PagerDuty

Managing Vendor Incidents

What do you do when your vendors are down?

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Speaker Intro

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The Cloud is Powerful and Convenient

Add functionality you need with little friction

Get the most up to date features with little need to manually update

It also brings risk

PagerDuty

https://www.datacenterdynamics.com/en/analysis/ovhcloud-fire-france-data-center/ SDIS 67 / Laurent Schoenferber

What matters to your users should matter to you

What matters to your users doesn't make it to your vendors

Organize Your Vendors

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Tier 1

Directly **customer** facing or in **support** of **production**

- IaaS
- Shopping cart, payments
- Search
- Metrics / monitoring / alerting

An incident on a **Tier 1** provider might mean a **revenue** hit for your organization

Tier 2

Part of your **build** and **test** process

- QA tools
- CI/CD and Deployment
- IaC
- Source code management
- Possibly user documentation, etc

An incident on a **Tier 2** provider might not impact your customers directly, but could impact your **ability** to **ship bug fixes** and **features**

Tier 3

Additional tools and workflow components

Outside of the workflow to get code to production

POCs, experiments, internal reporting

An incident on a **Tier 3** provider should not impede work on production

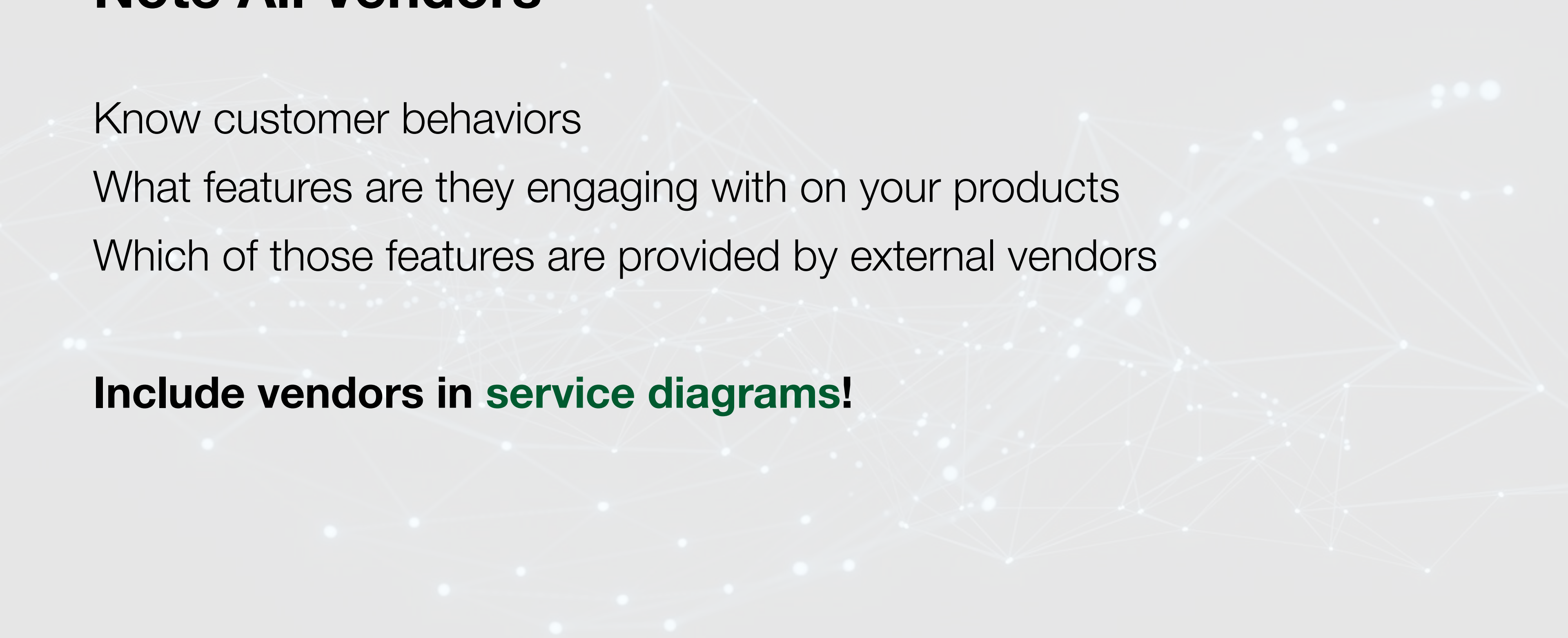
Other

Apps you rely on for your own **Incident Response** processes

Conference software
Team **chat**
Internal docs like **wikis** etc

These may just warrant a **note** and a **backup** plan
They are probably owned by **IT**, who might already have a plan and/or **runbook**

