



The content described herein is intended to outline our general product direction for informational purposes only. It is not a commitment to deliver any material, code, or functionality, and should not be relied upon in making purchasing decisions.

The development, release, and timing of any features or functionality described herein remain at the sole discretion of Atlassian and is subject to change.



# Making incidents suck **less**

10 battle-tested tips



**KATE CLAVET | SENIOR TECHNICAL PRODUCT MARKETING MANAGER | ATLISSIAN**

# What we'll cover

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

- George Bernard Shaw



someecards  
user card

- Setting up processes
- Defining key information
- Communicating well

Credit: Someecards.com

# INCIDENTS ARE **COSTLY** AND STRESSFUL

**MAJOR INCIDENT**

## Website is slow

Create subtask Investigate Link issue Add form Add PIR

Abby Cole raised this request via API  
[View request in portal](#) [Hide details](#)

Affected service(s)

- Website

Affected application(s)

- Billing
- Customer Support
- Security

+ Add object

AJ Automation for Jira March 14, 2023 at 5:53 PM · Internal note

**Major Incident Escalation**

This incident has been declared a Major Incident. The priority has been increased to Critical and the Responders are being alerted according to the escalation policies and on-call schedule(s).

**Note:** Only managers may de-escalate a Major Incident. If you have raised this in error, please contact the manager on-call.

Edit · Delete ·

# WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS & PROCESSES, INCIDENTS CAN SUCK LESS

The image shows a Slack channel interface on the left and a Jira incident management interface on the right. The Slack channel, #itsm-13042, contains several messages from the Jira Service Management - Incidents app. The main message is a pinned incident titled "40727\* - Main Website is down, customers are receiving a 404 \*". The incident details include a critical priority, a completed status, and a description of a 404 error on the main website. The Jira interface on the right shows the configuration for this incident, including fields for labels, request participants, approvers, organizations, affected services, affected hardware, urgency, impact, severity, Slack, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, operational categorization, responders, major incident status, time tracking, and original estimate.

**Jira Service Management - Incidents** APP 12:57 PM  
joined #itsm-13042.

**Jira Service Management - Incidents** APP 12:57 PM  
set the channel description: Main Website is down, customers are receiving a 404 <https://banclyinc.atlassian.net/browse/ITSM-13042>

★ Pinned by Jira Service Management - Incidents

**Jira Service Management - Incidents** APP 12:57 PM  
**! 40727\*** - Main Website is down, customers are receiving a 404 \*

Priority: **Critical** Status: **Completed**

**Teams:** [Mobile Operations] **Services:** [Mobile]

**Last updated:** March 6th 1:01:12 PM

**Description:** Customers see a 404 error when trying to find the website, payments cannot be collected and sales cannot be made.

**Buttons:** Add responder, Inform stakeholders, ...

**Serena Mehta** 12:57 PM  
was added to #itsm-13042 by Jira Service Management - Incidents, along with Sammy Vito. Also, Kate joined.

**Jira Service Management - Incidents** APP 12:59 PM  
**! 40727\*** - Main Website is down, customers are receiving a 404 \*

