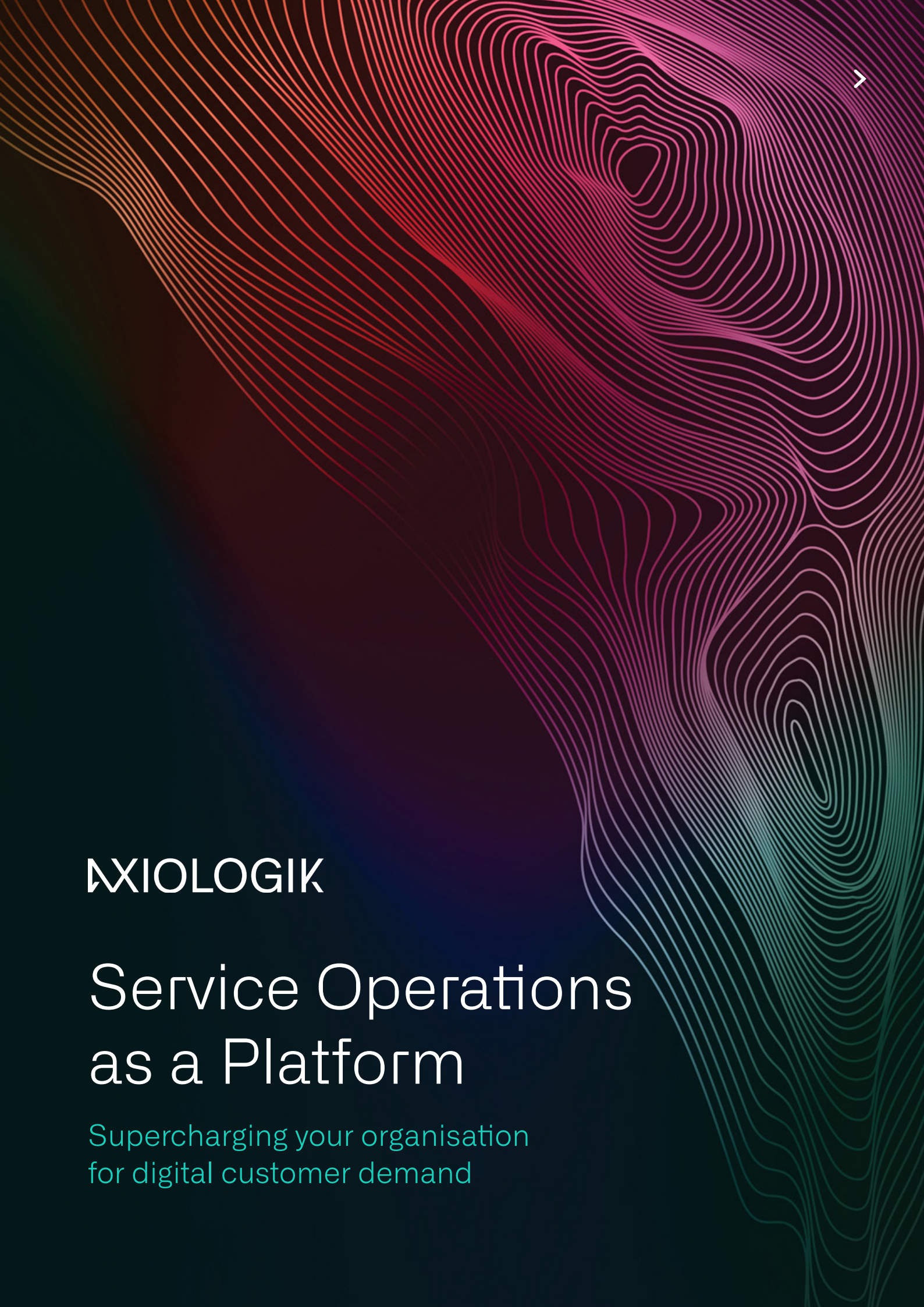




AXIOLOGIK

Service Operations as a Platform

Supercharging your organisation
for digital customer demand

Traditionally, Service Operations ensured performance and resilience through stability – IT estates were physical, locked down, and subject to infrequent, heavily-controlled change.

In recent years the technology world has changed beyond recognition. Dependent upon Digital products to drive value, businesses demand continual product refinement to meet customer needs; and in response, product delivery has revolutionised ways of working, dramatically increasing the rate of change, and thereby increasing the challenge for outdated operational teams.

To date, the response has been limited. Working practices have changed little, and improvements have been small and incremental. But this needs to change. Faced with ever increasing demands, traditional ways of working are no longer fit for purpose.

This paper discusses the challenges facing Service Operations teams and suggests a radical rethink in the way they work. Extending “shift-left” concepts, the paper proposes ever greater responsibility for live performance should sit with product teams, and that operational teams need to adapt to provide a “platform approach” to support this.

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Introduction

This paper was originally published in 2024, and received wide, positive feedback.

It argued that to keep pace with customer demand, Service Operations must undergo a significant transformation, similar to product delivery's shift from waterfall to more agile ways of working; reinventing itself as an enabling team rather than a gatekeeper. We referred to this as Service Operations as a Platform.

Since then we have seen an increasing prevalence of product-oriented delivery models, focused on driving exceptional customer experiences, further accelerating the pace of change, and increasing the burden on already stretched operations teams.

Additionally, the prevailing cyber-security landscape adds an increasingly ominous dimension. Attacks exploiting poor asset management, shadow IT, and opaque supply chains, with unpatched systems and undocumented dependencies, are the norm. In 2024, over 90% of ransomware attacks that progressed to encryption involved unmanaged or poorly managed devices (Microsoft Digital Defence Report), underscoring how asset visibility gaps and neglected dependencies directly translate into organisational exposure.

