Incident Management in the Age of Customer-Centricity
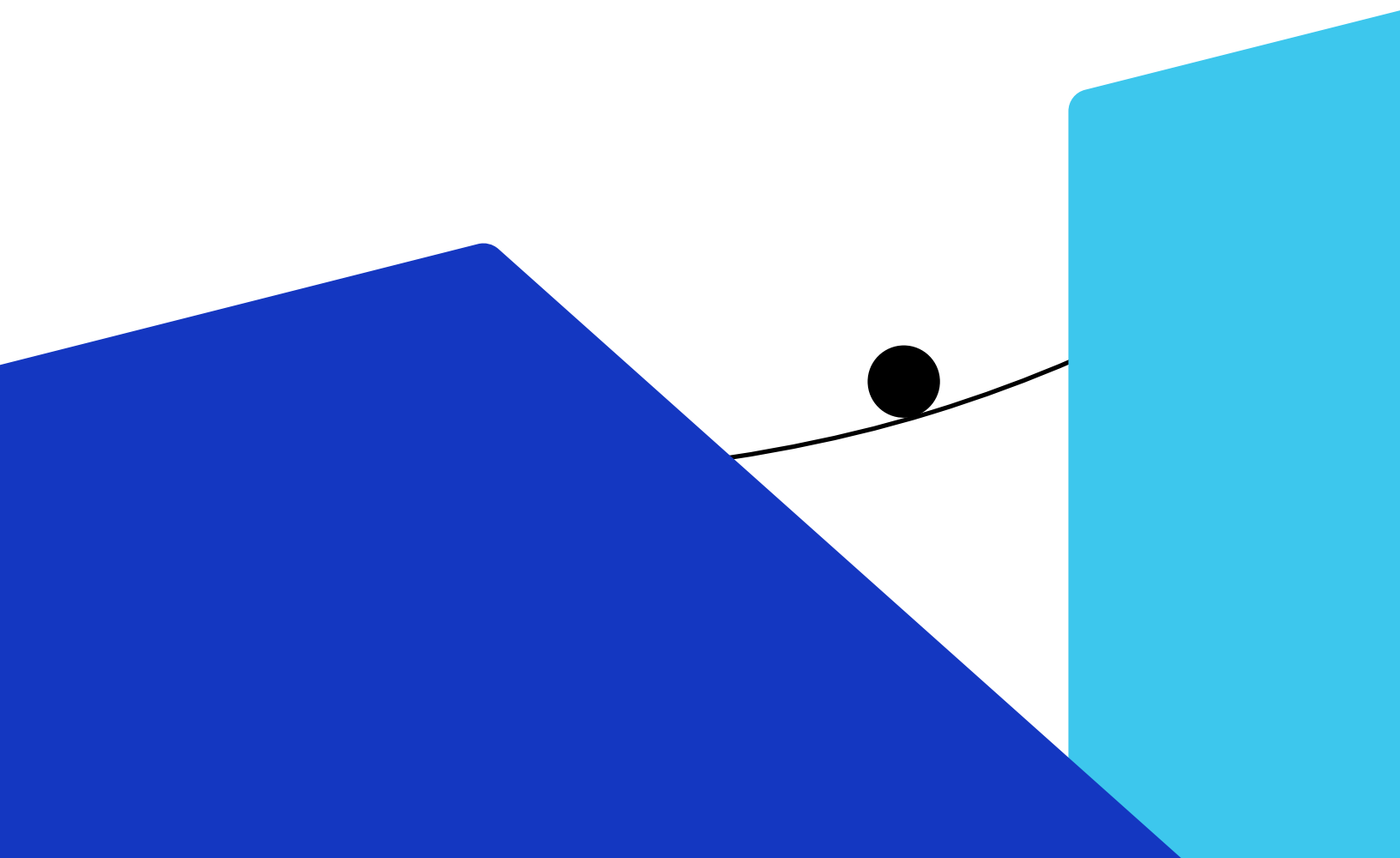
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Executive Summary

