PagerDuty

Reliability as a Competitive Advantage

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Contents

Introduction

Service reliability directly impacts business success. Every minute of downtime erodes customer trust, disrupts revenue streams, and creates openings for competitors. As organizations expand their digital operations, maintaining consistent service delivery has evolved from a technical challenge into a strategic imperative.

The complexity of modern digital services demands a new approach to reliability. Organizations must transform how technical and customer-facing teams work together, leveraging advanced technology and automated workflows to prevent, detect, and resolve issues before they impact customers. Those who master this challenge gain more than operational efficiency—they build the foundation for sustained market leadership.

This ebook explores how organizations can transform service reliability into a competitive advantage. From breaking down silos between teams to implementing intelligent automation, we'll examine the strategies and technologies that enable organizations to deliver the consistent, reliable experiences that distinguish market leaders from their competitors.

The case for service reliability

Digital services have become the backbone of enterprise operations, powering everything from financial transactions and supply chain management to employee collaboration and business intelligence. Yet, outages and major incidents can rapidly erode customer confidence, disrupt revenue streams, and create openings for competitors to capture market share. While service disruptions make immediate headlines, their strategic consequences run deeper, fundamentally altering business outcomes and competitive dynamics.

A recent outage at a multinational financial institution demonstrated how technical issues can quickly spiral into large-scale business crises. For almost a week, a third-party system failure left thousands of customers unable to access their accounts, preventing essential services from direct deposits to payment processing and loan applications. As the incident persisted, customers turned to social media to voice their mounting frustrations. What began as a system glitch evolved into front-page news that touched almost every aspect of the company's business, from customer trust and brand reputation to regulatory compliance and market valuation.

The incident reflects a troubling trend across enterprise operations. Customer-impacting **incidents have increased by 43% over the last year**,[1] with each major incident **costing organizations an average of $800,000**.[2] Note that these figures only represent their direct costs, such as emergency response, lost transactions, and immediate recovery efforts. The long-term strategic costs often far exceed these initial figures when accounting for customer churn, missed market opportunities, and diminished brand value.

Incidents are on the rise

43%

YoY increase in customer-facing incidents

175 minutes

average resolution time

$800K

approximate average cost per incident

https://www.pagerduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Whitepaper_Automation-survey.pdf

For enterprises managing critical digital services, these disruptions have progressed from technical inconveniences to substantial business risks demanding C-suite and board-level attention. The frequency and severity of these incidents have prompted executive teams to reevaluate their approach to service reliability, particularly regarding internal response efforts, third-party dependencies, and system integration points.

[1] https://www.pagerduty.com/newsroom/execs-expect-another-global-it-outage-2025/
[2] https://www.pagerduty.com/resources/learn/cost-of-downtime/

When systems fail: The cost of complexity

Modern enterprise architectures span multiple cloud providers, third-party services, and internal systems. This interconnected ecosystem creates overlapping dependencies where a single point of failure can trigger cascading disruptions. For customer-facing teams, these technical complexities manifest as significant operational challenges that test both system resilience and organizational effectiveness.

When an outage or major incident occurs, support teams often serve as the first line of defense. These teams frequently detect emerging issues through user reports before monitoring systems raise alerts. Without direct access to system status or real-time incident updates, teams must piece information together from multiple customer touchpoints to identify patterns. The challenge intensifies as they try to determine which engineering teams to escalate the disruption to, especially when issues span multiple services or regions.

During major service failures, support leadership will have to make rapid decisions about resource allocation. Do they need to pull agents from other queues to handle increased support volume? Should they activate emergency response procedures? How do they maintain service levels for customers unaffected by the incident? These choices become more crucial as incident duration extends and user frustration mounts.

Without robust contingency planning and tooling, coordination between support and engineering often reveals organizational friction points. Support teams struggle to translate customer impact into technical context that helps engineers identify root causes. Likewise, engineering teams focused on technical remediation may not fully grasp the broader business impact or end-user experience implications. The resulting communication gap can further delay effective response and resolution.