As a result, we see an ever-increasing need for modernisation. Service Operations must reinvent itself as an enabler, working to streamline and automate governance, equipping product teams to be operationally excellent, and safeguarding organisations against existential risks such as supply chain fragility.

Today, we believe this new version of paper is more important than ever. As a platform, operations teams can provide the expertise, governance, and discovery and observability capabilities for product teams to consume by default; and in doing so, help them deliver faster whilst also strengthening both resilience and security.

Context

As recently as a decade ago, Service Operations was a world defined by stability and control. IT estates were physical, tightly locked down, and subject to infrequent, heavily governed change cycles. Reliability and resilience were maintained through predictability, and Service Operations held a strong line against disruption.

The technology world has since changed beyond recognition. Businesses are now wholly dependent upon digital products to deliver value. Consumers demand seamless, constantly evolving experiences, and organisations have responded with agile methods, DevOps, cloud-native architectures, and product-centric ways of working. Change cycles that once took months are now achieved in hours.

And yet, despite the radical changes “up-stream”, Service Operations has changed little. In many organisations it’s “more of the same”. Much more.

Many organisations are now seeing the consequences of this imbalance. Change failure rates are creeping upward, and recovery times are lengthening, as rigid processes, inflexible approvals, and operational handoffs add friction to already complex delivery chains. The latest DORA and Accelerate benchmark reports point to a growing drift toward lower performance clusters, suggesting that more teams are struggling to sustain reliability in the face of mounting procedural drag. Industry surveys echo the same story: governance, risk, and compliance frameworks, once designed to protect stability, are now often cited as barriers to speed and effectiveness.

While hard causal data is scarce, the pattern is clear: when Service Operations optimises for control above adaptability, the system becomes brittle. The old adage, “you can’t break something if you never change it” may be true, but when adhering to this, organisations trade innovation and responsiveness for the illusion of safety.

Meeting expectations, driving value

Accepting that continual change is non-negotiable for successful digital products, Service Operations teams must fully recognise that new features and innovations are critical to attracting and retaining customers. Only by working together towards this common goal, Service Operations and Change Delivery teams can collaborate effectively, avoid conflicts, and ultimately achieve better results – greater business agility combined with service resilience.

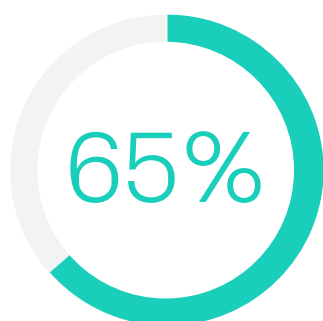
The Opportunity

Although the result of poor service quality appears to be self-evident, the true impact is much deeper than seen at a superficial level. In a world where brand loyalty is no longer a thing, lack of business agility, downtime and service outages present an existential threat to businesses.

208x

Slow release cadence hampers organisational agility

The seminal book “Accelerate,” provides evidence clearly demonstrating the value of this change in thinking. It highlights that high-performing teams that adopt a holistic approach not only deliver faster but also sustainably, with reduced failure rates and quicker recovery times. The research reveals that “elite performers deploy 208 times more frequently than low performers and have a change failure rate seven times lower.”



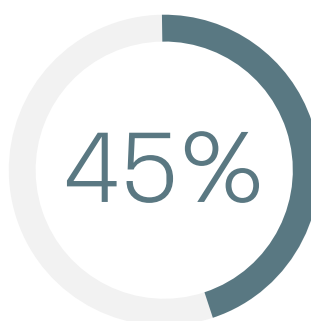
Long or frequent outages will damage your reputation

The challenges don't end with financial implications. The reputation of an organisation is intrinsically linked to its service reliability. A study from the Ponemon Institute found an immediate erosion of trust by 65% of consumers following a service outage or data breach. This sentiment accentuates the importance of robust integration testing, apt configuration management, and efficient inter-service communication protocols.

£1/2m

Every minute of downtime costs your organisation money

The financial implications of Service Operations cannot be overstated, as highlighted in the 2022 Outage Analysis report. Outages, often a result of overlooked considerations during product development or a lack of coordination with service teams, have vast implications. The report indicated that “an average outage could result in financial losses exceeding £500,000 for larger enterprises.”