Technology has taken a prominent role in helping businesses create repeatable positive customer experiences—especially for enterprises who provide digital services (i.e., online services, mobile app, etc.). Enterprises undergoing a digital transformation have also come to realize that their business success is inextricably tied to the quality of their customers' experiences (i.e., quick connectivity, minimal service interruptions/digital service uptime, quick and efficient service and support). Adding to this, today's tech-savvy customers are increasingly empowered with unlimited options and low switching costs which make it easier to move on to an alternative if their increasing demands for high quality experiences and the latest innovations aren't met.

For technology and digital service providers, providing a superior customer experience demands new IT architectures and places new expectations on the way previously siloed groups, such as DevOps, ITOps and business leaders, work together.

Ownership of the customer experience is now shared across roles throughout the enterprise

This report is based on findings from the Incident Management in the Age of Customer-Centricity 2019 survey, which examined the opinions of over 300 DevOps, ITOps and business leaders from organizations delivering digital services of varying sizes, including midsize and enterprise-level businesses. To better understand whether the pressure to innovate when delivering digital services impacts customer experience the survey asked for perspectives on:

- Whether current roles have evolved as a result of the increased focus on the customer experience

- If there is a gap between how development teams prioritize innovation vs. uptime

- Which roles are responsible for maintaining a superior customer experience

- The role of incident management in delivering positive customer experiences

- If the application of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), in incident response and management affect DevOps/SRE and IT Operations roles and practices
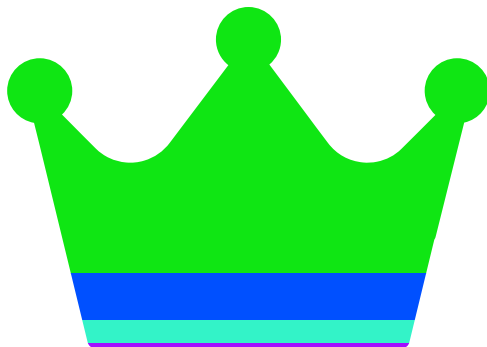
Key Findings

1   **91.7%** of respondents reported that delivering a superior customer experience is a priority in their role.

2   More than half of respondents **(54%)** reported that they introduce at least one new software release each week, including those who introduce several new releases per day.

3   Nearly half of other respondents **(40%)** reported that a new release is rolled out monthly or every few months. Roughly three out of four respondents **(74.4%)** say that their ability to build out services is sometimes or always affected by customer-impacting issues.

4   More than half **(57%)** of organizations are still experiencing degradations in their digital experiences, ranging from minor performance issues to major outages, on a weekly and daily basis.

5   Approximately half of development team leads **(44.8%)** indicate their developers spend more than 50% of their time manually addressing incidents (i.e., any negative impact to the customer digital experience ranging from core service outages to degradations in performance due to servers, databases, load balancing or configuration issues).

6   Even though teams across functions bear incident management responsibilities, more than half of all respondents **(62%)** noted that IT Operations is still seen as primarily responsible for delivering seamless digital services offerings.

7   Roles have also shifted as a result of the rise in new digital services. The top ways roles have shifted include learning new technologies, reported by **63.1%** respondents; gaining a better understanding of incident management and issue resolution best practices, reported by **51.9%** of respondents; as well as needing to manage more data, reported by **49.7%** of respondents.

8   As a result of the rise in new digital services, top challenges IT organizations face include increased difficulty in capacity planning (e.g., predict growth, needs of business, migration to the cloud, etc.) **(57.4%)**, increased complexity resulting in more cognitive load **(48.4%)** and increased number of tools **(37.5%)**.

9   Monitoring tools were selected by the majority of respondents **(64.7%)** as the top IT tool or service for delivering optimal customer experiences, while incident management was selected by over a third **(32.7%)**, indicating that a modern approach to incident management is required for providing stellar digital experiences.

