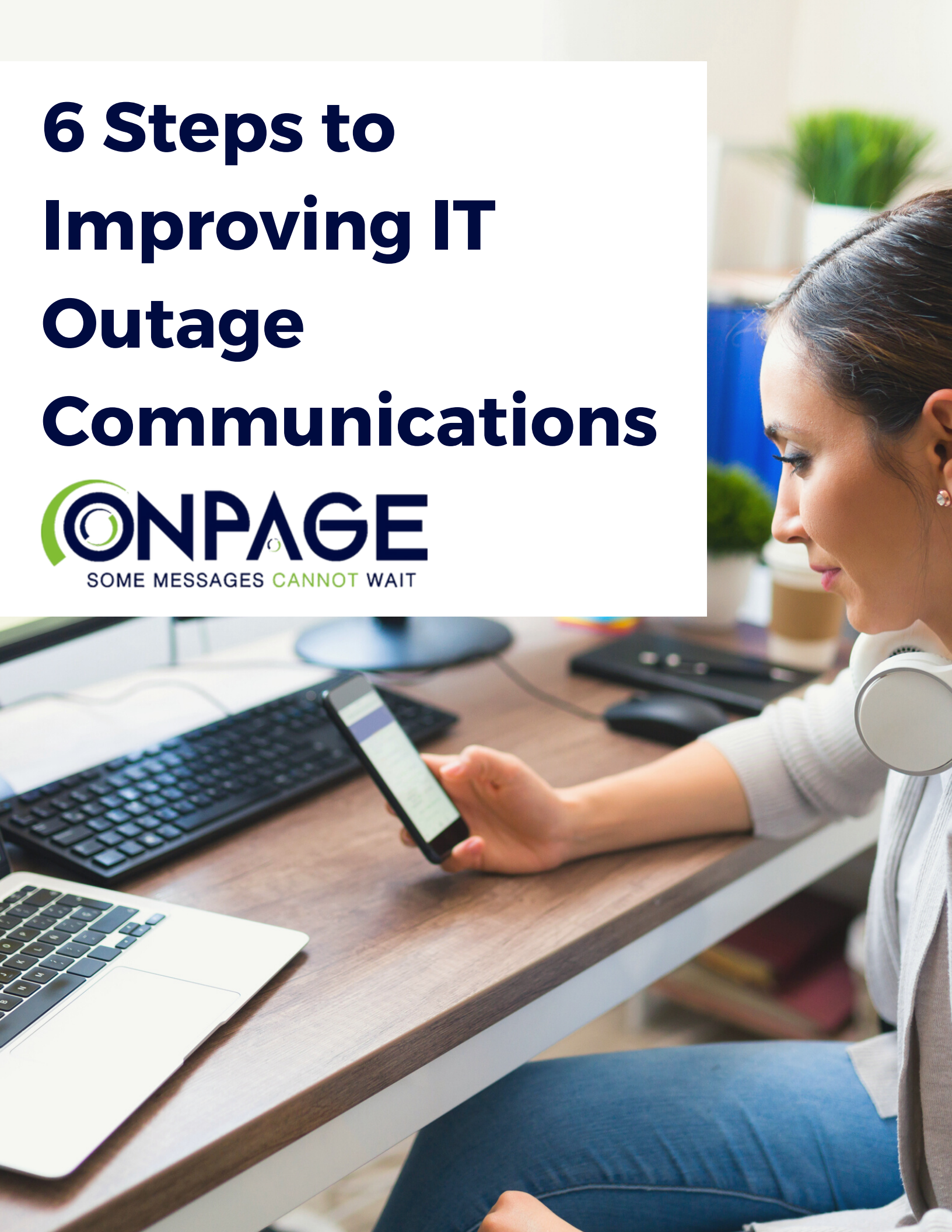
6 Steps to Improving IT Outage Communications

ONPAGE

SOME MESSAGES CANNOT WAIT



How Much Are IT Outages Costing You?

IT outages are not only frustrating but increasingly expensive for businesses.

The Price of Downtime

According to ITIC's 2021 Hourly Cost of Downtime Survey, just one hour of downtime can cost over **$300,000** for 91% of mid-sized to large enterprises.

$300,000/hr.

Per ITIC, the cost of downtime in 2021.

As businesses grapple with cost pressures, they're depending on IT teams and managed service providers (MSPs) to quickly resolve and ideally prevent outages.

It Pays to Have a Plan

Of even greater importance than the technology at their disposal is an IT team's process for responding to outages. A systematic, pre-defined resolution process reduces potential confusion or delay.

