



Consultants
an ALTEN company

MAJOR INCIDENT RESPONSE

PLAN

FOR E-COMMERCE WEBSITE CRASHES

Objective: This plan provides a structured approach for e-commerce companies to respond quickly and efficiently to a major website crash, minimizing downtime, restoring services, and maintaining customer trust.

1 Preparation and Prevention

MONITORING TOOLS

- Implement robust real-time monitoring tools to track website performance (e.g., New Relic, Datadog, or Pingdom).
- Set up automated alerts to notify key stakeholders (technical teams, leadership, and customer support) of unusual activity or crashes.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT)

- Establish a cross-functional team, including IT, DevOps, customer support, PR, and legal, responsible for managing incidents.
- Define roles and responsibilities:

Incident Commander:

Oversees the response.

Technical Lead:

Manages root cause analysis and resolution.

Communications Lead:

Handles internal and external communications.

Customer Support Lead:

Ensures proper handling of customer inquiries.

BACKUP AND REDUNDANCY

- Regularly perform **system backups** and establish **failover systems** such as load balancing and server redundancy.
- Maintain an **offsite disaster recovery** plan to restore services quickly in case of a critical failure.



Incident Management Team (IMT)



Incident Commander



Technical Lead



Communications Lead



Customer Support Lead



2 Immediate Actions Post-Crash

INITIAL NOTIFICATION

- Upon detection of a crash, trigger an incident notification to the Incident Management Team (IMT) and all relevant stakeholders.
- Prioritize assessment: Isolate the extent of the outage (specific areas of the site, global outage, performance degradation).

TRIAGE AND INITIAL DIAGNOSIS

- The Technical Lead conducts a quick triage to understand the root cause: server overload, database failure, cyberattack, etc.
- Classify the incident's severity:

P1 (Critical):

Full website failure, immediate business impact.

P2 (High):

Partial website failure affecting a significant part of the business.

P3 (Moderate)

Minor or isolated issues affecting limited features or user groups.

COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL ACTIVATION

- Initiate internal communication to leadership, employees, and key partners.
- Provide a 30-minute window for initial customer-facing communication through emails, social media, and website status pages.

3 Crisis Communication Strategy

WEBSITE UPDATES

- If accessible, post a maintenance page or status update on the website:

"We are currently experiencing technical issues and are working to resolve them. Thank you for your patience."

SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

- Use Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for real-time updates, ensuring customers know the issue is being addressed:

"Our team is aware of the current outage and working to fix it as soon as possible. We'll keep you posted with progress updates."

EMAIL AND PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

- Send an email to all customers acknowledging the issue and offering reassurances: *"We apologize for the inconvenience caused by our website outage. We're working around the clock to restore service and appreciate your patience."*

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

- Equip the customer service team with **scripts and FAQs** to answer common customer questions about the crash, refund policies, and expected service restoration times.

4 Incident Resolution

ROOT CAUSE IDENTIFICATION AND FIX

- The Technical Team performs a root cause analysis to identify the source of the issue, whether it's infrastructure-related, software, or security.
- Initiate immediate actions to fix the issue:

Scaling servers to handle traffic overload.

Restoring databases from backups in case of corruption.

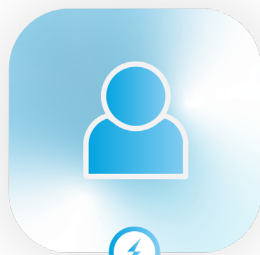
Implementing patches if the crash is caused by software bugs or vulnerabilities.

CONTINGENCY MEASURES

- If the issue cannot be resolved quickly, activate business continuity measures such as:

Redirecting traffic to a static page for essential customer communications.

Offering alternative channels for placing orders, such as phone lines or apps.



5 Post-Incident Actions

FULL RESTORATION AND TESTING

- Once the website is back online, test thoroughly to ensure all systems are functioning correctly.
- Monitor closely for recurring issues or additional problems post-crash.

CUSTOMER FOLLOW-UP

- Send a post-recovery communication to customers, acknowledging the issue and explaining what has been done to prevent future incidents. *"We apologize for the inconvenience caused by the recent outage. Our team has identified the cause and implemented a solution to ensure this does not happen again."*
- Consider offering compensation (discount codes, free shipping, etc.) for the inconvenience caused.

