Helping operations top-heavy teams the smart way

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This Is The Only Slide You May Need a Picture Of

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When Operations Isn’t Perfect

Code Yellow: When Operations Isn’t Perfect

BY TODD PALINO ON APRIL 13, 2018 — 0 COMMENTS

Every now and then, engineering teams will get into trouble for any number of reasons. Sometimes, explosive growth catches the team by surprise. Or, on-call has gotten out of control, with alerts going off every five minutes. Or, development and operations teams simply have stopped seeing eye to eye. Regardless of why, the team is in a bad spot and something needs to be done to resolve it.

https://devops.com/code-yellow-when-operations-isnt-perfect/
This talk is not

• How to quickly erase all your technical debt
• How to change your engineering culture
This talk is

- How to identify team anti-patterns
- How to work through high toil
- How to create sustainable workloads
### Today’s agenda

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Background
Personal Experience in the past two years

ASSISTANCE RENDERED

- Traffic-SRE: Technical Debt/ Resource Allocation
- Voyager-SRE: Technical Debt
- Capacity War-room
- Espresso-SRE: Reliability
- Kafka-SRE: Capacity and Alert Fatigue
Scenario 1: Traffic-SRE
Technical Debt

Problem Statement

Traffic-SRE

- Written documentation needed improvement
- Deployment infrastructure needed investment
- Alert Fatigue
Resource Allocations

Problem Statement

• Backlog of work for clients
• Staff shortage
Scenario 2: Kafka
Capacity Planning
Problem Statement

• Multi-tenant Infrastructure
  • No resource controls
  • Unclear resource ownership
• Ad-hoc capacity planning
• Sudden 100% increase in traffic
Alert Fatigue
Problem Statement

- Multiple applications overutilized
- No time for proactive work
- Most alerts non-actionable
Building a formula for success
Code Yellow
Building a formula for success

**Problem Statement**
Define the areas that need attacking

**Exit Criteria**
Define success criteria

**Resource Acquisition**
Get the help that you require

**Planning**
Plan for short-term & long-term

**Communication & Partnerships**
Communicate expectations with clients & partners
Building a formula for success

Problem Statement
Define the areas that need attacking

- Admit there is a problem
- Measure the problem
- Understand the problem
- Determines underlying causes that need to be fixed
Building a formula for success

- Define concrete goals
- Define concrete success criteria
  - Measure via an operational metric
  - Measure via a project being completed
- Define timelines for completion
Building a formula for success

Resource Acquisition
Get the help you require

• Ask other teams for help
• Get dedicated engineers/ project managers/ other roles as required
• Set exit-date for resources
Building a formula for success

Planning
Plan for the short-term & long-term

• Plan out short-term work
• Plan out longer-term projects
  • Do they need to be rescheduled?
• Prioritize work that will reduce toil & burnout (Automation + Measurement)
Building a formula for success

- Communicate problem statement & exit criteria
- Send regular progress updates
- Ensure that stakeholders understand delays & expected outcomes

Communications & Partnerships

Communicate expectations with clients & partners
Key Learnings
Key Learnings

Measure

- Measure toil/overhead

Prioritize

- Prioritize efforts to remove overhead/toil

Communicate

- Communicate with partners & teams
Q&A