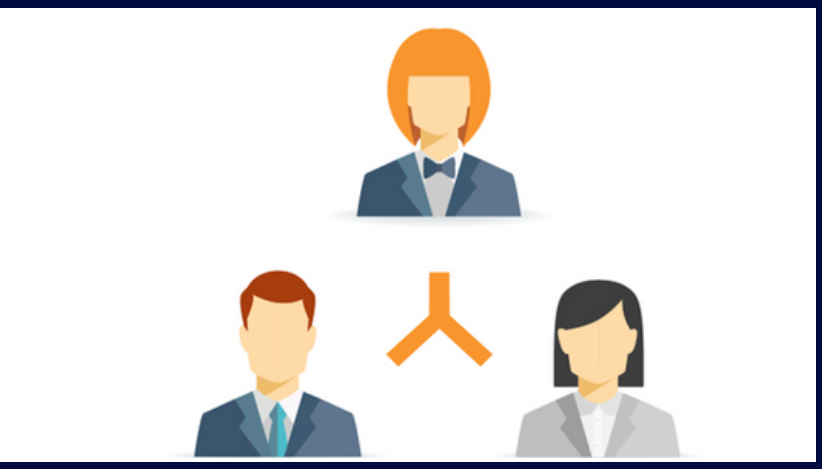
To minimize downtime, IT teams need to have a plan in place which mobilizes all available members of the IT team in the event of an outage.

Everyone must have a clearly-defined role as well as a set of tools they can rely on for proper communications.

In this white paper, we explain the six steps teams must take to effectively manage critical IT outages, no matter the cause.

1. **Organizing Teams**
2. **Sending Powerful Alerts**
3. **Creating Communication Channels**
4. **Managing Stakeholders**
5. **Tracking Response Time**
6. **Conducting Postmortems**

1. Organizing Teams



Effective outage communications in IT require not only a pre-assigned leader, but defined roles for all team members.

Without establishing roles in advance, team members can set resolution efforts backwards by improvising outside of their defined scope or waste precious time performing redundant tasks.

To eliminate guessing as to who will be notified, the response team must load their contact info into a digital scheduler.

This team should also have back-up responders included in the digital scheduler so that issues can be escalated further as a last resort.

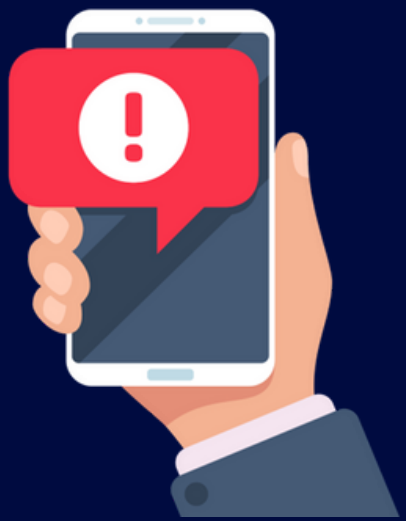
2. Sending Powerful Alerts

Your method for alerting the on-call IT outage team must be loud enough to stop them in their tracks or even wake them up if needed.

Using traditional forms of messaging such as texts, emails, and phone calls runs the risk of important alerts getting stuck behind do-not-disturb settings.

Instead, use a high-priority alerting smartphone app. These advanced applications will deliver alert-until-read messages that override do-not-disturb to grab recipients' attention.

Can your alerts awake you in an emergency?



3. Creating Communication Channels

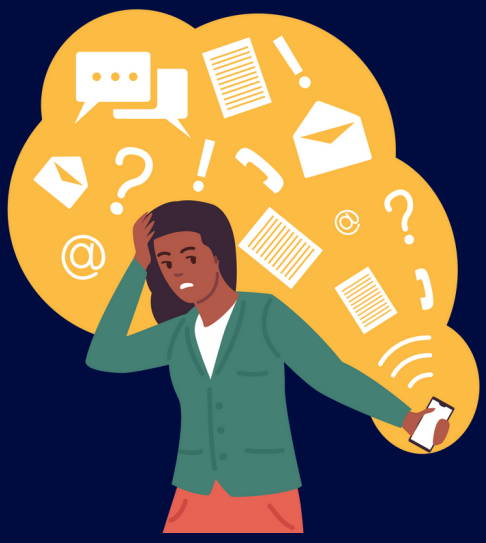
Once the IT outage response team has been alerted to the issue, it needs a dedicated and clutter-free communication channel.

Messages should be able to include visuals, sound recordings, or documents.

Engineers can show the problem they are running into by sharing a snapshot of an error message.

