned more on these than I ever have by working on new things

Every new shiny is tomorrow's legacy code.

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