

# The Unix Guide To Defenestration

This book explains that most commercial systems work disappoints because the incentives favor exactly the kind of continuous low level failure we usually see. Systems management careers are enhanced by budget growth and staff expansion, both of which are maximized by maintaining a level of non performance that teeters on the edge of catastrophe. Correspondingly, systems budgets and staffing levels, and therefore management careers, are diminished by successful execution of the cost saving, or cost avoidance, mandates that normally go with the job.

When companies pay for failure, they get failure. Throw away enough money as a CIO and you'll make somebody's annual "100 best IT users" list, but deliver services with the effectiveness and reliability of the phone system while meeting your mandate to cut costs and you won't get promoted; you won't be attending executive committee meetings; and most people --including recruiters, your colleagues, and your bosses-- will dismiss you as a loser whose budget and corporate visibility are fading while theirs are growing.

The organizationally right answer seems simple: reposition systems as a profit center instead of a cost sink, provide incentives for personal success that align with corporate goals, and stand aside while your systems people grab hold of the stuff that works and throw out the stuff that doesn't.

We've all seen this recipe work. Embedded systems developers and most of the freeware community, have personal incentives and business controls that align directly with those of the end user - and as a result the software for your car engine, video camera, network router, or Linux server will work correctly and reliably all day, every day --at a fraction of the cost of the software on a PC.

This book's message, for business executives and systems people alike, is that getting the house in order is the system manager's first step in that transformation and starts with a hard clear look at the issues, choices, and technologies involved.

That's the technical focus of this book: improving service, and saving money, by understanding and adopting the structures and technologies that work and throwing out those that don't.

As a result there's lots of practical advice here on making things work; but there are also war stories and hard lesson commentaries that bring out the moral and ethical issues facing systems staff who try to get the job done in an environment where the incentives, and therefore most of the other people, favor failure.

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Murphy



"A brutally honest bit of truth telling by someone who's been there, done that, got the scars"

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Murph P. Murphy

"An unflinching look at systems technology and an utterly unapologetic recommendation for what works and against what doesn't, or cannot, work."  
- Duane Gran  
SolarisCentral.org