Effective asset and supply chain management reduces security breach risk

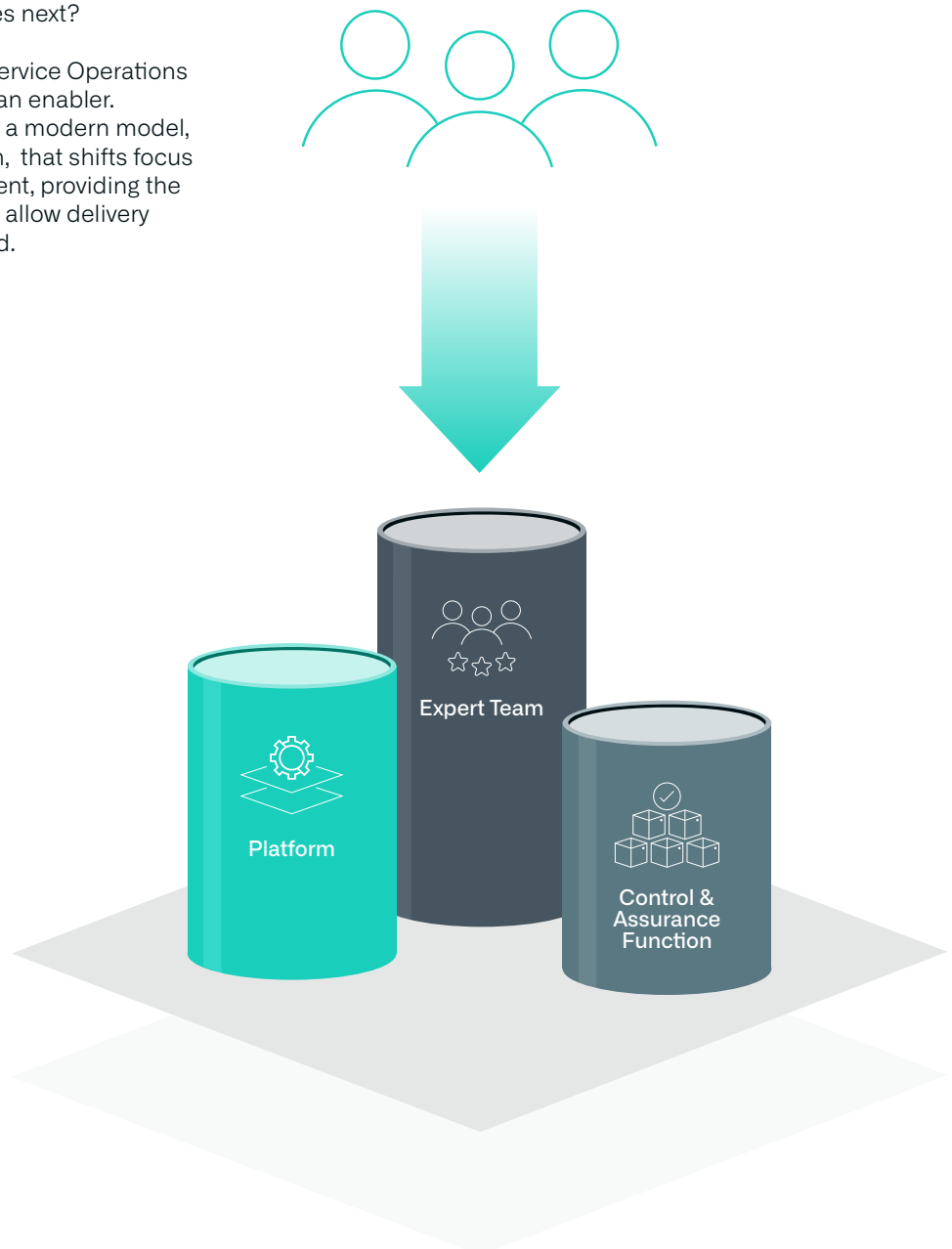
Effective asset and supply chain management is essential to strengthening cyber resilience. A Forrester study found that enhancements in third-party risk management, driven by improved visibility and oversight resulted in a **45 % reduction in the likelihood of experiencing a cyber breach, equating to \$2.3 million in cost avoidance over three years.** This underscores how robust supply chain governance directly reduces cyber exposure and enhances organisational security.

It is essential that organisations ensure their IT strategies resonate with overarching business objectives. A focus purely on IT-centric metrics, sidelining critical business metrics, is a misstep. A Harvard Business Review article provides compelling evidence on this front, pointing out that organisations that harmonise their IT and business strategies benefit from IT departments that are doubly effective, fostering improved business outcomes.

Service Management optimisation should not be a buzzword or an “initiative” but a shift in leadership thinking to enable businesses not only to keep pace with but outpace competition while delighting customers.

Having explored why traditional Service Operations approaches are no longer sufficient, and how poor agility and resilience pose real business risks, the question becomes — what comes next?

The answer lies in reimagining Service Operations not as a control function, but as an enabler. The following section introduces a modern model, Service Operations as a Platform, that shifts focus from gatekeeping to empowerment, providing the capabilities and confidence that allow delivery teams to innovate safely at speed.



Service Operations as a Platform

If continuous rapid change is essential to drive business value, traditional ways of working simply cannot survive.

Historically, Service Operations defined its value in terms of governance and control. Processes such as change approval boards, incident escalation chains, and release sign-offs were seen as necessary to protect stability. In the age of digital, these mechanisms create friction, delay, and resentment, and often add little value.

The future is different. Simply put, the “shift-left” concept needs to reach its logical conclusion – product delivery must take responsibility for ensuring services are engineered for resilience and can be successfully monitored and managed. Service Operations must redefine its role from that of a governance function to one of enablement – providing self-serve capability to support, implement and embed this thinking.

The Platform that Powers Flow

The phrase Service Operations as a Platform (SOaaP), draws from Team Topologies definition of “platform”, but the concept is that the team provides a range of capabilities to be consumed by product teams, **reduce their cognitive load**, support flow, improve resilience and ultimately drive exceptional customer experiences. An optimised SoaaP will typically provide: a platform, an expert team, and a control and assurance function.