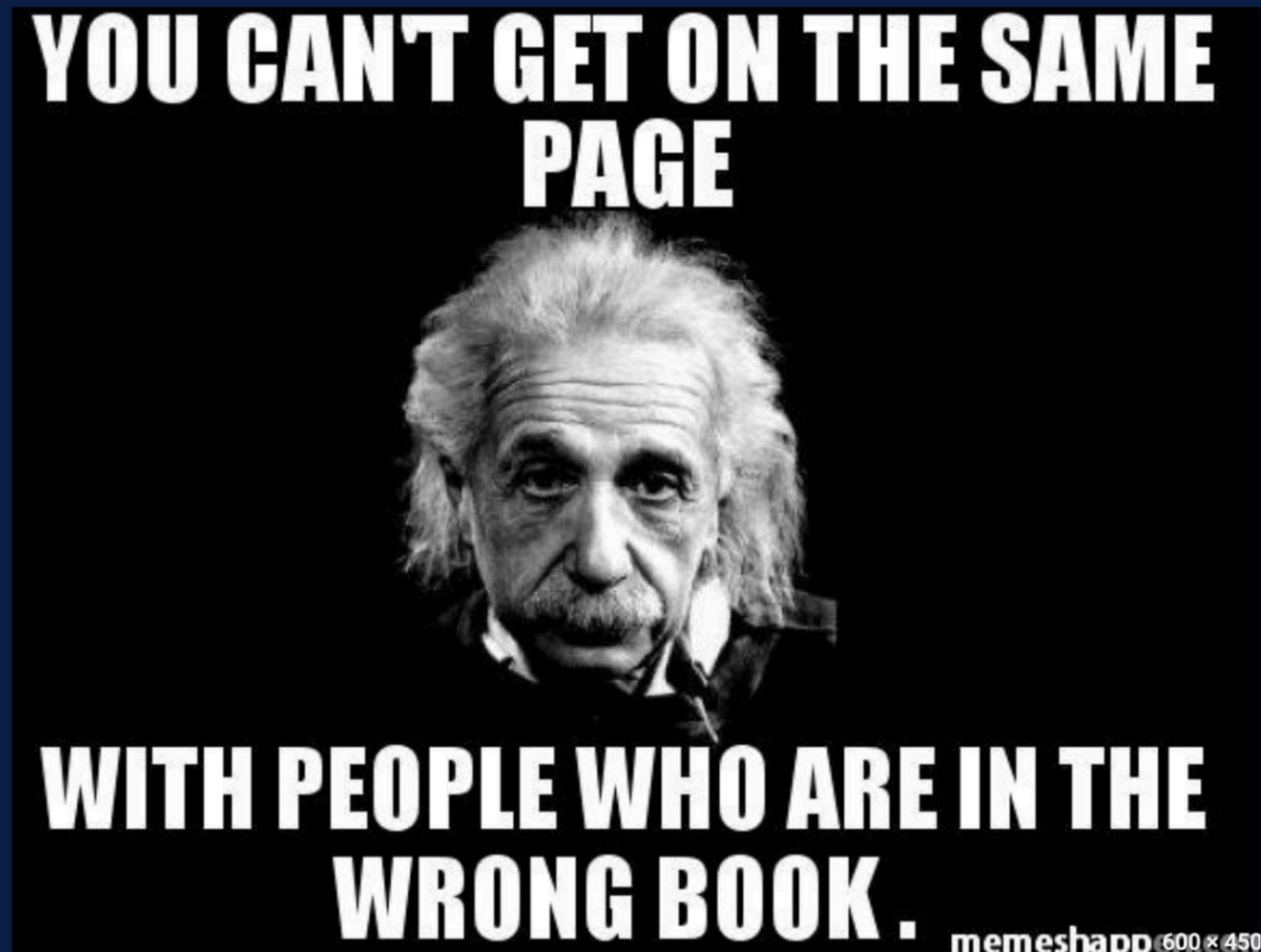
**Jira Service Management - Incidents** APP 12:57 PM  
Automation Rule executions

**More fields**

Labels	None
Request participants	None
Approvers	None
Organizations	None
Affected services	+ Add service
Affected hardware	None
Urgency	None
Impact	None
Severity	None
Slack	Create channel
Microsoft Teams	Join meeting
Zoom	Create meeting
Operational categorization	None
Responders	0 Responders
Major incident	Off
Time tracking	No time logged
Original estimate	Off

Created 3 minutes ago Updated 3 minutes ago Configure

# 1. Get on the same page



- Assume nothing
- Define everything
- Talk about the obvious
- Over-communicate

## 2. Define key terms

Term	ITIL definition	(Your company's) example
<b>Alert</b>	Notification that a threshold has been reached, something has changed, or a failure has occurred.	Scheduled maintenance during shopping hours for AWS EC2.
<b>Incident</b>	An unplanned interruption to or quality reduction of an IT service.	45 second web app outage, or 100 users can't access their account information.
<b>Major Incident</b>	The highest category of impact for an incident. A major incident results in significant disruption to the business.	Web app outage for more than five minutes.

