

October 2021



The Origins of USAA's Postmortem Of The Week

➤ **Bringing Transparency to USAA's largest outages**

Adam Newman
Site Reliability Engineer
USAA



OUR MISSION



The mission of the association is to facilitate the financial security of its members, associates and their families through provision of a full range of highly competitive financial products and services; in so doing, USAA seeks to be the provider of choice for the military community.

THE USAA STANDARD



Keep our membership and mission first

Live our core values: **Service, Loyalty, Honesty, Integrity**

Be compliant and manage risk

Build trust and help each other succeed

Embrace diversity and be purposefully inclusive

Innovate and build for the future

Adam Newman

- **12 Years at USAA**
- **3 Years in Site Reliability Engineering**
- **Dad Joke Teller**



Obligatory Introductory Joke

- What do you call the engineer on your team who goes MIA for three days and then pops out with some amazing new code?



Obligatory Introductory Joke

➤ A Site Reliability Binge-ineer



Obligatory Introductory Joke





What Is USAA's "Postmortem Of The Week"

➤ (It is what it sounds like)

What Is USAA's Postmortem Of The Week?

➤ A Weekly Meeting



What Is USAA's Postmortem Of The Week?

➤ Everyone is invited



What Is USAA's Postmortem Of The Week?

- **Talk about failures**



What Is USAA's Postmortem Of The Week?

- **Throw people under the bus**



What Is USAA's Postmortem Of The Week?

- **DON'T** throw people under the bus



What Is USAA's Postmortem Of The Week?

- Occurs after the debrief





What You Need To Do

➤ Simple Logistics

What You Need To Do

1. Set up a meeting



What You Need To Do

2. Invite a bunch of people



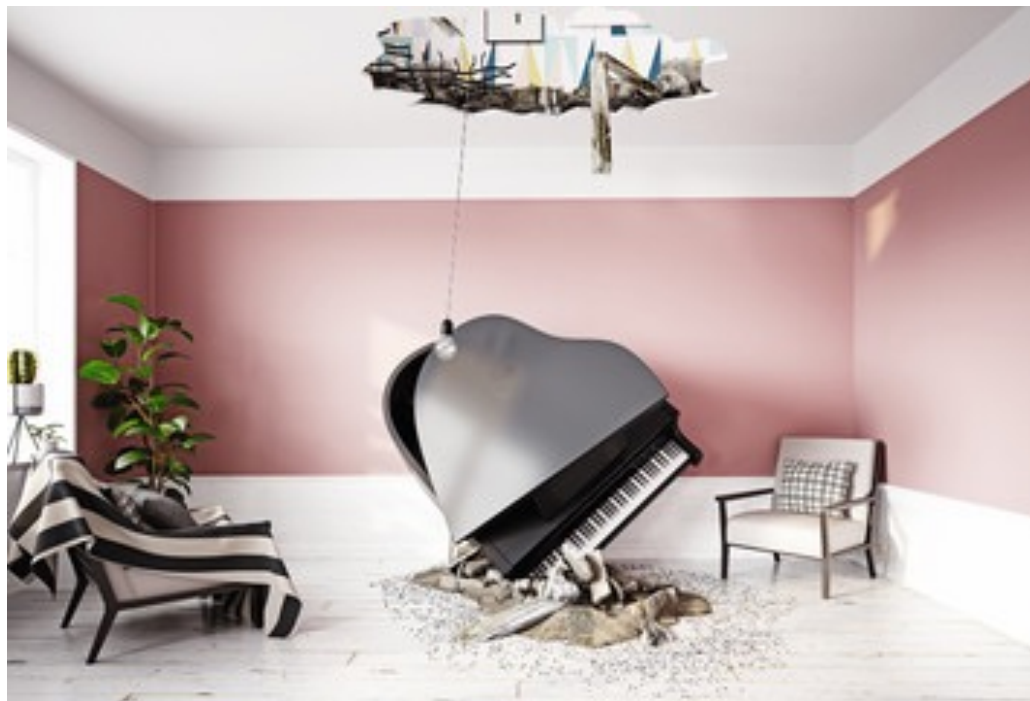
What You Need To Do

3. Get an executive to sponsor it



What You Need To Do

4. Find a cool outage to talk about





The Challenge

➤ Getting People To Speak

The Challenge

- **Question: What would it look like today if your largest outages were spoken about in front of the entire IT Organization?**