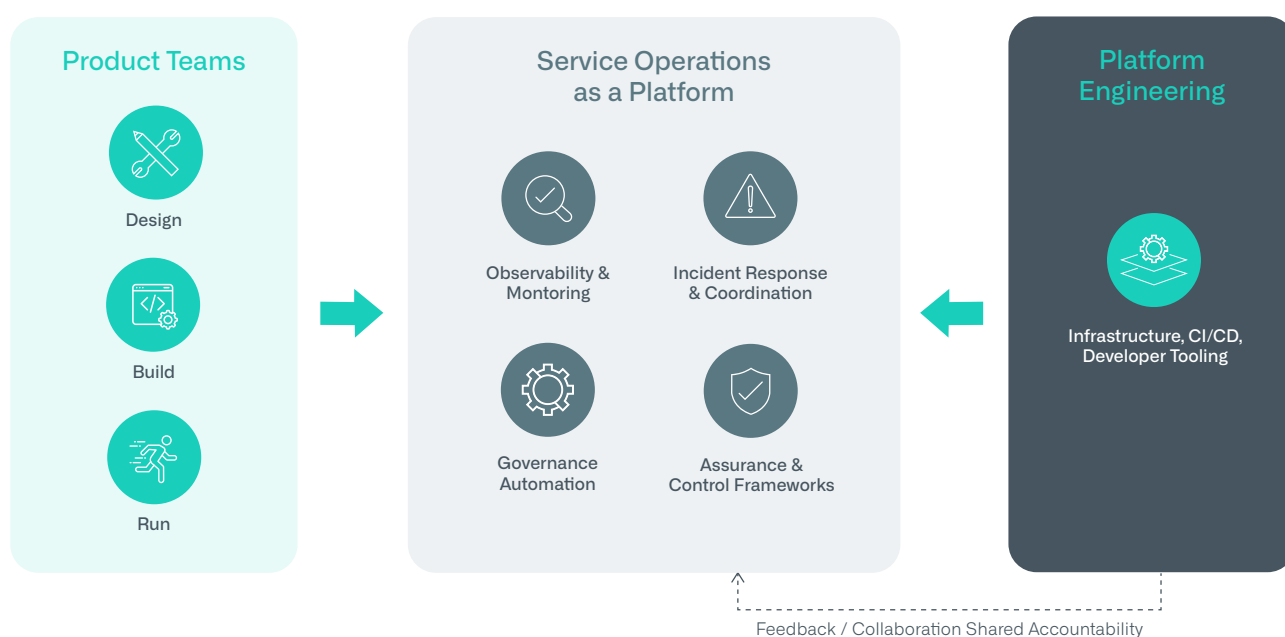
How	 Service Management as a Platform	 Service Management as an Expert Team	 Service Management as an Control & Assurance Function
What	Consistent tools, processes & services to enable a broad range of teams	Expert consultancy to support teams with designing & improving operational outcomes	Frameworks for teams to operate within that provide safety & protect the organisation from service risk
Description	Specialist Service Management related services and tools (e.g. helpdesk, alert response, reporting) provided to engineering teams as a valuable service that removes the need for the teams to build and operate these services themselves.	Expert Service Management support / consultancy provided to engineering teams to help improve IT operational performance within teams (e.g. Service Delivery Management, SRE, Service Design & Evolution capabilities).	Manadatory operational processes and governance structures which provide a minimum degree of consistency across teams, provide assurance on change delivery and protect the organisation against unnecessary / uncontrolled risk.
Success Factors	User-centricity of service offerings & positive impact of services on engineering teams	Level of service management & operability expertise of personnel and their ability to consult with teams	Penetration / adoption of control processes and adoption of common building blocks (e.g. path to production)

The Platform Lens

Drawing on the leading works, Team Topologies, Service Operations as a Platform (Soaap) must think of itself as a product team serving internal customers. This requires:

- **Clear service catalogue:** defining the scope and value of Ops-provided services, from monitoring to compliance automation.
- **Consumer-grade experience:** services must be easier, faster, and more reliable than teams building their own alternatives.
- **Continuous improvement:** Ops must track CSAT-style measures, usage data, and business outcomes to evolve services.
- **Accountability for value:** like any product, Ops platforms must justify their existence by outcomes, not processes.

In practical terms, SOaaP provides a set of reusable capabilities that span the full lifecycle – Design, Build and Run:



Product teams should view the Service Operations platform as a consistent, repeatable framework with clearly defined entry and exit points, whether through programmatic APIs for automation, or well-structured engagement pathways within the Service Operations service catalogue. The platform operates against an agreed set of services, processes, and standards that should “just work”, delivering a consistent service experience to end users, maintaining appropriate controls and observability, and ensuring that issues reach the right person to resolve them in the shortest possible time.

In this model, those with the greatest impact on service resilience, the engineers, have clear accountability for operational excellence. Crucially, they also feel the pain when incidents occur, creating a natural incentive to prevent recurrence and continuously improve.

Putting the customer first

Historically, bureaucratic and user-unfriendly service management processes didn't really matter. If processes were hard to use and subject to arcane governance, things were harder to release, and that was just fine by Service Operations teams.

But all this changes when we start to view Service Operations as a Platform. If Product teams are now accountable for their operational performance, then what matters for Service Operations teams is the extent to which they are “useful” to Product teams in achieving their goals. Rather than putting the brakes on, the role of Service Operations is now to help teams go faster with increased control.

Team Topologies, the seminal work on fast product flow and organisational dynamics, talks about the need for platforms to be considered as if they were ‘commercial products’ – i.e. they live or die by the effectiveness of the services they provide to their consumers. The services provided by a platform need to be better (easier to use, more cost effective, faster to adopt) than if Product teams were to build their own support capability.

As a supplier, Service Operations need to be held to account for the value they provide, and their services must fully meet the needs of both internal teams and end users.

From an almost unassailable ivory tower, Service Operations now has to become the most user-centric of organisations, continually evolving the things it does to better meet the user need, whilst also being held to account for its business effectiveness – in short, it needs to think about itself and be managed in the same way an organisation would consider its customer-facing products. This is a paradigm shift in mindsets for many organisations.

The evolution of Service Operations:

1. Be clear on the ‘service catalogue’ for Service Operations.
2. Take a user-centric approach to designing services that meet the needs of internal and external users.
3. Use data to understand how well both internal (e.g. ITSM processes) and customer-facing services (e.g. helpdesks) are performing, using both quantitative and qualitative measures (e.g. ‘experience’ or CSAT measures).
4. Hold Service Operations teams to account for the business results they deliver, taking a balanced scorecard approach and driving continuous improvement over time.
5. Allow Product teams to follow their own path if they wish, but the results must be better than those provided by Service Operations.