Support teams must craft clear communications with the right level of detail. This process includes providing timely updates to customers, managing executive expectations, and coordinating with multiple stakeholders from engineering to legal and public relations. They also track customer sentiment across social media channels while preparing response strategies for various recovery scenarios. The strain mounts as ticket volume increases and engineering focuses on urgent work. This reactive cycle often leads to quick-fix solutions that increase technical debt, setting the stage for future incidents and putting further pressure on teams across the organization.

As companies scale and systems become more complex, the need for a unified incident response and resolution becomes increasingly critical.

Accelerating response through unified operations

To ensure service reliability, organizations must fundamentally change how support and engineering teams work together to prevent, detect, and resolve service disruptions. Incident management transformation requires a strategic purpose focused on people, processes, and shared outcomes. Support teams understand customer pain points and business impact, while engineering teams grasp technical complexity and system dependencies. When organizations bridge this knowledge gap, they create stronger incident response capabilities.

Alignment starts with shared language and context. Support teams need the right technical understanding to effectively route issues and provide meaningful updates. Engineering teams require clear visibility into user impact to properly prioritize their response. Creating this common ground requires ongoing knowledge sharing and collaborative contingency planning.

Fast, effective incident response requires more than established communication paths. It demands intelligent automation and real-time collaboration capabilities. Modern digital operations platforms can automatically route incidents to the right technical responders based on service ownership and expertise. These systems define and enforce severity levels, response times, and communication protocols that align with business priorities.

Real-time collaboration becomes seamless when support and engineering teams share a unified incident management platform. Support teams gain immediate access to technical responders and incident status, while engineering teams can provide automated updates that support teams can use to relay information to customers. This automated flow of information reduces manual coordination and accelerates resolution.

IT operations teams with at least 5 manual processes vs 5 fully automated processes in incident response

Manual		Fully automated
3hrs 58mins	▶	2hrs 40mins
average time to resolve customer-impacting incidents		
29	▶	23
# of high-priority/priority incidents resulting in customer-facing outages		
$30.4M	▶	$16.8M
yearly cost of customer-facing outages		
48%	▶	43%
growth in customer-impacting digital incidents		

https://www.pagerduty.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Whitepaper_Automation-survey.pdf

Machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) now enable organizations to detect patterns and potential issues before they impact customers. Advanced analytics identify anomalies across system behavior and customer interactions, automatically alerting relevant teams without human intervention. Agentic AI takes this a step further by learning from incidents to provide intelligent recommendations and automate routine responses. By integrating with IT service management and customer support platforms, these AI capabilities create a comprehensive view of operational health while handling repetitive tasks so teams can focus on complex problem-solving.

Modern digital operations require tools built for enterprise scale. Leading organizations implement platforms that combine incident response, automation, ML, and cross-team collaboration capabilities. These solutions eliminate manual processes while providing real-time visibility across technical and customer-facing teams.

As digital services continue to grow in complexity, organizations that modernize their incident management processes gain significant competitive advantages. Those leading in operational excellence have discovered that the right platform can transform how teams work together, combining AI-powered automation, intelligent incident response, and seamless collaborations into a unified operations solution.

Reliability at scale: The PagerDuty competitive edge

Digital operations platforms have evolved beyond basic alerting and on-call management to become essential drivers of service reliability. Today's solutions combine AI-powered automation and real-time collaboration into a unified platform that helps organizations maintain their competitive edge through consistent service delivery.

The PagerDuty Operations Cloud represents the next evolution in maintaining service reliability at scale. By integrating ML, automation, and cross-team workflows, enterprises can detect and resolve incidents faster while reducing manual overhead. PagerDuty Advance brings agentic AI capabilities that transform incident response by serving as an intelligent assistant – automating routine tasks, providing real-time recommendations based on historical data, and guiding teams through complex resolution processes.

Building on this intelligence, AIOps capabilities automatically group related alerts, identify anomalies, and surface potential incidents before customer impact. Automated remediation workflows then execute predefined response procedures for common issues, while event intelligence reduces alert noise and provides rich context for faster resolution. Jeli's incident analysis capabilities help teams learn from each incident, while the platform transforms how customer-facing teams manage disruptions through real-time incident visibility and automated communications. This comprehensive approach frees teams to focus on strategic problems while automation handles routine tasks.