10   **83.9%** of DevOps/SRE respondents, **72.9%** of IT Operations respondents and **64.9%** of Developers believe emerging technologies such as AI and ML will help them do their jobs better.

Customer Experience is King, But Who is Responsible?

Customer experience has become a key measure of any businesses' digital transformation success. The pace of digital services innovation continues to accelerate. In order to continually deliver a high quality customer experience, many organizations are rapidly introducing new services, which must be supported. The role of those responsible for the delivery of positive customer experiences is also evolving and expanding. Nearly everyone in the enterprise digital services lifecycle is responsible for delivering a superior customer experience.

The majority of survey respondents (91.7%) reported that delivering a superior customer experience is a priority in their role

- **78.2%** of respondents say that delivering a superior customer experience a priority in their role

- **13.5%** of respondents say that delivering a superior customer experience is somewhat of a priority in their role

- Only **6.7%** of respondents say that delivering a superior customer experience is not a priority in their role

- **1.6%** of respondents said they don't know

Respondents who reported that delivering a superior customer experience is a priority or somewhat a priority were predominantly those who held roles that contribute to the management of teams that deliver digital services, development or operations of digital services.
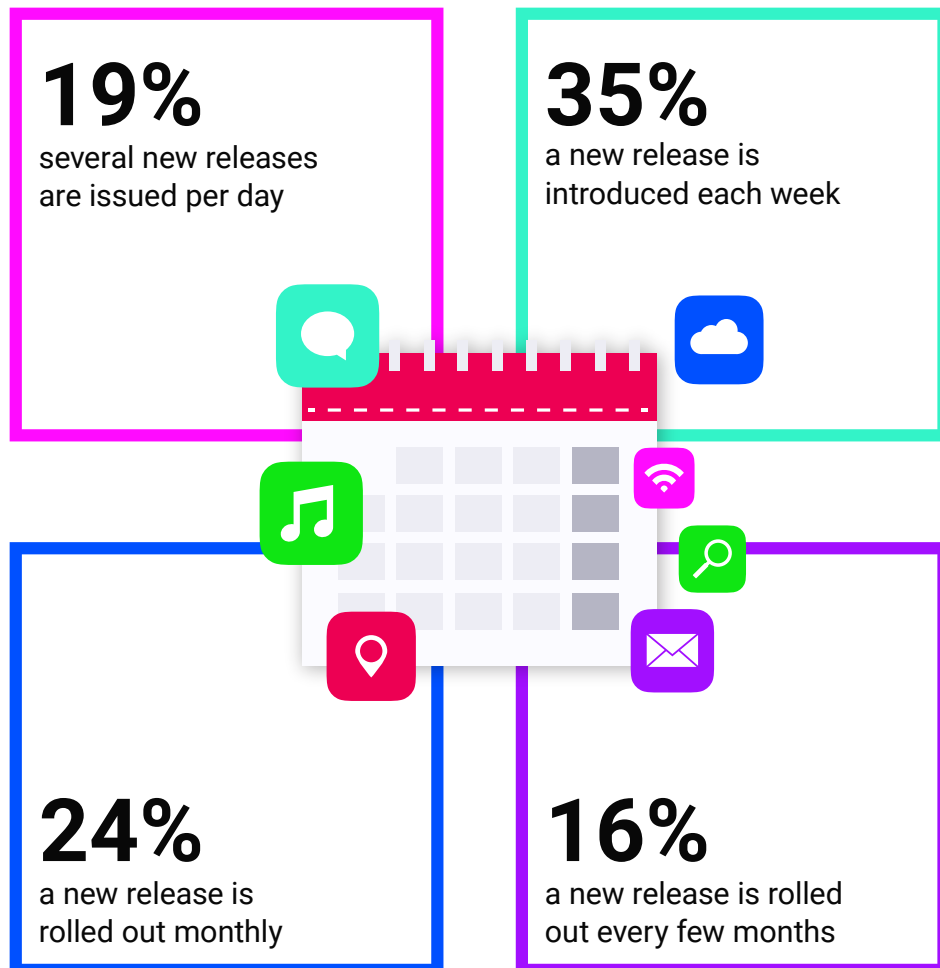
Delivering uninterrupted customer experiences