### 3. Capture and identify key fields



Examples include priority, impact, urgency, reported to, and assigned to.

Secondary examples include time to first response, time to resolution, time incident began, time incident closed, components, services, and many more.

# 4. Define & socialize SLAs & priorities

	Low	Medium	High	Critical
<b>Priority description</b>	Little to no effect on the ability to do one's job.	Limited loss of normal functionality.	Loss of normal functionality.	Severe disruption or degradation.
<b>Example</b>	Customer is a graphic designer and the request is for access to Spotify.	Customer can access email via web browser, but not directly via the email application.	Customer can't access their account profile.	Retail store website is down.
<b>Urgency</b>	Low	Medium	High	Critical
<b>SLA target</b>	48-72 hours	8-12 hours	4-6 hours	2 hours

# 4. Define & socialize SLAs & priorities

Projects / Central Operations / Project settings

## Service level agreements Add SLA

Set time goals with Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to help drive better quality of service across your service project team.

SLAs in this project:

 Time to triage normal change	Edit ... >
 Time to first response	Edit ... >
 Time to resolution	Edit ... >
 Time to close after resolution	Edit ... >
 Time to soak	Edit ... >

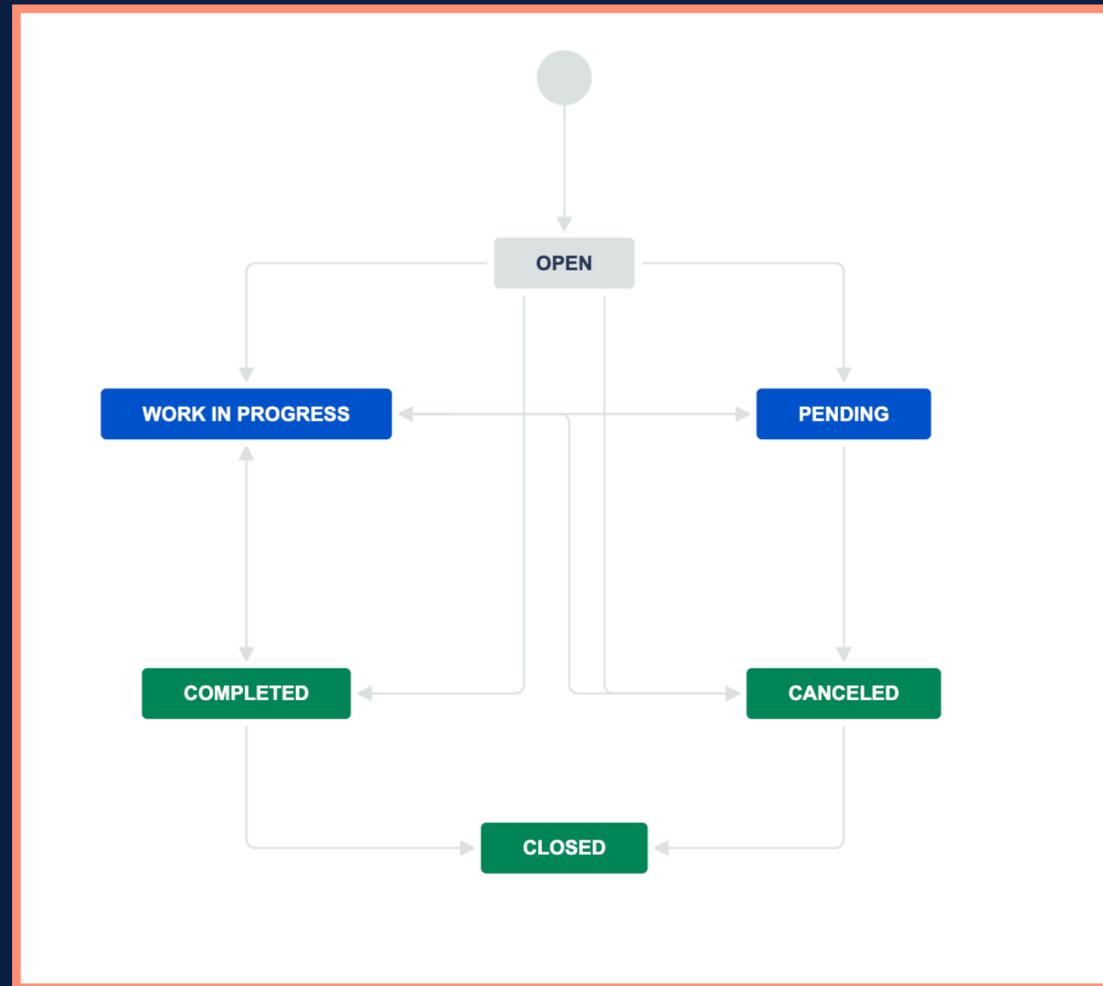


“Everything starts and ends with processes and expectations you set for communications. One of the best changes we made was adding an SLA for the time we expect a technician to communicate back to the customer.”

**Michael Marques**

ITIL-certified ITSM Incident Manager

# 5. Outline workflows & status changes



- Don't overcomplicate or over-customize
- Determine if alert priority and incident priority should match
- Define which parameters change an "alert" to an "incident"
- Put failsafes in place to prevent "false incidents"

# 5. Outline workflows & status changes

“

“When we changed our ITSM system a few years ago, instead of changing the way everyone works and leveraging what the tool had in place, we customized the new system as much as we did the old system. There is no end to the headaches this causes. If you’re just starting, I would stay away from overly complicated customizations – use what’s there to the best of your ability.”

**Michael Marques**

ITIL-certified ITSM Incident Manager



# 6. Communicate well

## Questions to ask yourself for both internal & external communication

- What channel(s) will be used for communication?
- What does effective communication look like?