The Journey

Just as the move from project-based to product-based delivery approaches has been a gradual and ongoing evolution, so too will the transformation of Service Operations take time. This is not a “big bang” change, but a progressive journey that mirrors the continuous refinement seen in delivery functions, one of learning, adaptation, and incremental improvement.

It represents a shift from control to empowerment, and from reactive governance to proactive enablement, a journey that will never truly be complete, but will continue to mature as the organisation evolves. Service Operations must evolve through clear stages of maturity, building trust and capability at each step. This journey is not about abandoning control but about engineering confidence into every layer of the organisation, so teams can move faster, safer, and with greater assurance.

The Roadmap of Accountability

Every organisation begins from a different place, but the evolution of accountability typically follows three recognisable stages. Each represents a step towards shared responsibility and embedded resilience. These stages are described below:

1. **Centralised: Controlled but Constrained:** At the earliest stage of maturity, Service Operations retains full ownership of service stability and incident response. Change is tightly governed, processes are highly standardised, and control is prioritised over speed. This centralised model provides essential structure and transparency, a necessary foundation for organisations beginning their modernisation journey. However, while it delivers predictability and assurance, it also limits agility and learning, setting the stage for a gradual shift toward shared responsibility.

2. **Federated: Collaborative and Learning:** As confidence and capability grow, accountability begins to shift. Product teams start to take direct responsibility for incidents, problems, and live performance within their domains, but with Service Operations still closely involved as coach, safety net, and partner. Operations provide shared tooling, frameworks, and guidance, helping teams to develop operational literacy and good habits while maintaining oversight of critical controls. This is the “stabilisers on” stage — delivery teams are learning to ride, with Service Operations ensuring balance and consistency as confidence builds.

3. **Decentralised: Empowered and Platform-Enabled:** At full maturity, product teams own the complete lifecycle: design, build, and run, with Service Operations acting as an internal service provider and platform enabler. Governance, observability, and assurance are embedded into automated delivery pipelines, allowing Operations to focus on enabling, not constraining. While certain enterprise-level processes, such as major incident coordination or capacity planning, may still be carried out by Service Operations, accountability for resilience sits with the product teams. This is the “stabilisers off” stage — speed with safety, where resilience is engineered, not inspected.

The journey toward modernised Service Operations demands more than mindset change; it requires the right technical and organisational underpinnings. To move from theory to sustainable practice, organisations must invest in the foundational capabilities that make platform ways of working possible.

The Criticality of Strong Foundations

To succeed on the journey, organisations must invest in key foundations. These foundations are where Service Operations as a Platform (SOaaP) plays a pivotal role, providing the standards, tooling, expertise, and assurance that enable teams to deliver safely and at speed.

The key foundations are:

- **Estate management:** automated discovery and dependency mapping to understand what exists, how it connects, and where risks lie.
- **Observability:** telemetry across logs, metrics, traces, and user journeys; AI Ops for event correlation; self-healing to pre-empt incidents.
- **Radical transparency:** publishing performance metrics and service analytics openly to encourage learning and competition.
- **Automation:** CI/CD, Infrastructure as Code, policy as code, automated testing and deployment to eliminate fragile manual steps.

Change does not happen overnight, but with these foundations, organisations accelerate both cultural and operational maturity, with Service Operations guiding, enabling, and assuring progress every step of the way.

Managing your estate is fundamental to everything you do – understand the whole picture

If you don't understand what exists in your IT landscape, you can't manage or protect it. In the era of dynamic, hybrid, and cloud-native environments, that visibility must be continuous and automated.

Service Operations as a Platform supports this through:

- Providing standards, policies, and tooling for automated discovery, dependency mapping, and configuration management.
- Enforcing lifecycle management and baseline controls that ensure systems remain current, compliant, and consistent.
- Offering a control function that assures data integrity and configuration accuracy, forming the backbone of reliable change and recovery.

Good estate management might not seem thrilling, but its importance is paramount. Proper estate management provides the groundwork for secure, reliable services by accurately understanding system connections and essential components. This clarity allows organisations to maintain control, pinpoint risks, and ensure configurations maximise security and reliability.

A robust estate management strategy directly bolsters cyber resilience. Automated discovery and dependency mapping reveal the true shape of your digital environment — surfacing shadow IT, unmanaged assets, and outdated systems that often serve as entry points for attackers. Incomplete asset inventories are among the most common root causes of breaches; strong estate intelligence closes those gaps.

Modern discovery tools continuously scan infrastructure and applications in real time, identifying everything from servers and APIs to microservices and code libraries. When combined with security scanning and software composition analysis, this provides a complete view of an organisation's technology landscape. The resulting Software Bill of Materials (SBOM) doesn't expose vulnerabilities itself, but ensures teams have a precise understanding of what their software comprises, down to the most granular component, enabling more accurate, targeted scanning and faster remediation when issues are identified.

The same visibility also improves recoverability. By knowing precisely what assets exist and how they interconnect, organisations can rapidly isolate compromised systems, restore affected components, and verify recovery integrity. Estate management becomes not only the foundation for operational control but also for proactive threat detection, rapid response, and confident recovery.

In short, you can't secure what you can't see, and effective estate management provides that essential sightline, turning visibility into protection, and protection into resilience.

Systems must be observable

Service issues should ideally be identified and dealt with before customers see them; where this is not possible, they should be resolved in the minimum possible timeframe. **Observability is the key to achieving this.**

Observability delves deeper than traditional 'monitoring'. It is about understanding a system's health by observing outputs like logs, metrics, and traces, giving a comprehensive view. Instead of just tracking predefined metrics, observability enables us to foresee, diagnose, and tackle unanticipated issues, ideally before they manifest in production by ideally "self-healing".

