The Origins of USAA’s Postmortem Of The Week

Bringing Transparency to USAA’s largest outages

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USAA
OUR MISSION

The mission of the association is to facilitate the financial security of its members, associates and their families through provision of a full range of highly competitive financial products and services; in so doing, USAA seeks to be the provider of choice for the military community.

THE USAA STANDARD

Keep our membership and mission first
Live our core values: Service, Loyalty, Honesty, Integrity
Be compliant and manage risk
Build trust and help each other succeed
Embrace diversity and be purposefully inclusive
Innovate and build for the future
Who Am I?

Adam Newman

• 12 Years at USAA

• 3 Years in Site Reliability Engineering

• Dad Joke Teller
What do you call the engineer on your team who goes MIA for three days and then pops out with some amazing new code?
Obligatory Introductory Joke

➤ A Site Reliability Binge-ineer
Obligatory Introductory Joke

LAUGH NOW

😊
What Is USAA’s “Postmortem Of The Week”

(It is what it sounds like)
What Is USAA’s Postmortem Of The Week?

➤ A Weekly Meeting
What Is USAA’s Postmortem Of The Week?

Everyone is invited
What Is USAA’s Postmortem Of The Week?

➤ Talk about failures
What Is USAA’s Postmortem Of The Week?

➤ Throw people under the bus
What Is USAA’s Postmortem Of The Week?

- DON’T throw people under the bus
What Is USAA’s Postmortem Of The Week?

- Occurs after the debrief
What You Need To Do

Simple Logistics
What You Need To Do

1. Set up a meeting
What You Need To Do

2. Invite a bunch of people
What You Need To Do

3. Get an executive to sponsor it
What You Need To Do

4. Find a cool outage to talk about
The Challenge

Getting People To Speak
The Challenge

Question: What would it look like today if your largest outages were spoken about in front of the entire IT Organization?
The Challenge

➤ Finger Pointing
Engineers won’t speak
The Challenge: How do you get people excited to talk about their problems?
The Solution

Fostering the Blameless Environment
The Solution

Preparation
Talk about the technology
The Solution

- Lead into the outage
The Solution

- Decide on profitable action items to discuss
The Solution

- Internalize lessons learned for broader community
BONUS: Get the clients to speak
Control injects into the meeting
The Solution

- IMPORTANT: Add a Dad Joke
The Results

USAA’s Awesomeness
The Results

» Community
The Results

Collaboration
The Results

Safety
Did you hear about the developers who spent all their time after the outage talking about how great of troubleshooters they were?
The Results – Bad Joke

» Yeah, it was a great Boastmortem
The Results
Next Steps

What the future holds
Next Steps

➤ Building Smaller Postmortem Review Meetings
Next Steps

➢ We want to help!

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