Note All Vendors



Know customer behaviors

What features are they engaging with on your products

Which of those features are provided by external vendors

Include vendors in service diagrams!

Image by MJH Shikder from Pixabay

Build Positive Vendor Relationships

For your **Tier 1** vendors:

- Consider buying up to a **premium support package**
- Not for help with implementation, but for access to **VIP support** and **account management**
- Have those regular calls with the vendor - so they know who you are and how important they are to your business
- It helps to be helpful - with bug reports, feature feedback, etc - that gets you more time with the vendor

Image by joakant from Pixabay

When your vendor has an incident

Your **customers** are seeing a problem

Your team is alerted by **PagerDuty**

An **incident response** process starts

Engineers **investigate**

Troubleshooting points to the **vendor**

Check the vendor’s **status page**, but there’s nothing.

Now what?

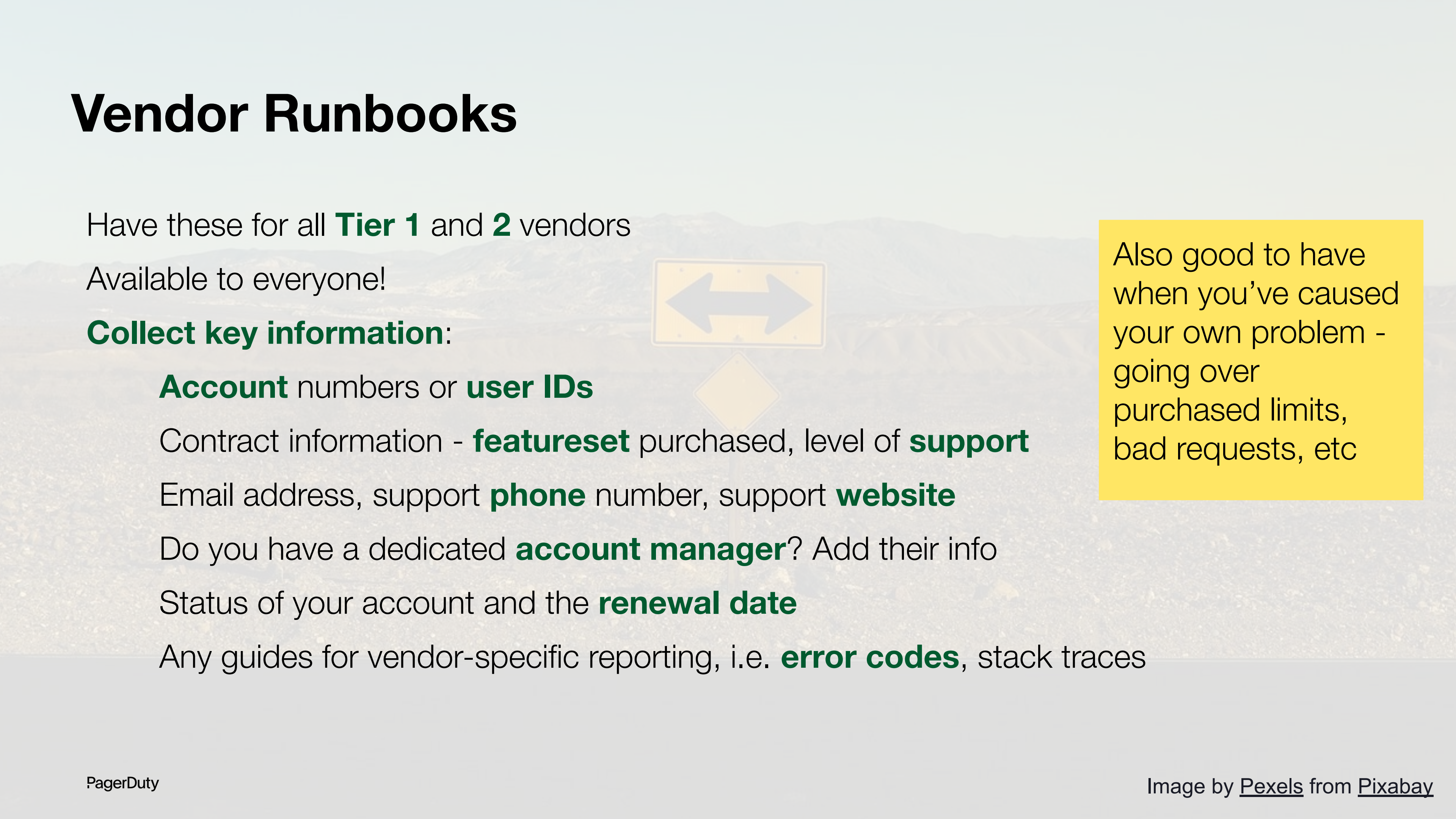
Owning the Vendor Relationship

Multiple teams interact with vendors:

- Procurement can be its own discipline
- Legal and finance may be involved before engineering is brought on
- Program managers or project managers for implementation
- Depending on the scope of the product, teams like Platform Engineering or SRE

When you are relying on a **vendor** for your **production environment**, someone or some team who has an **on-call responsibility** should be the **internal contact point** for that vendor.

Vendor Runbooks



Have these for all **Tier 1** and **2** vendors

Available to everyone!

Collect key information:

- **Account** numbers or **user IDs**
- Contract information - **featureset** purchased, level of **support**
- Email address, support **phone** number, support **website**
- Do you have a dedicated **account manager**? Add their info
- Status of your account and the **renewal date**
- Any guides for vendor-specific reporting, i.e. **error codes**, stack traces

Also good to have when you’ve caused your own problem - going over purchased limits, bad requests, etc

Image by Pexels from Pixabay

Contact or Wait?

Very **large** outages are noticeable and might make the **news**

Small subsystems incidents usually don’t

Making **contact** with your **account team** might get you on the **first-notified list**

If you decide to **wait** it out, appoint a **contact person** in your organization to keep an eye on the **vendor status**

Use your established **stakeholder communications** plan to keep the rest of your organization up to date