Service Operations as a Platform enhances observability by:

- Providing standardised tooling, logging patterns, and dashboards that promote consistent visibility across products.
- Defining best practices and architectural blueprints for observability design.
- Offering SRE expertise as an enabling team, helping product teams embed observability from day one.

Crucially, observability shouldn't begin in production. Embedding observability in non-production environments allows teams to test and refine their telemetry, ensuring reliability before go-live. This not only improves quality but also tests the observability tooling itself, a vital step towards production readiness.

Through this combination of enablement and standardisation, Service Ops ensures observability becomes a shared language for resilience across the organisation.

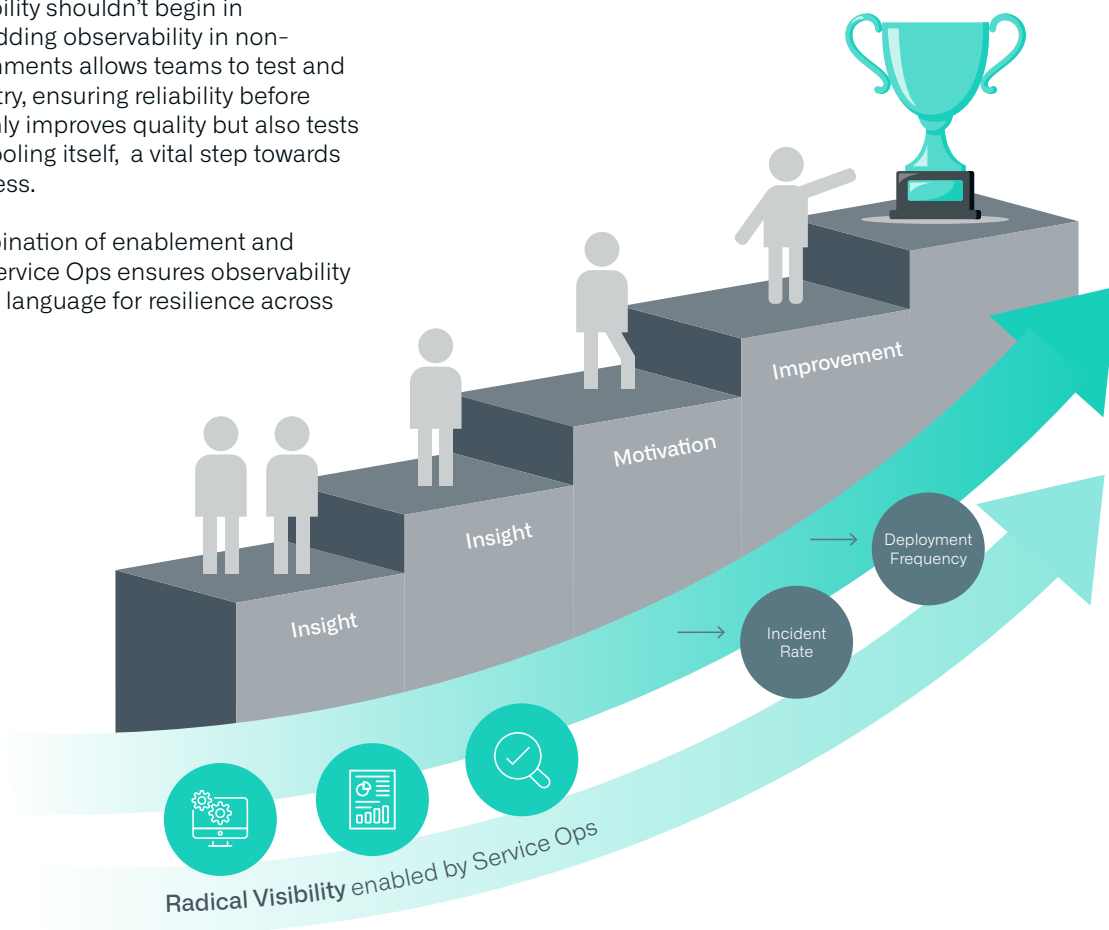
Make service analytics radically visible

Teams improve when they have clear insight into their own performance, and particularly when that is relative to others. A crucial starting point is therefore to enable teams by providing data in meaningful actionable ways. This encourages natural competition, the desire to learn from high performing teams, and an impetus within teams to address all areas of underperformance. Support this with cultural reinforcement mechanisms that recognise those that are improving at speed. What counts is not only where you are, but the improvements being made.

Service Ops enables this by:

- Publishing shared dashboards and performance analytics through the platform.
- Encouraging healthy competition and learning by making metrics visible.
- Recognising teams that improve rapidly, not just those already performing at the top.

Transparency isn't about naming and shaming; it's about creating the conditions for self-improvement at scale. With the right culture and data in place, Service Ops turns visibility into motivation, driving continuous learning and sustained excellence.



Automate, automate, automate

Manual change is fragile change. Every product team should aspire to repeatable, automated delivery pipelines that make change safe, fast, and reversible. Manual deployments are prone to human error and inconsistency. Automation replaces uncertainty with predictability, allowing rigorous testing and repeatable outcomes.

Service Ops' platform provides:

- Automation tooling and CI/CD pipelines as shared capabilities.
- Policies and controls that set a high bar for production-readiness.
- Governance frameworks and metrics to help teams benchmark and improve their automation maturity.

Service Ops acts not as a gatekeeper, but as an enabler, ensuring that automation, testing, and deployment practices meet strong, transparent standards.

With Infrastructure as Code (IaC) and Policy as Code, builds become not only consistent but also compliant and auditable. Over time, this reinforces a culture where greater automation equals greater safety, aligning operational excellence with delivery speed.

Every product team should work towards deploying the same artefacts into each environment and run comprehensive test suites that generate predictable results. Test early and frequently – and don't listen to people who say non-functional testing has to wait until the end.

