BOOK CLUB

Becoming SRE

First Steps Toward Reliability for You and Your Organization

David N. Blank-Edelman · O'Reilly Media, 2024

SRE isn't a recipe: you seek out teams until they seek you out.

INSIGHT 1

Green and red flags

Sharp signals that show whether SRE in an organisation is healthy, or not.

FROM THE BOOK

Red: no time for engineering, only firefighting and postmortems nobody acts on. Green: on call two or three times a quarter, at most a few incidents per shift.

WHAT I DO WITH IT

The green and red flags give direction.

INSIGHT 2

Culture and profile

Culture and the profile of an SRE: what kind of person you need to be, not only which technology you master.

FROM THE BOOK · CH. 2

Investigating how things fail and how that feels for the end user. You base SLOs on users, not on your own thresholds.

WHAT I DO WITH IT

We base our SLOs on the end user.

INSIGHT 3

There's no ‘this is how it's done’

SRE doesn't look the same everywhere. Find what fits your organisation, with the flags as a compass.

FROM THE BOOK · CH. 12

Slapping an SRE label on DevOps or an L3 service desk doesn't work. It's not only about who is responsible for reliability, but who also feels it.

THE KEY POINT

From push to pull

People and collaboration are central. Developers who don't like meetings had better not start on SRE. First you push: you go to the teams. The goal is pull: the teams come to you. That's the sign it works.

FROM THE BOOK

Push: SRE chases the business and is seen as a nuisance. Pull: teams ask themselves: shouldn't someone from SRE be involved?

WHAT I DO WITH IT

From push to pull: that's what we strive for.

INSIGHT 5

More accessible than the Google book

Reads more easily than Site Reliability Engineering (1st edition), which quickly becomes very Google-specific.

MY SCORE

Directly applicable 5

certainly for starting teams

Depth 4

a strong point

Readability 5

Shelf life 3.6

may be outdated in five years, the core remains

4.5 out of 5 · average, rounded to 0.5

WHO IT'S FOR

- ✓ Starting SRE teams
- ✓ Product leads and managers who hire SREs
- ✓ Anyone curious about SRE

WHO IT'S NOT FOR

- ✗ People outside tech

Which would you read first? Or am I missing one?

FURTHER READING

The Site Reliability Workbook *(2018)*

Site Reliability Engineering, 2nd edition *(2026)*

Seeking SRE *(2018)*

SRE with AIOps *(2026)*

Building Secure and Reliable Systems *(2020)*

Platform Engineering *(2024)*

More books: westerweel.work/en/bookclub