Postmortem Template

This is a standard template we use for postmortems at PagerDuty — feel free to use it for your own!

Guidelines

This page is intended to be reviewed during a postmortem meeting that should be scheduled within 5 business days of any event. Your first step should be to schedule the postmortem meeting for within 5 business days after the incident. Don't wait until you've filled in the info to schedule the meeting, however, make sure the page is completed by the meeting.

Postmortem Owner:

Your name goes here.

Meeting Scheduled for:

Schedule the meeting for within 5 business days after the incident. Put the date/time here.

Call Recording:

Link to the incident call recording.

Overview:

Include a short sentence or two summarizing the root causes, timeline summary, and the impact. (e.g. "On the morning of August 99th, we suffered a 1 minute SEV-1 due to a runaway process on our primary database machine. This slowness caused roughly 0.024% of alerts that had begun during this time to be delivered out of SLA.")

What Happened:

Include a short description of what happened.

Root Causes:

Include a description of any conditions that contributed to the issue. If there were any actions taken that exacerbated the issue, also include them here with the intention of learning from any mistakes made during the resolution process.

Resolution:

Include a description what solved the problem. If there was a temporary fix in place, describe that along with the long-term solution.

Impact

Be very specific here, include exact numbers.

Time in SEV-1

Time in SEV-2

Notifications Delivered out of SLA

Events Dropped / Not Accepted
Should usually be 0, but always check

Accounts Affected

Users Affected

Support Requests Raised
Include any relevant links to tickets

Timeline

Some important times to include:

Time the impact began

Time of the page

Time that the status page was updated
(i.e. when the incident became public)

Time of any significant actions	Links to tools/logs

Time the impact ended

pagerduty

Timeline (continued)

Time of any significant actions	Links to tools/logs

Responders

Who was the Incident Commander?

Who was the Scribe?

Who else was involved?

How'd we do?

What went well?

List anything you did well and want to call out. It's OK to not list anything.

What didn't go so well?

List anything you think we didn't do very well. The intent is that we should follow up on all points here to improve our processes.

Action Items

Write all action items to be actionable, specific, and bounded. Create tickets for all action items and label with their severity level and date tags: "sev1_YYYYMMDD" and "sev1".

Include action items such as:

1. **Any fixes required to prevent the issue from happening again in the future**
2. **Any preparedness tasks that could improve detection and mitigation of a similar issue**
3. **Remaining postmortem steps, such as an internal email, updating the public status page, etc.**
4. **Any improvements to the incident response process**

Messaging

Internal Email

This is a follow-up for employees. It should be sent out right after the postmortem meeting is over. It only needs a short paragraph summarizing the incident and a link to this page.

External Message

This is what will be included on the status page regarding this incident. What are we telling customers, including an apology (the apology should be genuine, not rote)?

Summary

What happened?

What are we going to do about this?