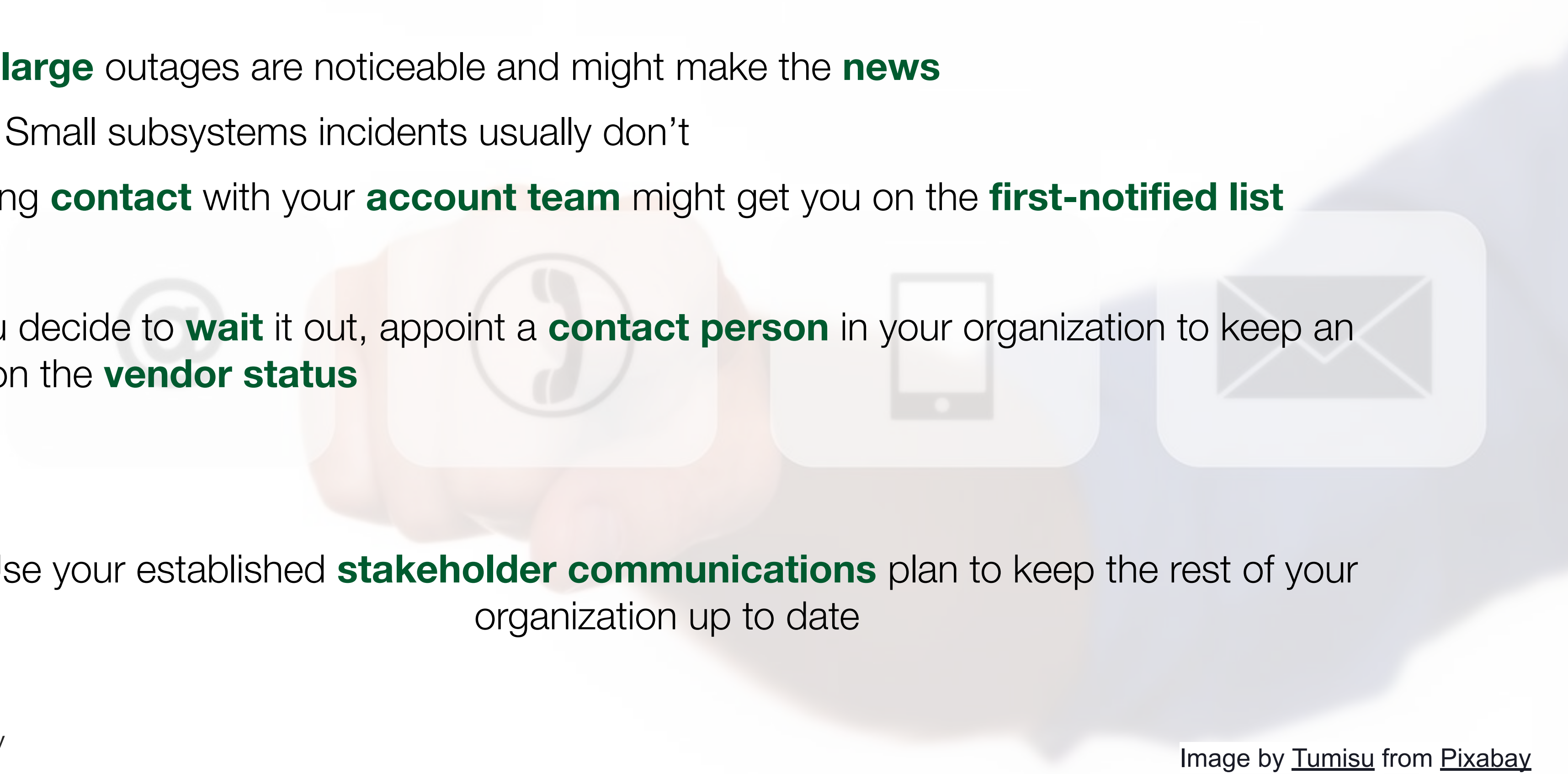


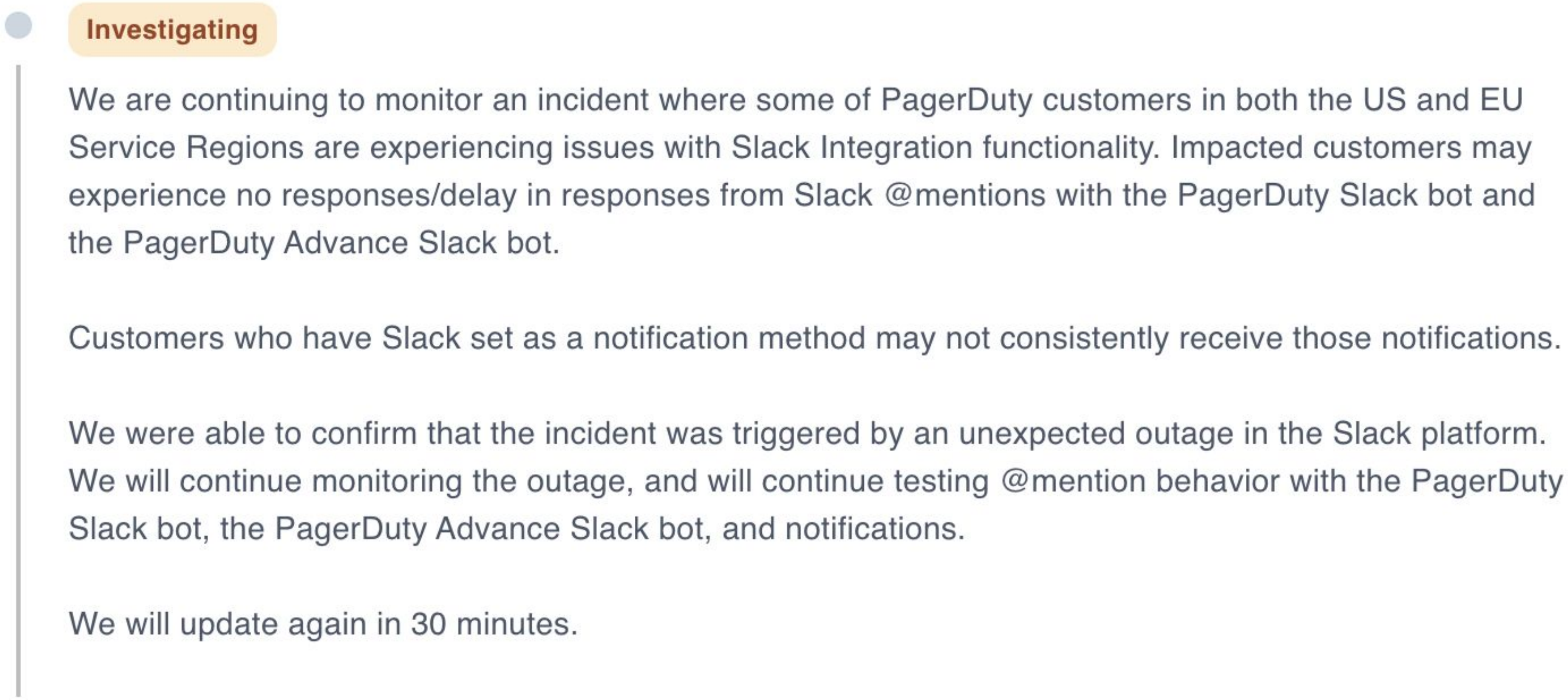
Image by Tumisu from Pixabay

Engage Your Support Team

Update your **status pages** and **customer messaging**

Beware **disparaging** comments