- Have expectations been set and clearly communicated?
- Is the chosen style and method of communication building trust?



# No but really, communicate *well*

✓ Here's an example of a helpful communication:

*November 11, 2020 05:45 a.m. UTC*

Service is currently down for North American customers. The issue was first detected at 05:30 this morning. Our team is aware and looking into the problem as well as working toward restoration. We will post the next update at 06:00. As a result of the outage customers are unable to access their profiles, don't hesitate to reach out to support with questions.

## Includes:

- ✓ Time & date
- ✓ Description of problem
- ✓ When next update is coming
- ✓ Where to go with questions

# 7. Define incident response roles



“Let the responders do their incident-related jobs. Responding to frantic managers and customers AND trying to fix something takes more time than just working on the problem.”

**Patricia Francezi**

Jira Admin Service Manager,  
Community Leader

<b>Incident commander</b>	Responsible for managing the incident response process and providing direction to the responder teams.
<b>Communications officer</b>	Responsible for handling communications with the stakeholders and responders.
<b>Scribe/Note taker</b>	Responsible for documenting information related to the incident and its response process.
<b>Subject matter expert</b>	Technical domain experts who support the incident commander in incident resolution.

# 8. Practice & reflect

- 1 Did everyone know what to do?
- 2 Did everyone understand their roles?
- 3 Was the internal communication clear?
- 4 Did external stakeholders feel informed?
- 5 Did the process work well for the team?



“Plan for the disasters. Test the plans. Assume the worst will happen. Don’t panic.”

**Matt Doar**

Senior Jira Administrator, Community Leader

# 9. Socialize the processes & expectations

Socialize both internally and externally to stakeholders. Process and expectations mean nothing if they aren't well-known.

Make expectations clear to responders, stakeholders, and leadership.



# 10. Celebrate the good



**CREDIT: SARAH JANE VICKERY**

# Parting wisdom

1. Get on the same page
2. Define key terms
3. Capture and identify key fields
4. Define and socialize SLAs
5. Outline workflow and status changes



# Parting wisdom

6. Communicate; i.e., over-communicate
7. Define incident response roles
8. Practice & reflect
9. Socialize processes & expectations
10. Celebrate wins





Full guide at [atlassian.com/whitepapers/  
incident-management-guide](https://atlassian.com/whitepapers/incident-management-guide)