POST-INCIDENT REVIEW

- Within 24-48 hours, hold a post-incident review with all stakeholders. Document the following:



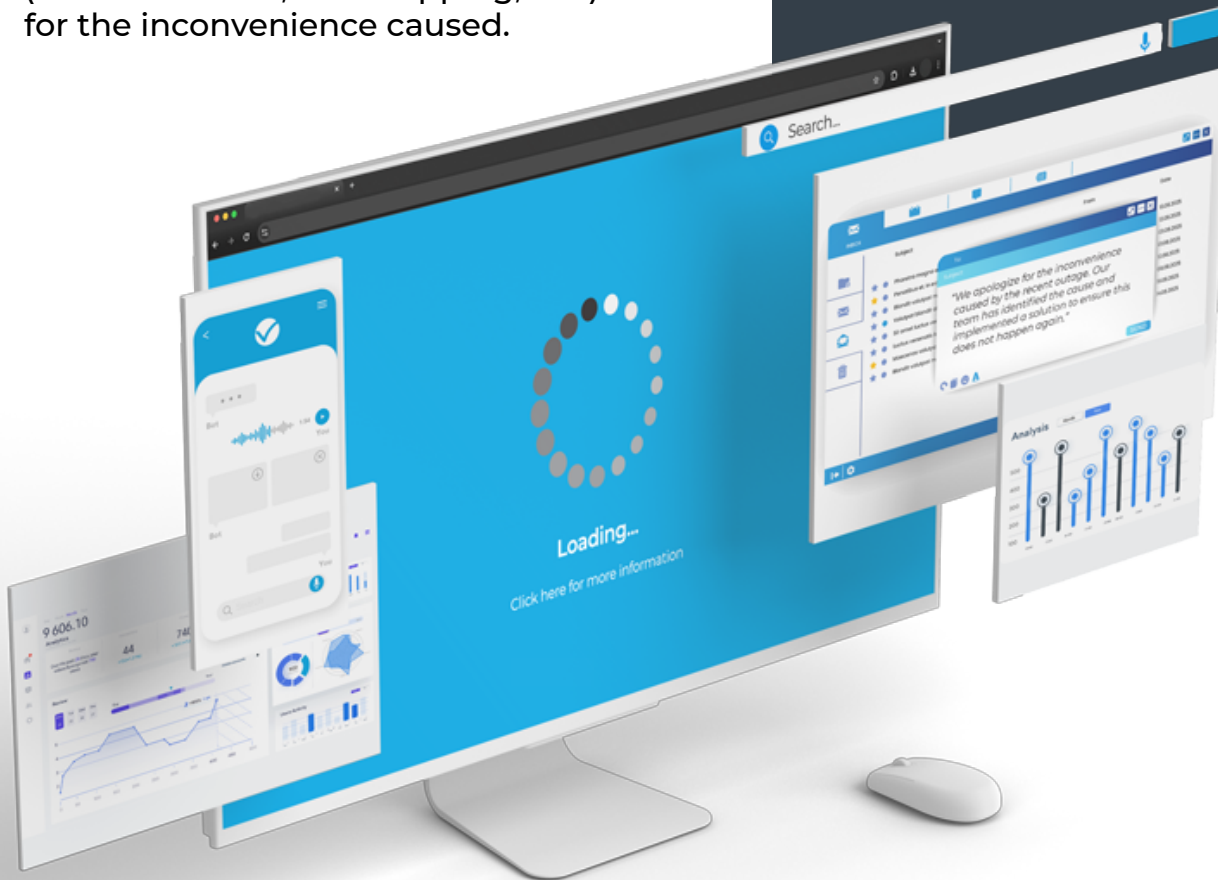
Timeline of events
from detection to resolution



Technical root cause
and how it was fixed.



Response efficiency:
Were protocols followed, and where can improvements be made?



6 Future Prevention and Continuous Improvement

SYSTEM UPGRADES AND MONITORING

- Review and upgrade system infrastructure to handle higher traffic, especially during peak periods (e.g., Black Friday).
- Invest in more advanced monitoring tools to improve response times and prevent future crashes.

DOCUMENTATION AND TRAINING

- Update the Major Incident Response Plan based on lessons learned.
- Regularly conduct training and simulations to ensure all team members are familiar with their roles during a crisis.

STAKEHOLDER REPORTING

- Provide a detailed report to company executives outlining the incident, the response, and recommendations for preventing similar events in the future.

THIS MAJOR INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN

ensures that e-commerce companies are prepared to respond to website crashes swiftly and minimize the impact on operations, customer trust, and revenue.

Ready to get started?

or go to qaconsultants.com/contact and fill out the form requesting our Performance Engineering services.



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This structured communication plan will help e-commerce companies maintain transparency, protect customer relationships, and limit reputational damage during a website crash.

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