55.4%	**40.3%**	**23.8%**	**18.2%**	**17.8%**
Management	IT Operations	Development	DevOps/SRE	Development Team Lead
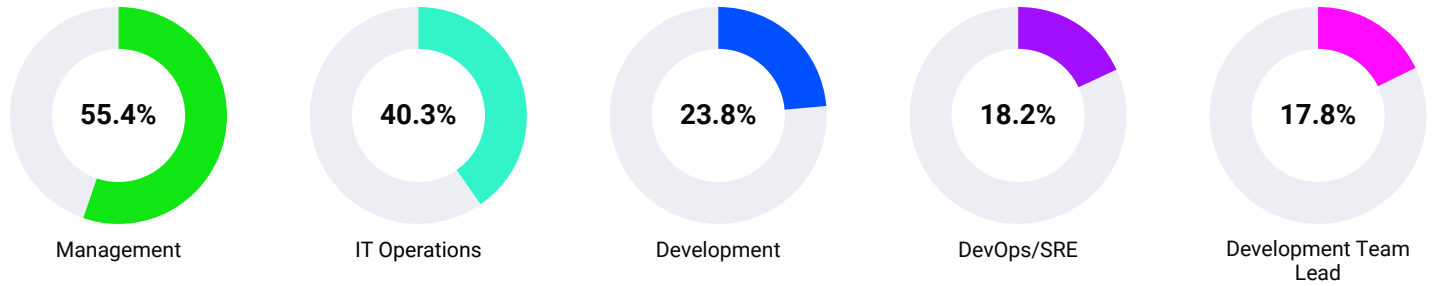
IT Operations professionals are still seen as primarily responsible for delivering seamless digital services by more than half of all respondents (61.5%). However, a shift in responsibility for the delivery of customer experiences means that developers, who ideally should be focused on delivering innovation, now share the burden of delivering an uninterrupted customer experience.

A Swift Pace of Innovation Impacts Customer Experience

Digital services organizations are delivering software releases significantly faster than just a few years ago. More than half of respondents (54%) reported that they introduce at least one new software release each week. Nearly half of other respondents (40%) reported that a new release is rolled out monthly or every few months.

19%
several new releases are issued per day

35%
a new release is introduced each week

24%
a new release is rolled out monthly

16%
a new release is rolled out every few months

77%

report the amount of releases increased by at least 25% over the past three years

The number of software releases within these organizations have also increased dramatically over the past three years.

For companies issuing software releases at this high pace, the ability to continue innovating is hindered by the rise in customer impacting issues.

With this dramatic increase in the pace of innovation, more than half (57%) of organizations are still experiencing degradations in their digital experiences, ranging from minor performance issues to major outages, on a weekly and daily basis.

Frequency of service degradations experienced by customers (ranging from minor performance issues to major outages)

