Blameless

Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement
Disclaimer: This is NOT a PM 101
Reliability is the most important feature
Bad Experiences Hurt Business

Uber vs Grab
Blameless Postmortems
WORKED FINE IN DEV

OPS PROBLEM NOW
Agree/Disagree
PMs help you increase resiliency
PMs help you ship faster
PMs help you uncover unseen insights
PMs create collaborative & blameless culture
Summary

- Build more reliable systems
- Get important insights
- Continuously Innovate - build new features
- Hire and retain the best talent by having a blameless culture
When you don’t do them
60% OF THE TIME

DEPLOYMENTS WORK EVERYTIME!
How to get more out of Postmortem
300+ Companies
Quick Survey
Typical Postmortem Process

1. Assign PM Owner
2. Complete the timeline
3. Schedule meeting
4. Discuss & Create follow up actions
5. Complete follow up actions
6. Publish and share postmortem
Postmortem Time Consumption

Timeline:
- Incident Resolved
- Assign
- PM Meeting
- Follow Up Actions
- Publish & Share
- Complete Follow Up Actions

时效:
- Hours +
- Day +
- Week +
Successful Postmortems Have

1. Ownership
2. Context & Key Details
3. On Time Completion
4. Follow up action items tracked to completion
5. Blameless language
6. Referenceability
Ownership: Case Study

Mid-Size SaaS Tech Company
Ownership: Why It’s Hard

- Role & Responsibilities not defined
- Hot Potato Blame
- Toil
Ownership: Make it Easy

- Simple model: 1 Service owner owns PM
- Manager/Dir/VP owns time allocation
- Track ownership via ticket
- Set up a Postmortem Guild
On Time Completion: Case Study

F500 Retailer
On Time Completion: Why It’s Hard

- Toil, toil, toil
- Shifting priorities
On Time Completion: Make it Easy

- Block new releases for teams w/ outstanding PMs

- Do them on slack/MSFT Teams

- Allocate time in sprint, escalate to C-Level

- Gamify and reward for on-time completion
# inc-2323-postmortem

You created this channel today. This is the very beginning of the # inc-2323-postmortem channel.

🔗 Set a purpose  🌟 Add an app  🌱 Add people to this channel

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**Ashar Rizqi** 10:04 AM

joined #inc-2323-postmortem.

**Ashar Rizqi** 10:06 AM

@Geoff White I need the following from you

@Geoff White I need the following from you

Impact, Root cause, Duration of problem, Product(s) affected

@Morgan Please fill out the following

Revenue impact, Detection Source, How we Resolved the incident

@Greg Can you fill out Lessons Learned

Document them here

I'll check back in by EOBD
Context & Key Details: Case Study

F500 Credit Card Company
Context: Why It’s Hard

Includes background and sometimes a glossary

- Tribal Knowledge

- Outdated Documentation

- Team Silos
Key Details: Why It’s Hard

Root cause, trigger, user impact, mitigation, metrics
- Data is in different systems
- Details live in different brains
- No SLOs - don’t know what’s important
Context & KD: Make it Easy

- IC’s job is to corral Content and KD and hand off
- Keep all details in one place: chat system, data warehouse etc.
- Setup 1:1 interviews with incident attendees asap
- Force conversations to happen over chat - easiest place to keep track
AIs created & tracked to completion: Case Study

Mid-Size IaaS Provider
Als created & tracked to completion: Why it’s Hard

- Created in different systems
- Never get tagged correctly, get buried
- Have same priority and unclear language
- Tracked manually
Alts created & tracked to completion: Make it Easy

- Use one ticketing system

- Use tags profusely - most systems have them

- Have SLO impact attached to Al

- Generate daily outstanding AI report
Blameless Language: Case Study

Hyper Growth Tech Startup
Blameless Language: Why it’s Hard

- English not always first language
- Easy to call out individuals and teams
- Culture of psychological safety is not there
Blameless Language: Make it Easy

- Don’t call out individuals, teams - use initials if you have to

- Move away from 1 root cause

- Don’t write personal judgements

- Always ask: where did the system fail
Referenceability: Case Study

Everyone!
Referenceability: Why it’s Hard

- No place to capture structured data
- Postmortem data lives in a different system
- Teams use different templates/methodologies
- No incentive to do this well
Referenceability: Make it Easy

TBH: It’s still hard!
Referenceability: Make it Easy

- Standardize on one template: use Google’s to start

- Have all postmortems in gdrive or confluence

- Hack: Log file format to index the data

- Hack: Hire temps/interns to scrape data
Unsolved Postmortem Problems

- Asynchronous vs. Synchronous?
- When do you declare a postmortem complete?
- Referencability
- Knowledge Extraction
Highlights

- Have clear roles & responsibilities
- Track things in diligently in systems: tickets, chat, data warehouse
- Reward good behavior
- Set SLOs
- Never call people out
When it’s working

1. Less Blame
2. Less Burnout, Less Toil
3. Less Panic
4. Continuous Improvement, Faster Delivery
5. Happy customers :)

No Excuses!

JUST DO IT!
A tale of 2 Blames
Thank you