An example: PagerDuty users and Slack 2/26/25



Investigating

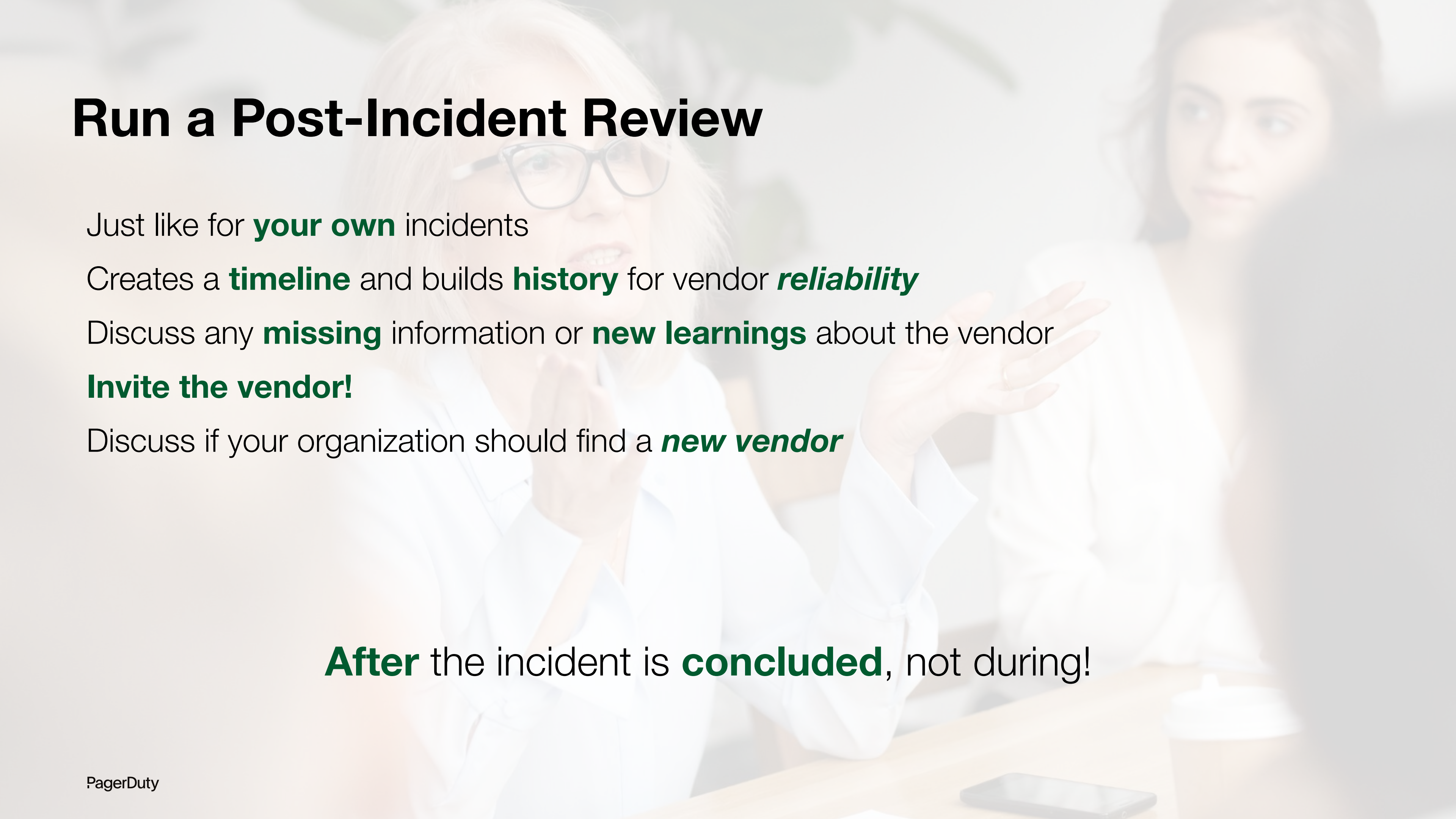
We are continuing to monitor an incident where some of PagerDuty customers in both the US and EU Service Regions are experiencing issues with Slack Integration functionality. Impacted customers may experience no responses/delay in responses from Slack @mentions with the PagerDuty Slack bot and the PagerDuty Advance Slack bot.

