Module Three

SLOs with Consequences

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1. Glossary

- **Blameless postmortem:** Detailed documentation of an incident or outage, its root cause, its impact, actions taken to resolve it, and follow-up actions to prevent its recurrence.

- **Reliability:** The number of "good" interactions divided by the number of total interactions. This leaves you with a numerical fraction of real users who experience a service that is available and working.

- **Error budget:** The amount of unreliability you are willing to tolerate.

- **Service level indicator (SLI):** A quantifiable measure of the reliability of your service from your users' perspective.

- **Service level objective (SLO):** Sets the target for an SLI over a period of time.

2. Key Points

- The mission of SRE is to protect, provide for, and progress software and systems with consistent focus on availability, latency, performance, and capacity.

- Understanding SRE practices and norms will help you build a common language to use when speaking with your IT teams and support your organization's adoption of SRE both in the short and long term.

- Experienced SREs are comfortable with failure.

- Failures are documented in postmortems, which focus on systems and processes versus people.

- 100% reliability is the wrong target because it slows the release of new features, which is what drives your business.

- SLOs and error budgets create shared responsibility and ownership between developers and SREs.

- Fostering psychologically safe environments is necessary for learning and innovation in organizations.

- Organizations developing an SRE culture should focus on creating a unified vision, determining what collaboration looks like, and sharing knowledge among teams.

3. Reflection Activity

1. Think about your IT teams. List some scenarios where working in a psychologically safe environment would benefit them.

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2. Do you think blamelessness is achievable in your organization? How can you support and encourage blamelessness and psychological safety within your teams?

Write down as many ideas as you can. Share these with your leadership team when you start your SRE implementation conversations.

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4. Postmortem Template

Below is a basic postmortem template. Share this with your IT teams as you start to implement the SRE role and postmortem practice.

Part 1. What happened?

Title:

Date:

Authors:

Status: In Writing/In Review/Reviewed/Published

Summary: --- *What was the incident? Its duration? Its cause?* ---

Impact: --- *Latency? Data loss? Availability?... Include revenue impact if known* ---

Root causes:

Trigger: --- *Action that initiated the incident* ---

Resolution: --- *Actions taken to mitigate or prevent the incident's impact in the short term. Actions taken (fixes deployed) to address the root causes* ---

Detection: ---*How was the incident detected?* ---

Lessons Learned

Some guiding questions:

- *Was the incident detected quickly, or did it take a long time for a human to notice?*

- *Did teams coordinate well among each other, or were there communication problems?*

- *Were the escalation paths clear, or did engineers not know where to go for help?*

What went well?

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What didn't go so well?

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Where did we get lucky?

[There is often some aspect of an incident that ensures that it wasn't as bad as it could have been. Often, this aspect wasn't by design. Call this out explicitly so you can build new safeguards and not rely on luck next time.]

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Part 2. What can we do differently next time?

- Work together to document what you've learned from these issues and come up with Action Items.

- *Note: Do not focus solely on bug fixes. Also include procedural changes required to mitigate the impact of similar incidents.*

Owners	Action Items	Priority	Bug/Tickets