➤ Finger Pointing



The Challenge

➤ Engineers won't speak



The Challenge

- **The Challenge: How do you get people excited to talk about their problems?**





The Solution

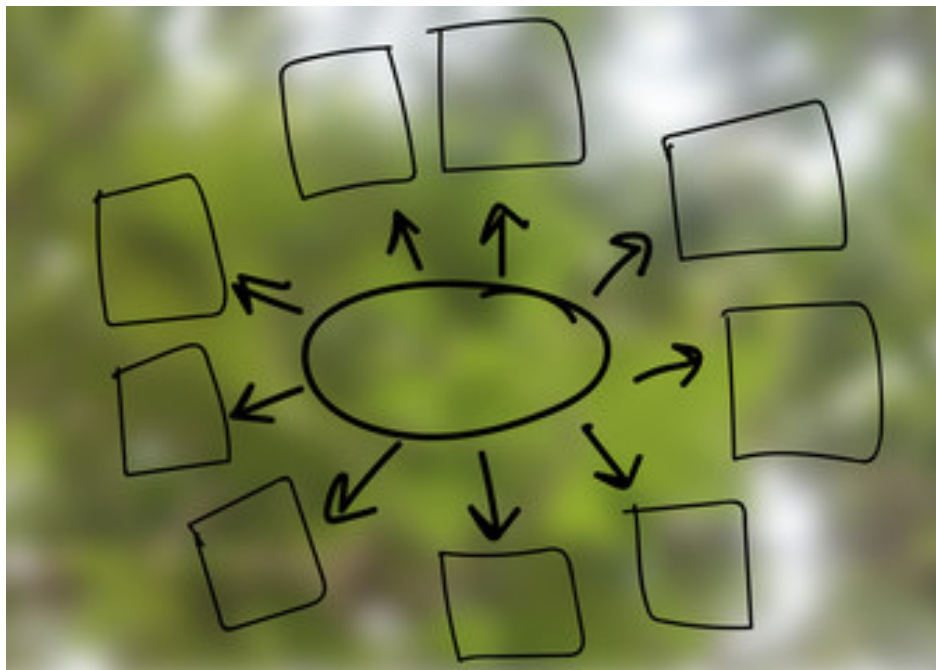
➤ **Fostering the Blameless Environment**

The Solution

➤ Preparation

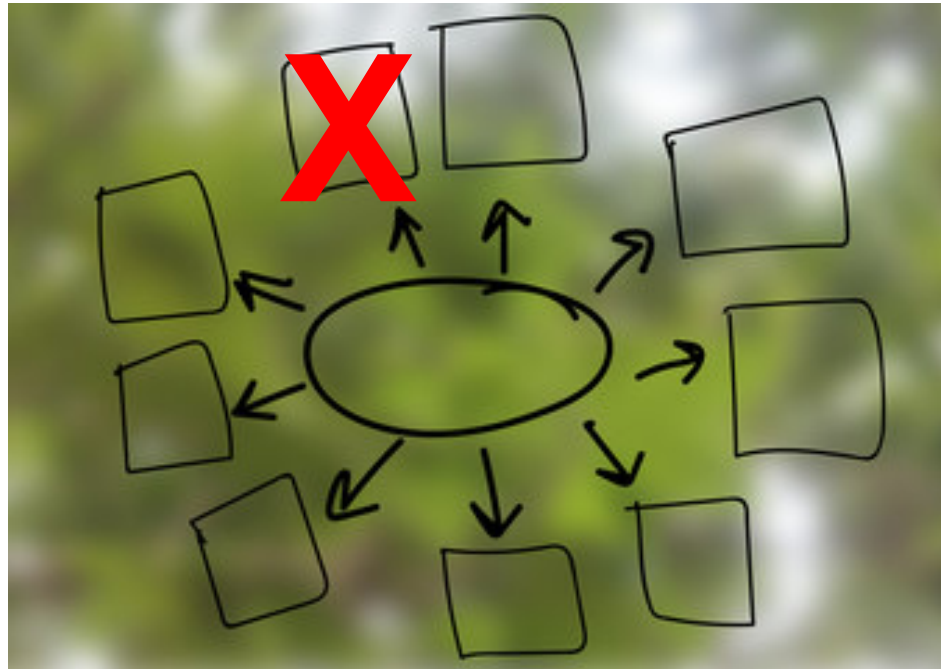


- Talk about the technology



The Solution

- Lead into the outage



- **Decide on profitable action items to discuss**



- **Internalize lessons learned for broader community**



- **BONUS: Get the clients to speak**



The Solution

- **Control injects into the meeting**



The Solution

- **IMPORTANT: Add a Dad Joke**





The Results

➤ **USAA's Awesomeness**

➤ Community



➤ Collaboration



➤ Safety



The Results – Bad Joke

- **Did you hear about the developers who spent all their time after the outage talking about how great of troubleshooters they were?**



The Results – Bad Joke

- Yeah, it was a great Boastmortem



The Results





Next Steps

➤ What the future holds

➤ Building Smaller Postmortem Review Meetings



Next Steps

➤ We want to help!



➤ Adam.newman@usaa.com



