

GIANT SWARM

# Seasonal Survival Kit

For eCom providers



## Challenge

The world of direct-to-consumer providers is associated with busyness and pressure during the holiday season. Some of our customers, for example, make 70% of their revenue just in the six weeks between Black Friday and Christmas, so we understand the importance of smooth operations and the impact they have on business if something goes wrong.

This time of the year is particularly busy for infrastructure and platform teams working hard to ensure stable and enjoyable buying experiences for consumers everywhere. As smooth operations are crucial, it is important to have a structure in place to prevent things from going wrong – or if they do, to at least plan how to mitigate them quickly, reduce the

impact incidents can have on the business, and move forward with confidence. As such, we want to share a checklist that can help you put together a plan to survive the season. You can use it as inspiration to show to your manager if you are asked how certain you are that things will run smoothly, or you can use it as a wishlist if you don't have the time, budget, or capacity to implement a plan at this time.

Alternatively, to get in the holiday spirit, you can share it with Santa – he also strives for a smooth consumer experience, you know, but in a different way, that involves... well, sleighs, reindeer, and chimneys. Let's get started, as 'tis the season to be helpful, spread the joy, and keep the elf factories humming.

### Incident Prevention and Preparation Checklist

#### ✓ Cohesive Platform

If your consumers' experience depends on the quality, stability, and resilience of your platform, it is essential to have solid integrations in place that have been rigorously tested and fully automated so that your applications, systems, services, and data stores are connected and communicate to each other in a way that's efficient and agile.

#### ✓ Full Monitoring

Infrastructure and application monitoring solutions that use automation enable you to track, measure, and monitor the health and performance of your infrastructure, services, and applications. If your organization prioritizes business KPIs, you might want to opt for a more advanced solution that helps you visualize and analyze metrics that might affect your company's performance.

#### ✓ Well-defined Escalation Path

Make sure you define the incident escalation path and communicate it properly to your first responders, as well as other stakeholders. This goes beyond having escalation policies or an escalation matrix in place; it also entails defining processes, clarifying roles and responsibilities, tracking escalations, or undergoing fire drills where your team can practice relevant scenarios.

#### ✓ Access and Visibility

It is essential to provide the right engineers with the right permissions so that they can access the information they need in a timely manner and troubleshoot properly (whether it's access to the corresponding log files for analysis or the necessary rights to be able to restore services).

## Incident Management Checklist

### ✓ Alerting

Use specific alerts to identify specific issues so that first responders don't waste valuable time trying to identify the source of the bottleneck. Alerts should be set up in a way that the right on-call person gets notified immediately.

### ✓ Swarming

It can be hard to do root cause analysis while firefighting, but a hive-mind approach could help. If members of different teams come together and 'swarm' around the issue, a solution can be found more quickly. Additionally, swarming can help with finding possible workarounds and hotfixes to re-establish services as soon as possible.

### ✓ Fail-Fast Approach

The quality and urgency of troubleshooting and solution-finding can be heavily impacted by facing the fear of doing something wrong and getting penalized for it. Opting for a fail-fast approach and 'no blame' cultural elements encourages testing and experimentation and paves the path to creative and clear-thinking methods that can ensure fast issue-fixing and service restoration.

## Incident Aftermath Checklist

### ✓ Post Mortems

Every incident provides a great learning opportunity. Whether it's a chance to identify gaps in your processes, pinpoint issues within your infrastructure, find bugs in your code or realize that the wider approach of your organization can be improved (i.e., cultural elements), incidents provide an opportunity to course correct, learn and enhance your operational capabilities.

### ✓ Programmatic Changes

Based on the nature and gravity of the incident, you might want to change some things: for example, improve alerting, put more automation in place, fix bugs, train teams appropriately, or make more advanced enhancements to eliminate bug sources.

### ✓ Iterating

As the saying goes, repetition is the mother of learning. But it doesn't make sense to repeat things that don't work or hinder progress. Instead, substitute repetition for iteration to focus on improvement and evolution. Each failure must be seen as a new iteration of the platform, and so fixes must also be included as a new iteration.