Customers who have Slack set as a notification method may not consistently receive those notifications.

We were able to confirm that the incident was triggered by an unexpected outage in the Slack platform. We will continue monitoring the outage, and will continue testing @mention behavior with the PagerDuty Slack bot, the PagerDuty Advance Slack bot, and notifications.

We will update again in 30 minutes.

https://status.pagerduty.com/posts/details/PB5WBMB



Run a Post-Incident Review

Just like for **your own** incidents

Creates a **timeline** and builds **history** for vendor ***reliability***

Discuss any **missing** information or **new learnings** about the vendor

Invite the vendor!

Discuss if your organization should find a ***new vendor***

After the incident is **concluded**, not during!

Summary

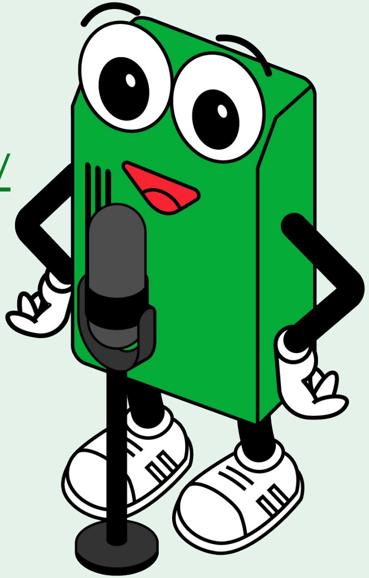
1. **Organize** your vendors
2. **Document** relationship owners
3. Create vendor **runbooks**
4. **Keep in touch** with important vendors
5. Keep your **customers informed**
6. Run **post-incident reviews** after vendor incidents

Learn More

https://pagerduty.com

https://response.pagerduty.com

https://www.pageittothelimit.com/vendor-incidents-with-jeff-martens/



Let’s continue the conversation!

Connect with fellow PagerDuty users and digital operations enthusiasts at your one-stop community hub for real-time ops. Join local groups, upcoming events & more!

Scan to join the Developer Community.

Leave a message in the “Introductions” forums telling about this event for a chance to win a special gift!