- 2.2%
- 20.8%
- 18.3%
- 22.4%
- 36.2%

- ● Daily
- ● Monthly
- ● Weekly
- ● Rarely
- ● Never
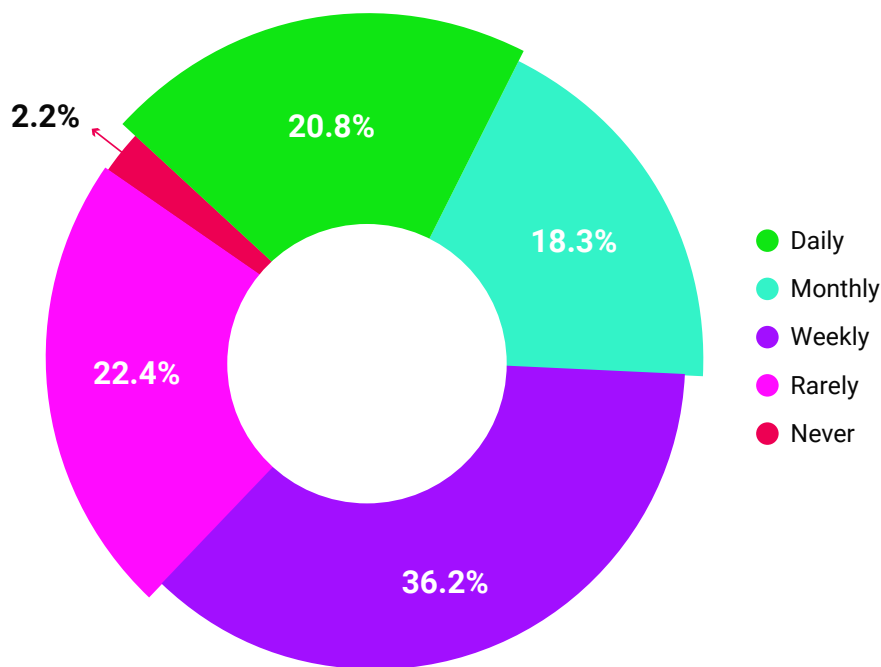
There is also a correlation between the frequency of releases delivered and the frequency of customers experiencing a degradation in their digital experiences. More than half **(54.9%)** of respondents who indicated that their customers have weekly degradations in their digital experiences reported that their organization delivers new releases weekly. Additionally, more than half **(56.9%)** of respondents who indicated that their customers have daily degradations in their digital experiences reported that their organization delivers several new releases per day.
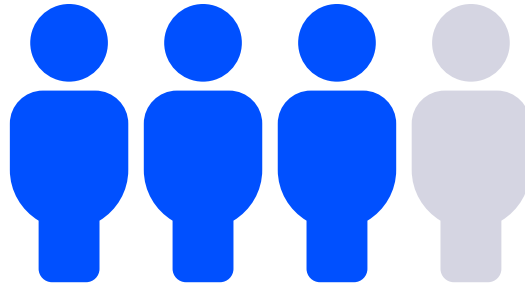
Nearly three out of four respondents (74.4%) say that their ability to build out services is sometimes or always affected by customer-impacting issues.
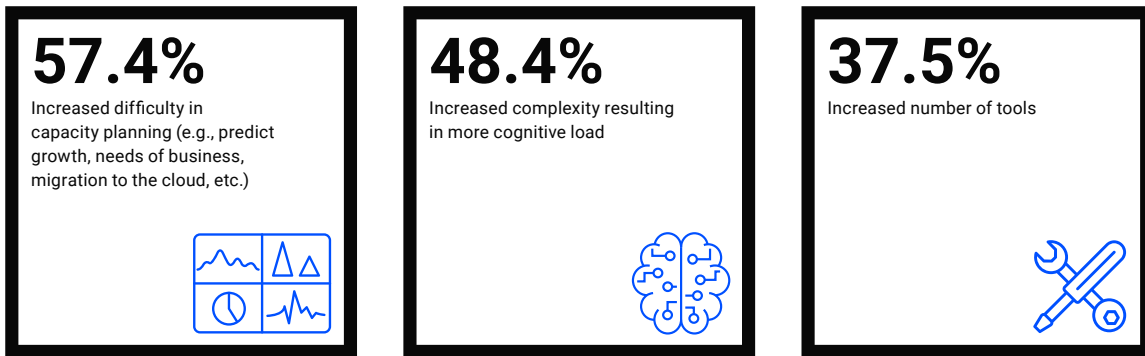
The Toil of Addressing Incidents

Approximately half (44.8%) of development team leads indicate their developers spend more than 50% of their time manually addressing incidents (i.e., any negative impact to the customer digital experience ranging from core service outages to degradations in performance due to servers, databases, load balancing or configuration issues).