Repeatability ensures a process consistently produces the same outcomes. A repeatable deployment can be tested rigorously, offering clear expectations and proactive issue management. Automation enhances this by removing human error, letting scripts or tools handle deployment with precision and speed. This not only boosts efficiency but also allows teams to focus on innovative tasks rather than repetitive ones.

Employing continuous integration and continuous deployment (CI/CD) pipelines furthers this approach, as tests and deployment changes are automatically applied, ensuring consistency and reducing the risk of human error. The automation ethos also encompasses thorough testing. Automated test suites confirm the reliability of deployed changes, emphasising the modern testing principle: test early and test often. Identifying bugs early reduces rectification costs and bolsters software quality.

Contrary to some beliefs, non-functional testing shouldn't be an afterthought. Aspects like performance, security, and usability are paramount, deeply influencing user experience. They should be tested alongside functional features, their concepts baked into ways of working and “shifted left” as much as possible.

In essence, repeatability and automation are the foundations of quality software delivery. Embracing these in every development phase ensures fewer errors and a smoother development lifecycle.

However, reaching this level of maturity doesn't happen overnight. Organisations need clear pathways, guidance, and governance to help teams adopt these practices effectively. This is where Service Operations plays a pivotal role. Not just as a gatekeeper, but as an enabler. By defining and upholding a high bar to production, Service Ops ensures that automation, testing, and deployment practices meet robust standards before changes reach live environments.

Through transparent frameworks and tooling, Service Ops can help teams understand how well they align to those standards, identifying where improvements are needed and recognising teams that demonstrate strong automation and testing maturity. Over time, this creates a culture of continuous improvement. Where greater automation unlocks faster, lower-risk change routes, reinforcing the connection between operational excellence and delivery speed.

Deployment of environments using Infrastructure as Code, and introducing “policy as code” to codify compliance, regulatory, or delivery assurance activities, takes this further – ensuring not only consistent and predictable builds, but compliant and auditable ones too.



Operational Excellence by Design

Resilience, security, and operability are essential dimensions of product quality, regardless of delivery model. What differentiates a product-led approach is where and how these qualities are embedded.

In a product-led model, core capabilities not delegated to downstream functions or treated as external concerns. They become integral to the product itself, owned by the same teams that design, build, and evolve it. The mantra “you build it, you run it” only works if “running it” is taken seriously, with teams accountable for operational excellence as a core part of product delivery.

To achieve this, reliability and operability must be built in by design. That means embedding good engineering practices, automation, observability, and clear ownership throughout the lifecycle. From development to production. Site Reliability Engineering (SRE) provides a proven framework for doing this. First developed by Google to manage their vast and complex infrastructure, SRE applies engineering discipline to operations, focusing on measurable reliability, resilience, and performance outcomes. It emphasises designing systems that remain available and predictable, even under stress or failure.

In this model, Service Operations doesn't disappear, its role evolves. Instead of manually intervening to uphold reliability and control, Service Ops defines the standards, guardrails, and platforms that help product teams build and run reliable services themselves. It provides the observability, compliance, and automation capabilities that make SRE practices scalable across the organisation. In doing so, Service Ops ensures that reliability, control, and assurance remain first-class citizens, not through after-the-fact inspection, but through embedded design and continuous improvement.

This partnership between product teams and Service Ops forms the foundation of Service Operations as a Platform: a model where operational excellence is enabled, not enforced, where shared tooling, data, and principles allow teams to deliver resilient, secure, and high-quality services at speed.

Achieving operational excellence by design requires more than intent — it demands clear, measurable mechanisms that translate reliability into practice. The following disciplines form the **core pillars of SRE and product-led operations**, providing the structure and metrics that embed reliability, performance, and resilience into everyday delivery.



Service Level Objectives (SLOs) and Error Budgets

Define SLOs, which are specific, measurable targets for the reliability of a service. These objectives set the acceptable level of reliability for a system, such as uptime percentages, response times, or error rates.

Similarly, work with the concept of error budgets, which is the allowed amount of downtime or errors within a specified period. By setting these budgets, teams can balance innovation and reliability. If a system is within its error budget, teams can focus on new developments; if not, efforts are directed towards increasing stability.

By setting clear targets, and monitoring these as KPIs, teams understand clearly what the tolerance levels are. These should be achievable, but acceptable to the business in performance terms.



Monitoring and alerting

Implementing monitoring and alerting involves setting up systems to continuously observe the health and performance of services and infrastructure, and to notify relevant parties when predefined thresholds or conditions are breached.

Engineering teams, collaborating with Service Management should clearly define what needs monitoring and establish key metrics that align with Service Level Objectives (SLOs) and user expectations. Metrics might include latency, error rates, throughput, resource utilisation, etc.

By working together alert thresholds should be defined based on acceptable performance levels, configuring alerts to trigger when metrics cross these, indicating potential issues. Alerts should be actionable, indicating the severity and providing context for quick diagnosis.

And, of course, establish clear escalation policies detailing who should be notified for different types of incidents and how they should be notified.



Non-functionals, non-functionals, non-functionals

If you don't define what you need upfront and pay attention to how non-functional requirements are realised, it's highly unlikely you'll end up with the product you aspire to. It's simply not possible to design systems and make the right technology choices without understanding how a product needs to behave.

Ensure non-functional requirements are baselined early within your overall lifecycle and ensure your governance validates how these requirements are being met at each stage.

Product teams should be encouraged to build products with a "production mindset". Always thinking how the product will perform, scale and respond to issues in production in a graceful manner, ideally without impacting the user experience.



Design for failure and the unexpected

Services always fail and it's the experience during that failure that customers typically remember. Deliberately engage with your failure modes and engineer out as many as possible through automated reconciliation.