The **2025 PagerDuty State of Digital Operations report** validates the impact of these capabilities.[3] Compared to non-customers, organizations leveraging the PagerDuty Operations Cloud demonstrate greater digital resilience and maturity, use automation more effectively, and get products to market faster. As digital services grow more complex, these capabilities help organizations deliver the reliable experiences that distinguish market leaders from their competitors.

[3] https://www.pagerduty.com/assets/2025/state-of-digital-operations-2025.pdf

Reliability in action

Organizations across industries have transformed their digital operations to build reliability as a competitive advantage. Their experiences show how the PagerDuty Operations Cloud platform delivers measurable improvements in operations and customer outcomes.

Scaling reliability during unprecedented growth

When the global pandemic drove an overnight shift to remote work, Zoom faced an unprecedented scaling challenge. Daily meeting participants surged from 10 million to over 300 million, making service reliability more critical than ever. The company needed to maintain service quality while managing explosive growth in both customer base and operational complexity.

Through automated incident routing and standardized response procedures, Zoom transformed its incident response capabilities. Support and engineering teams gained real-time visibility into service health, while automated workflows ensured faster resolution of customer-impacting issues. The results demonstrate the power of modern digital operations:

- 75% reduction in critical incident resolution time
- 68% decrease in escalations to engineering
- 48% improvement in the meantime to acknowledge incidents

Transforming healthcare delivery

With over 2,000 stores across multiple countries, Specsavers needed to ensure reliable service delivery for its retail operations and critical healthcare systems. The challenge intensified as it expanded its digital services, requiring seamless integration between in-store and online customer experiences.

Through implementing automated incident response and standardized workflows, Specsavers transformed their approach to service reliability. The platform enabled better coordination between technical teams and store operations while providing real-time visibility across their service ecosystem. Their results demonstrate significant operational improvements:

- 80% reduction in the meantime to resolve incidents
- 50% decrease in high-severity incidents
- 43% improvement in customer satisfaction scores

Reliability at scale

As Europe's largest airline group, Ryanair manages critical systems that support millions of passengers daily. Their digital platforms handle over 1 million daily web visits and 3,000 flights, making service reliability essential to operations and revenue. The challenge was maintaining system performance during peak booking periods while supporting rapid business growth.

By implementing automated incident management and real-time analytics, Ryanair transformed its operational response capabilities. The platform enabled seamless coordination between technical and customer service teams while providing early detection of potential issues. Their results highlight the impact on both technical operations and customer experience:

- 90% reduction in the meantime to acknowledge incidents
- 60% decrease in customer-impacting issues
- 40% improvement in system availability

Conclusion

Service reliability has evolved from a technical consideration into a strategic imperative. As organizations continue to expand their digital footprint, the ability to deliver seamless customer experiences increasingly defines market leadership. Those who master this challenge will gain more than operational efficiency. They build the foundation for sustained competitive advantage.

Success demands a fundamental shift in how organizations approach incident management, breaking down silos between technical and customer-facing teams while establishing clear ownership of reliability outcomes. The PagerDuty Operations Cloud enables this transformation through intelligent automation, cross-team collaboration, and comprehensive incident response capabilities. Organizations that embrace these modern operations demonstrate measurably better outcomes through capabilities like agentic AI and automated remediation.

The future belongs to organizations that recognize service reliability as core to their competitive strategy. With PagerDuty, they gain the operational excellence and resilience needed to lead in an increasingly digital world. Those who embrace this modern approach will set the standard for customer experience and market leadership in the years ahead.

Discover how PagerDuty can help your organization build competitive advantage. **Contact us today** to learn more.

About PagerDuty

PagerDuty, Inc. (NYSE:PD) is a global leader in digital operations management, enabling customers to achieve operational efficiency at scale with the PagerDuty Operations Cloud. The PagerDuty Operations Cloud combines AIOps, Automation, Customer Service Operations and Incident Management with a powerful generative AI assistant to create a flexible, resilient, and scalable platform to increase innovation velocity, grow revenue, reduce cost, and mitigate the risk of operational failure. Half of the Fortune 500 and nearly 70% of the Fortune 100 rely on PagerDuty as essential infrastructure for the modern enterprise. To learn more and try PagerDuty for free, visit www.pagerduty.com.

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