TECHNOLOGY

Phase III: Preparing for Change

Activity 15: Catastrophizing: Tech Edition

Goals

1. Understand how the program's current technical staff, stack, and roadmap work with unexpected issues (catastrophes)

2. Help programs identify how resilient their staff, stack, and long-range technical strategy are

Prerequisites

None

Who Should Participate?

Program leadership (strategic thinkers), Program management (tactical), Program staff (operational experience)
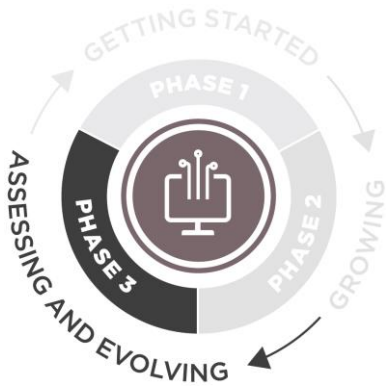
Length

60 minutes

Activity Instructions

1. Brainstorm a list of technical "catastrophes" that would have a significant impact on your program's ability to fulfill its mission. The examples or suggestions can be outlandish - the idea is to think of catastrophic events and how they would be handled.

   a. Defer judgment - make it clear that stakeholders can say whatever they like.

   b. Encourage wild ideas - these can lead to creative leaps!

   c. Build on the ideas of others - encourage stakeholders to "and" each other's ideas.

   d. Set objectives for the number of ideas to be listed and the time to be spent, e.g. "Let's spend 10 minutes coming up with a list of 30 new ideas."

If no immediate suggestions are given, the activity facilitator can seed the discussion with examples such as:

- What if your technical lead won the lottery and moved to Tahiti?

- What if a key element of your technology stack was discontinued?

- What if a service provider forked the code and became a competitor?

2. Once there is a list of several catastrophes, have participants work together to plot the catastrophes on a risk map with axes of Likelihood and Impact (example on page 2). Once complete, move to Tech Activity: Catastrophizing - Tech Edition Part 2.

Activity 15: Catastrophizing: Tech Edition

LIKELIHOOD

High

Low

IMPACT

Low   High

Detect

Prevent

Control

Monitor