## Alternative Solution

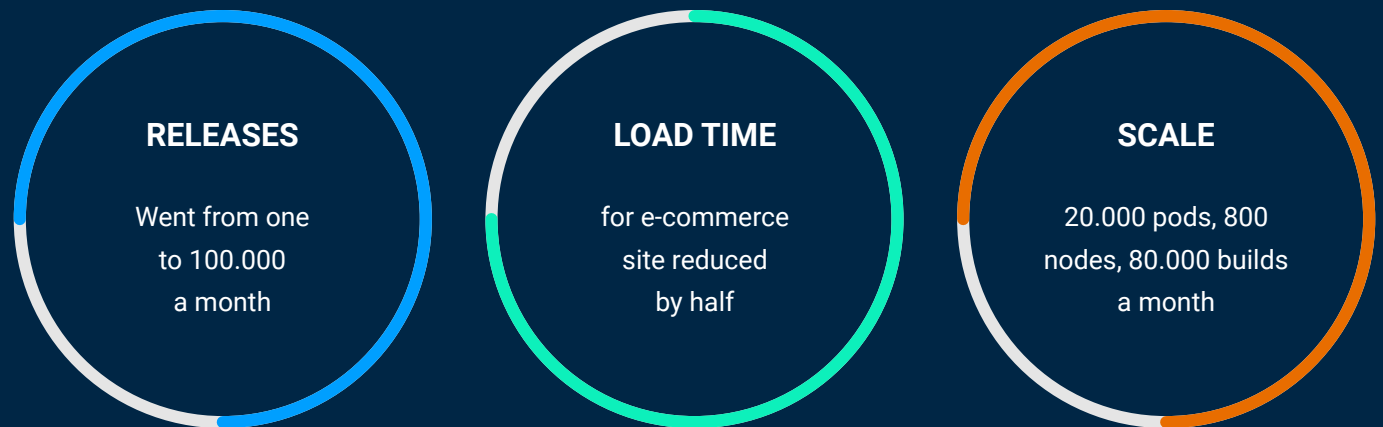
If you're exploring (or already reaping) the benefits of using a cloud native platform, but struggle with managing it, especially during busy times like the holiday season, you might benefit from a strategic technology partner who doesn't just take over the 24/7 operation of Kubernetes clusters, but goes beyond managed Kubernetes services. And no, that's not Santa – as resourceful as he may be, we don't think he has this kind of expertise.

Giant Swarm, on the other hand, provides a solid Kubernetes-based platform for deploying and managing applications in the customer's cloud or on-premises environments.

We help accelerate the cloud native journey of your DevOps teams from day one. We have full monitoring in place, and we are proactively looking out for issues,

so that we detect and fix them before they affect the customer. We prevent companies from running into the same issue as we embed the insights that we found as a result of solving one issue into the platform and roll it out to every customer.

We provide our customers with full flexibility and control over the platform – we focus on collaboration, cooperation and root cause analysis and help even when the customer has changed something so that trust in the environment is built and the customer still has the freedom to customize it according to their use cases. We draw on many years of experience to enable companies to stay focused on the high-velocity innovation of their digital products and accelerate their digital business growth – just like we do with one of our main direct-to-consumer customers, adidas (as you can see below).



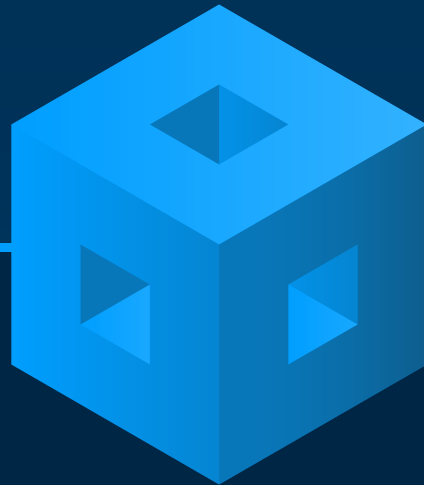
"I call our cloud-native platform the field of dreams. The Giant Swarm guys are really amazing and know their stuff in and out. Specifically in the area of containers and Kubernetes and everything around this I never met a more knowledgeable partner."



**Daniel Eichten**  
VP Enterprise  
Architecture  
adidas



If you want to chat more, get in touch. We'll say Happy Holidays for now, but if you want to partake in some special seasonal cheer, follow us on Twitter, [right here](#).



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track to digital success?**

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