

CALM UNDER PRESSURE

FREE SAMPLE

Five Messages for the Hardest Minutes

A Free Preview of the Incident Playbook for SaaS Support Teams

BUILT FOR LIVE INCIDENTS Evidence before certainty. Ownership before excuses. A next update before an invented ETA.

MONIKA TUPÁ / HEAD OF SUPPORT

About the author



MONIKA TUPÁ / HEAD OF SUPPORT

Monika Tupá is an IT customer support leader with more than ten years of experience leading technical support operations. She bridges technical teams and end users through clear communication, analytical thinking, empathy and practical ownership.

LINKEDIN [linkedin.com/in/monikatupa/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/monikatupa/) CONTACT [linkedin.com/in/monikatupa/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/monikatupa/)

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What this sample is for

These five scenarios demonstrate the operating logic behind the complete Calm Under Pressure kit. Each message is designed to reduce uncertainty without inventing certainty, keep ownership visible and give the recipient a dependable next step.

A filled example

Fictional scenario: authentication failures are reported in one region, but the full scope is not yet confirmed.

Hello Anna,

Thank you for reporting this. I understand that users in your Prague office cannot sign in and that access to customer records is blocked. We are prioritizing validation based on that impact.

Our incident team is checking authentication monitoring and recent gateway changes. We have not yet confirmed whether other regions are affected, so we will not overstate the scope.

We will send the next update by 10:30 CEST, even if the investigation is still in progress. No action is required from your team at this point.

BEFORE YOU SEND Replace every placeholder. Use only verified facts. Add a named owner and an exact next update time with a time zone.

01 | High impact, scope not yet confirmed

AUDIENCE CUSTOMER CHANNEL EMAIL OR TICKET

USE WHEN The customer reports a serious impact, but you have not independently confirmed the full scope.

PRIMARY MESSAGE

Hello [NAME],

Thank you for reporting this. I understand from your report that [BUSINESS FUNCTION] is affected and that your team is unable to [CUSTOMER IMPACT]. We are prioritizing validation based on the reported impact.

Our team is now validating the scope and reviewing [LOGS / MONITORING / RECENT CHANGES]. We will not speculate about the cause before the evidence supports it.

We will send the next update by [TIME + TIME ZONE], even if the investigation is still in progress.

MORE EMPATHETIC I understand that this is blocking [BUSINESS FUNCTION] and that you need clarity quickly. We have started validating the scope and will stay with the case until the next owner and action are confirmed.

SHORT AND DIRECT We have received the report and are validating the impact now. Next confirmed update: [TIME + TIME ZONE].

06 | Update with no material progress

AUDIENCE CUSTOMER CHANNEL EMAIL, TICKET, OR STATUS PAGE

USE WHEN You owe an update, but there is no verified breakthrough.

PRIMARY MESSAGE

Hello [NAME],

The investigation is still active. Since the last update, we have [ACTIONS COMPLETED]. These checks have ruled out [CONFIRMED EXCLUSIONS], but they have not yet identified the cause.

We are now [NEXT ACTION] with [OWNING TEAM]. The service impact remains [CURRENT IMPACT].

We will update you again by [TIME + TIME ZONE], even if the status is unchanged.

MORE RELATIONSHIP-SENSITIVE I know the lack of a confirmed cause is frustrating. The team has nevertheless completed [CHECKS], which has narrowed the remaining paths to [AREA].

EXECUTIVE CONCISE No confirmed cause yet. Completed: [ACTIONS]. Ruled out: [ITEMS]. Active next step: [ACTION/OWNER]. Next update: [TIME].

14 | ETA not available

AUDIENCE CUSTOMER OR LEADERSHIP CHANNEL EMAIL OR TICKET

USE WHEN The customer requests a repair time before the team has enough evidence.

PRIMARY MESSAGE

Hello [NAME],

I understand why you need an ETA for your internal planning. We do not have enough verified information to give you a reliable restoration time yet. Any estimate at this stage would be speculation.

What we can commit to is the next decision point: [TEST / DEPLOYMENT / VENDOR RESPONSE] by [TIME]. We will then confirm whether we can provide an ETA or whether further investigation is required.

Your next update is scheduled for [TIME + TIME ZONE].

PLANNING-FOCUSED I cannot give you a reliable restoration time yet, but I can give you the point at which the next decision becomes possible: [MILESTONE] by [TIME].

EXECUTIVE CONCISE Restoration ETA: not yet supported by evidence. Next decision: [MILESTONE] at [TIME]. Next customer update: [TIME].

15 | ETA has moved

AUDIENCE CUSTOMER OR LEADERSHIP CHANNEL EMAIL OR TICKET

USE WHEN A previously communicated target will not be met.

PRIMARY MESSAGE

Hello [NAME],

The previously communicated target of [OLD TIME] will not be met. During [VALIDATION / DEPLOYMENT], we found [NEW FACT] that must be addressed before we can proceed safely.

Based on the evidence available now, the revised target for [NEXT MILESTONE] is [NEW TIME]. We recognize that changing the timing affects your planning, and we should have made the dependency clearer in the previous update.

We will confirm progress by [TIME + TIME ZONE].

MORE ACCOUNTABLE We will miss the target we gave you. The new evidence is [FACT], and we recognize that our earlier wording did not make this dependency clear enough.

CONCISE Target changed: [OLD] → [NEW]. Reason: [NEW FACT]. Next verified milestone: [MILESTONE] by [TIME].

19 | Issue recurred after stabilization

AUDIENCE CUSTOMER OR PUBLIC CHANNEL EMAIL, TICKET, OR STATUS PAGE

USE WHEN The same symptoms return after a previous recovery update.

PRIMARY MESSAGE

Hello [NAME],

The issue has recurred after the earlier period of stability. We confirmed the renewed impact at [TIME + TIME ZONE]. The earlier mitigation restored service temporarily, but the same symptoms have returned; the underlying cause is still being reassessed.

We have reopened the incident at [SEVERITY] and engaged [TEAMS]. Our immediate action is [CONTAINMENT STEP].

I recognize that the recurrence reduces confidence in the earlier recovery. We will update you by [TIME + TIME ZONE] with the outcome of the containment step.

MORE ACCOUNTABLE The issue has returned, and we understand that this undermines the confidence created by our earlier update. We have reopened coordinated response immediately.

CONCISE Recurrence confirmed at [TIME]. Incident reopened at [PRIORITY]. Containment: [ACTION]. Next update: [TIME].

The complete field guide

Ready for the complete response system? The full Calm Under Pressure kit contains 52 scenarios, two tone alternatives per situation, communication psychology, severity and cadence guidance, major-incident controls, cross-functional escalation paths, a timeline worksheet, closure controls and an RCA framework.

Inside the complete edition

- 52 primary messages and 104 alternative wording blocks;
- customer, internal, leadership and public-channel guidance;
- communication psychology and common wording traps;
- major-incident, security, privacy, legal, continuity and AI-governance escalations;
- timeline, closure, PIR and RCA working tools.

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