Operational Challenges Abound

Although 79.2% of organizations say they are currently equipped to support digital service offerings effectively, IT organizations still face critical operational challenges as a result of the rise in the introduction of new digital services.
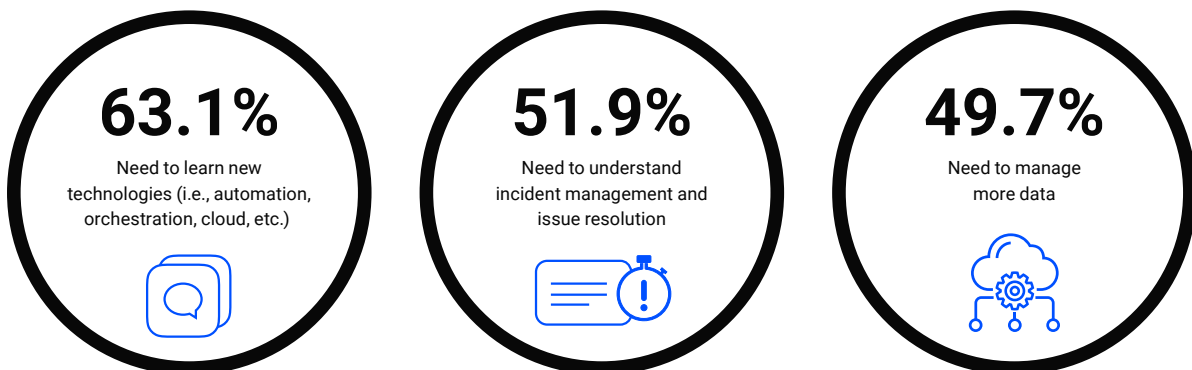
Top Challenges Technology Organizations Face Resulting from Rise in New Digital Services

57.4%
Increased difficulty in capacity planning (e.g., predict growth, needs of business, migration to the cloud, etc.)

48.4%
Increased complexity resulting in more cognitive load

37.5%
Increased number of tools

In addition to these challenges, respondents indicated that their role has also shifted as it relates to learning new technologies, gaining a better understanding of incident management and issue resolution best practices.

Most Common Shifts in Roles

While learning new technologies was the most prominent shift in roles cited by respondents, about 3 in 4 (77.2%) believe AI and ML could help them do their jobs better.

63.1%
Need to learn new technologies (i.e., automation, orchestration, cloud, etc.)

51.9%
Need to understand incident management and issue resolution

49.7%
Need to manage more data

The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)

More specifically, the majority of those who identified as Development, DevOps/SRE and IT Operations believe emerging technologies such as AI and ML will help them do their jobs better.
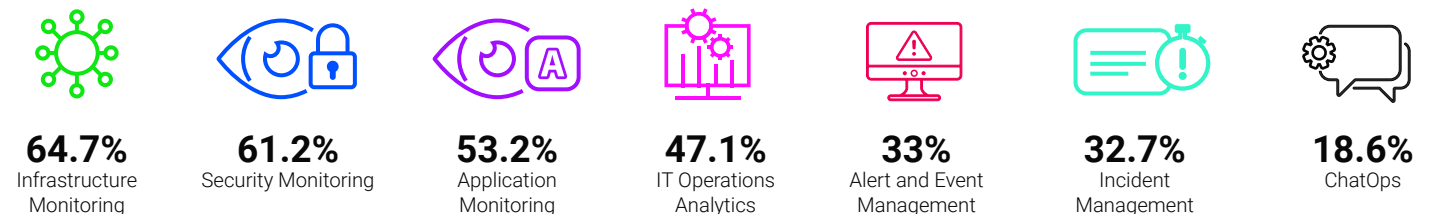
No