The channel should allow for the exchange of instructions or runbooks to help colleagues resolve known issues.

Lost in cluttered communications?



A dedicated channel prevents this chaos.

4. Notifying Key Stakeholders

IT outage communications systems must also be designed so that high-level updates can be reported to the C-suite and other top stakeholders.

While these individuals are not in the weeds of solving the outage, they need to receive alerts to inform them of the situation and keep them apprised of important developments.

5. Tracking Response Time

To continuously improve and avoid repeat incidents, outages must be documented and measured. This can only occur when there is effective reporting provided by the critical alerting platform.

The reporting should provide summaries and insights based on your incident response data.

With easy access to data visualizations and summaries, team managers gain insights into alert distribution, team productivity, workloads, and MTTR.

6. Conducting Postmortems

After an outage is resolved, it is important to review the incident to see what went right and what could be improved.

An effective post-mortem should be blameless, looking at what actions were taken and what effects were observed.

Make sure relevant stakeholders and participants are present in the postmortem meeting to share their distinct perspectives.

This includes people who worked on the problem, who might have contributed to the problem, and who were affected by the problem.

Incident notes must be used to transcribe actions taken by the responder during incidents. This creates a timeline of events for an accurate record of the incident.

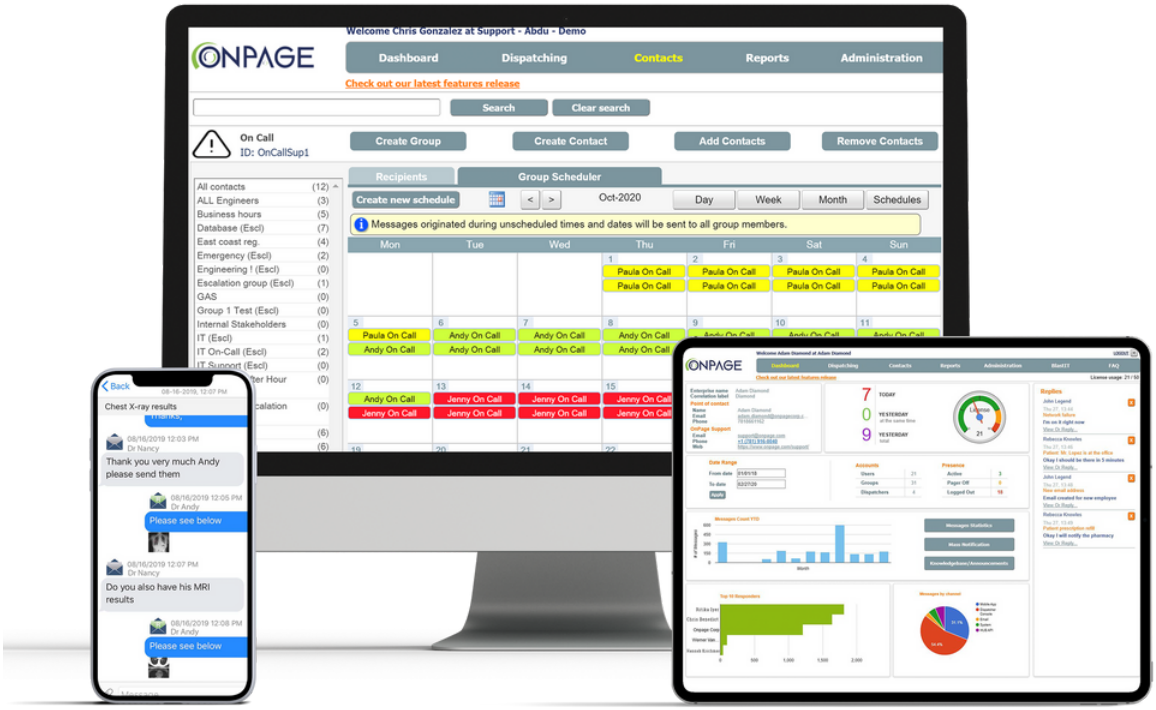
Conclusion

When the chaos of an IT outage strikes, IT teams can take control of the situation with effective communication. This starts with predefining roles and implementing powerful alerting technology.

Once the outage has been resolved, don't forget to track response metrics and commit to postmortem reporting.

We hope this guide helps you improve your outage communications!

About OnPage



OnPage elevates critical notifications from critical infrastructure, applications, and services to ensure business uptime.

Outages detected are routed to the On-Call team with enhanced, unique notifications for immediate remediation and post-event reporting.

Easily integrate OnPage with your existing tech stack to improve team responsiveness.

To learn more and schedule a demo, visit OnPage.com.