However, no matter what you do, you'll never fully eliminate failure. As part of your service design, think about how customers get help. Ensure support channels understand customer context and can do something – badly designed support channels often leave a more bitter taste than no support channels at all.



Shift thinking from components to end-to-end services and journeys

To provide superior customer experiences, businesses must pivot from focusing solely on individual components to emphasising comprehensive end-to-end services and user journeys. They should use product analytics to understand where customers are dropping out on user journeys and use this information to improve effectiveness. Think first about availability and response time requirements across journeys and only then budget for individual components.

It is crucial to evaluate each component's influence on the overall service. For instance, while batch reporting might have different availability requirements, it can still influence user tasks. Measures like round trip times, Service Level Agreements (SLAs), SLOs, and SLIs provide a holistic view of service quality. Moreover, being mindful of all upstream and downstream dependencies ensures a consistent, responsive service that aligns with user expectations.

Prompt recoverability from service outages is vital, necessitating a well-tested disaster recovery plan. Additionally, a robust support system that promptly addresses issues can significantly enhance the user experience.

Leveraging product analytics aids businesses in understanding user behaviour and allocating resources effectively, enabling prioritization of crucial components and fine-tuning the user journey. In essence, by shifting the lens from isolated components to holistic end-to-end services, businesses can ensure an unmatched, seamless customer experience.

Where next?

In the majority of organisations, Service Operations has changed little over the last 40 years.

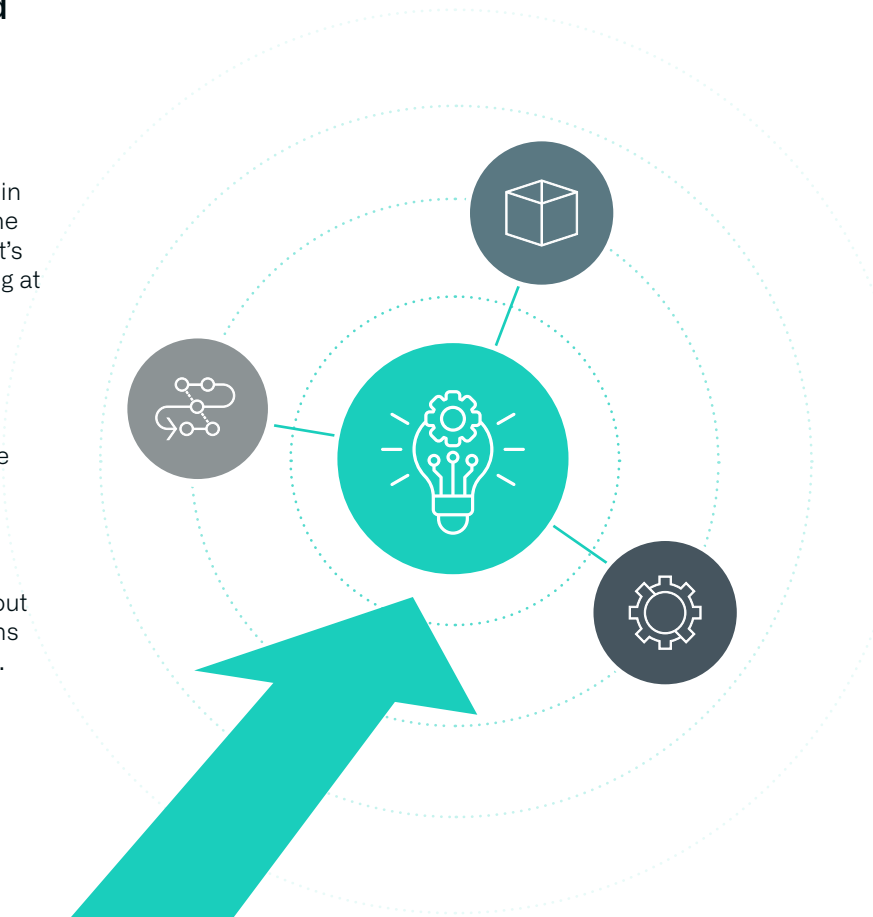
In that time we have seen the inexorable rise of the internet and digital services, a revolution in the way in which products are developed, the emergence of the cloud, big data, AI and a host of new technologies. It's hardly surprising that Operations teams are creaking at the seams.

The challenges faced will not be addressed by "tinkering at the edges". Service Operations needs to rethink its ways of working, introducing the latest technologies for discovery, observability and release automation; and working with product teams to engineer for reliability, resilience and management.

So, where to start? Radical improvements can be made through the introduction of new tooling, without significant cultural changes. Similarly, product teams can start to introduce new engineering approaches.

As confidence builds, cultural change can start to happen. Trust will grow and traditional governance models can be relaxed to enable pace and agility.

Who needs CABs if changes never fail?



Want to know more?

Axiologik consultants are digital and technology experts. We take pride in our unparalleled ability to deliver our clients' hardest and most complex digital change initiatives - often in the face of significant adversity and where others have failed. No one can deliver like we can.

We are committed to excellence in digital delivery: pushing boundaries, exploring the new, never settling, always striving for better. We connect the dots, see the big picture, and bring together the whole. We're difference-makers in every dimension.

And just as importantly, we believe in being good humans - ethical, honest, respectful, apolitical, and straightforward. Because who we are is every bit as important as what we do. For this reason, we are proud to be one of the few digital transformation consultancies in the UK to achieve B-Corp status.

We continue to help organisations reimagine their Service Operations. Through our Digital Excellence Assessment and hands-on transformation work, we help enterprises design platform operating models, embed accountability modes, and build secure, high-performance digital estates.

If you'd like to explore how Service Operations as a Platform can accelerate your organisation's journey, contact us at contact@axiologik.com.

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