13.8%

Yes

77.2%
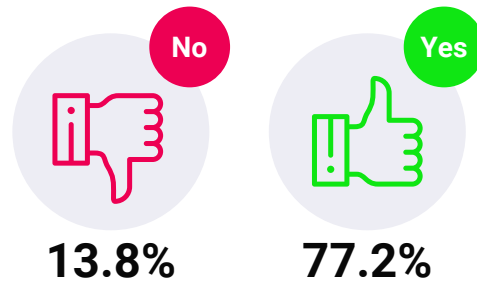
Monitoring tools were also selected by the majority of respondents (64.7%) as the top DevOps, SRE and ITOps tools or services for delivering optimal customer experiences, while incident management was selected by nearly a third (32.7%), indicating that a modern approach to incident management is required.

83.9%
DevOps/SRE

72.9%
IT Operations

64.9%
Developers

Top DevOps, SRE and IT Ops tools or services that provide the insight needed for teams to deliver an overall positive customer experience.

64.7%
Infrastructure Monitoring

61.2%
Security Monitoring

53.2%
Application Monitoring

47.1%
IT Operations Analytics

33%
Alert and Event Management

32.7%
Incident Management

18.6%
ChatOps

In With the New: An Intelligent, Automated Approach to Addressing Incidents

The digitization of business continues to have a profound impact on those most responsible for introducing new services and on those tasked with maintaining the performance and availability of not only the services, but also on the underlying architecture. These professionals describe an environment that is more challenging than ever and they acknowledge that too much time is still being spent manually addressing incidents. In addition, with today's digital businesses, the customer experience is not only a key measure for business success, but also a priority for nearly every individual across the enterprise. To address the need for this business priority, many organizations are introducing innovations at an increasing rate, including new services which must be supported.
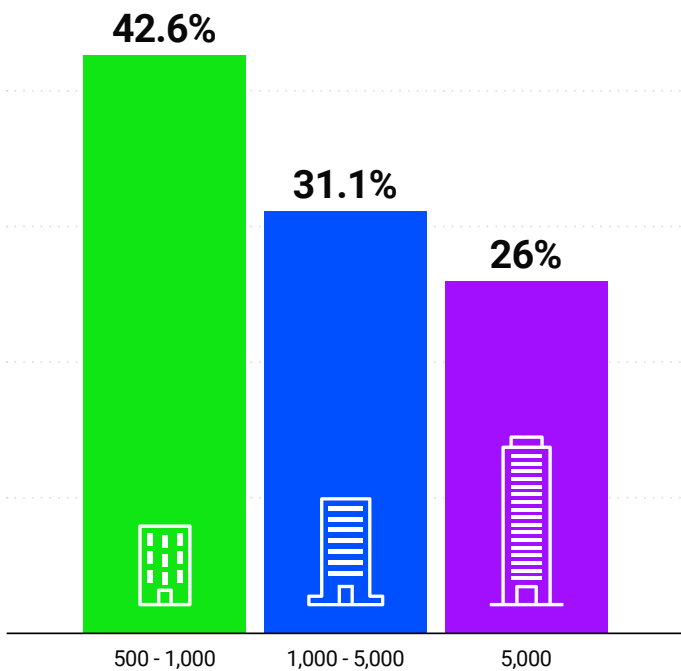
The gap between a company's ability to maintain uptime and its ability to innovate has never been more apparent as more than half of organizations have experienced a dramatic increase in the pace of innovation, impacting their ability to deliver uninterrupted customer experiences.

