Pager Rotation Devops Duties

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Definition

- Pager rotation duties can be defined as the process of assigning team members specific on-call hours or days where they are responsible for responding to issues that happen outside of nominal working hours (PagerDuty, 2023).
- Pager rotation duties as specific to devops is important because maintaining application up time is important for reliability, and pager rotation duties means there is always a SME(subject matter expert) available for critical issues.

Pager Rotation Effects

- 24/7 application coverage (PagerDuty, 2023)
- Fast incident response time
- Equal load of on-call duties to all team members(Cortex, 2021)
- Clear incident escalation procedures(PagerDuty, 2023)
- Less application downtime(Cortex, 2021)

Scheduling Best Practices

- Use automated tools to manage and schedule on-call rotations(PagerDuty, 2023)
- Have a schedule that can be viewed months in advanced
- Allow flexibility of on-call schedule via shift swaps and blackout days(PagerDuty, 2023)
- Ensure everyone has access to the schedule and is constantly aware of when it is their turn to be on-call(PagerDuty, 2023)
- Verify that there is 24/7 coverage at all times
- Have a backup just in case the first on-call cannot be reached

Benefits

- Improved transparency of responsibility for issues outside of working hours(PagerDuty, 2023)
- Happier customers who can have an on-call contact for time sensitive(Cortex, 2021) issues(PagerDuty, 2023)
- Improved incident response speed(PagerDuty, 2023)
- Clear backups that can be contacted
- Happier team members who can be sure they are being treated fairly(Cortex, 2021)
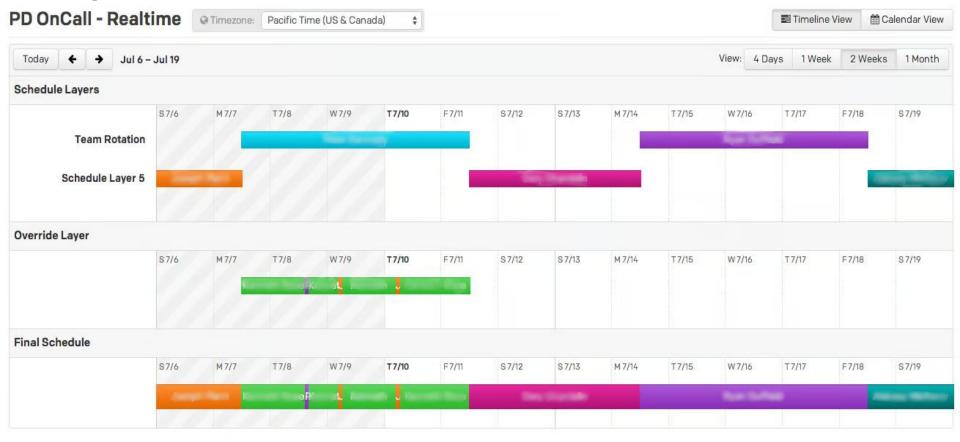
Different Methods

- Different from the traditional pager rotation duties method where there is an on-call schedule, some teams prefer to use a team/application based on-call method
- This method involves assigning different services to individuals, or teams, that are responsible for responding only when their service has an incident(Cortex, 2021)

Real World Experience

- In my experience I have been on an on-call rotation and assigned to a specific team in charge of a smaller subset of applications
- What worked best in my experience was when teams, or individuals, were assigned to a specific set of apps to be responsible for, along with a backup
- The reason this worked best is because the more senior engineers could be responsible for more troublesome apps, or apps that had the most visibility and income generation to ensure that app had the least downtime

Pager Rotation Example

References

- Cortex. (2021, February 13). Best practices for your team's on-call rotations: Cortex. Best practices for your team's on-call rotations. https://www.cortex.io/post/best-practices-for-on-call-rotations
- PagerDuty. (2023, January 17). On-call rotations and schedules. PagerDuty. https://www.pagerduty.com/resources/learn/call-rotations-schedules/