

# DEVOPS CULTURE AND MINDSET

Using Incident Reviews to Your Advantage



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Slide 1: What Strikes Dread in the Hearts of Developers?



## **What Strikes Dread in the Hearts of Developers?**





## Learning Objectives

**Discuss** how software industry evolved

Change mindset around incident reviews

**Explain** how to use them to your advantage

**Describe** using incident reviews to improve an organization's processes

## It Was a Blame Game

Software engineer in the **hot seat**

**Interrogated** for root cause of an incident

Action plan so this **“never happens again”**

Tasks not followed up or completed



## Results of Old School Incident Reviews

Everyone **frustrated**

People were **very apprehensive** when an incident review was scheduled



## Blameless Incident Reviews

Shift in the industry

Encourage **candor** and **learning**

Perform critical and objective **analysis**

Plan prevention **strategies** for future



## Honoring and Extracting Reality

Seek **discovery** of what really happened

It has to be safe for **reality** to surface

If leaders don't want to understand they  
won't be able to extract reality



## Is Your Culture Pathological or Generative?

Explore the Westrum Model

### **Pathological Culture:**

Failure > Blame & Scapegoating

**Generative Culture:** Failure > Inquiry  
Spirit of learning, blame-free





## Blameless Incident Reviews

Calls for a good facilitator

**Encourages** open exploration

Check out Etsy's facilitator guide



## **Study Successes**

What worked?

What can we learn from this success?

What can we apply to other parts of the organization?



## Transformation of Root Cause Analysis

**Then**, we sought single a root cause

**Now**, thinking has changed

With complex systems we must seek  
**multiple contributing factors**



## The Myth of Human Errors as the Root Cause

Human errors are **never** the root cause!

Something in the system **broke down**

Usually it's a **process failure**



## **An Example of Why Human Errors are **NOT** Root Cause**

Conducted blameless inquiry

What was assumed to be human error ended up reinterpreted as management failure



## Benefits of a Blameless Incident Review

Focus shifted from **blame to improvement**

Able to identify better **leading indicators**

**Multiple contributing factors** managed



## Summary

Software industry has **evolved** with regard to incident management

**Shift** from seeking a single root cause to multiple contributing factors

High-performing organizations use incidents as opportunities to **learn**

Focus on what broke down in the system, **NOT** human error