Closing this gap has become a priority among organizations that deliver digital services, making it even more critical to provide development, ITOps, DevOps and SRE teams with tools to support them in their new roles as incident responders.
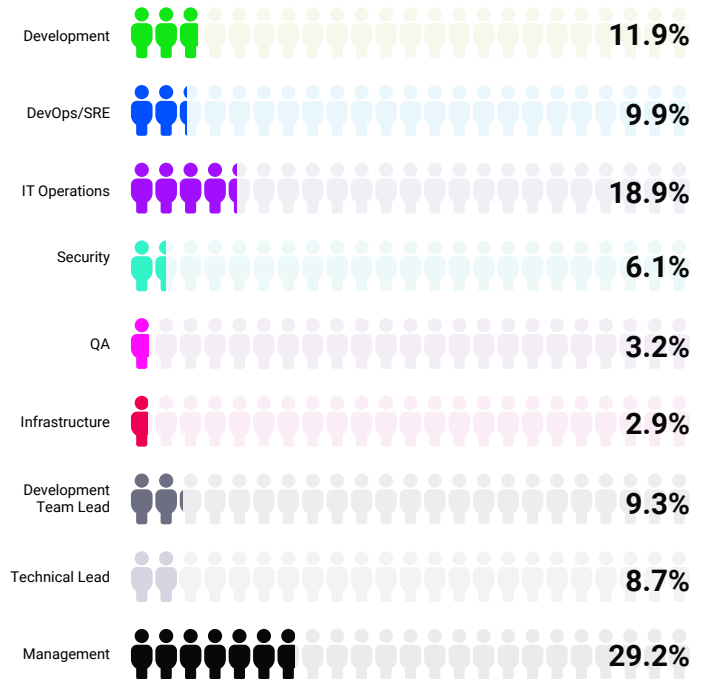
Innovations in incident management, including greater automation, more extensive integration, data/event-level visibility and advances in ease-of-use, will enable the healthy infrastructure on which uninterrupted customer experiences depend. A modern approach to incident management will help expand the reach of incident management workflows that help resolve issues at the pace of innovation and equip any employee across the enterprise with the information and resources they need to support digital transformation and deliver uninterrupted customer experiences.

Survey Respondent Demographics

Number of Employees in a Company

42.6%
31.1%
26%

500 - 1,000   1,000 - 5,000   5,000

Primary Role

Role	Percentage
Development	11.9%
DevOps/SRE	9.9%
IT Operations	18.9%
Security	6.1%
QA	3.2%
Infrastructure	2.9%
Development Team Lead	9.3%
Technical Lead	8.7%
Management	29.2%

Role in Management

- ● Manager / Supervisor
- ● Director
  (e.g., Director of IT, Director of Engineering, etc.)
- ● Vice President
  (e.g., Vice President of IT, Vice President of Engineering, General Manager, etc.)
- ● Executive
  (e.g., CIO, CTO, etc.)

51.7%
22%
8.8%
12.1%

Role in Industry

- ● Information Technology
- ● Financial Services
- ● Telecommunications
- ● Media & Broadcasting / Entertainment
- ● Manufacturing
- ● Public Administration / Government
- ● Healthcare
- ● Retail
- ● Transportation / Travel
- ● Legal Services
- ● Property / Real Estate
- ● Retail
- ● General Public
- ● Other

48.4%
27.6%
22.1%
14.7%
18.3%
14.4%
22.8%
4.2%
3.1%
8.3%
8.7%
15.4%
17.3%
2.6%

About xMatters

xMatters is a service reliability platform that helps DevOps, SREs, and operations teams rapidly deliver products at scale by automating workflows and ensuring infrastructure and applications are always working. The xMatters code-free workflow builder, adaptive approach to incident management, and real-time performance analytics all support a single goal: deliver customer happiness. Over 2.5 million users trust xMatters daily at global companies and innovative challengers including BMC Software, Credit Suisse, Danske Bank, DXC Technology, Experian, NVIDIA, ViaSat and Vodafone. xMatters is headquartered in San Ramon, California and has offices worldwide.

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) empowers enterprises and government organizations to anticipate, mitigate, respond to, and recover stronger from critical events. In today's unpredictable world, resilient organizations minimize impact to people and operations, absorb stress, and return to productivity faster when deploying critical event management (CEM) technology. Everbridge digitizes organizational resilience by combining intelligent automation with the industry's most comprehensive risk data to Keep People Safe and Organizations Running™.

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