OPERATIONS

An Alert Needs Someone Who Can Act on It

The warning reached the group. Two people read it and each assumed the other would handle it. A third replied with a thumbs-up. Hours later, the issue was still open, although the system had done exactly what it was asked to do: send a notification.

Write the Action Before Configuring the Warning

For each condition you want to monitor, describe what someone should do when it occurs. If the answer is “keep an eye on it”, more work is needed. A stalled integration might require checking the last import, contacting a supplier or starting an agreed manual process.

- Name an owner during covered hours and a substitute when that person is unavailable.
- State what the owner can do without waiting for further approval.
- Define when an alert counts as attended and what evidence allows it to be closed.
- Agree what happens if nobody acknowledges receipt within the expected interval.

Group Noise That Describes the Same Problem

One interrupted connection can generate dozens of related warnings. If each arrives separately, people may silence the channel. Group related events and preserve the detail for investigation. A reminder should follow an agreed condition rather than fire simply because another minute has passed.

Test closure as well. The recipient needs to know whether operations recovered or someone merely acknowledged reading the message. Those are different states and the history should keep them separate.

Remote oversight can organise this sequence, but human availability is a separate agreement. If the business has no overnight coverage, the system should reflect that limit and explain which situations are escalated outside normal hours.

An alert does not imply an immediate response or round-the-clock support. Coverage hours, owners and response expectations belong in the operational scope.

A Check You Can Run

Rehearse one alert using a labelled test. The person receiving it should be able to identify the affected operation, acknowledge the message and find the agreed next step. Check what happens when that person is unavailable. Count repeated notifications for the same event separately from distinct incidents, so noise does not masquerade as coverage.

Supporting guidance: Google SRE on actionable monitoring.
https://sre.google/sre-book/monitoring-distributed-systems/

Continue with: A Green Dashboard Can Be Showing Yesterday’s Data.
https://systems.kavaliero.com/en/blog/a-green-dashboard-can-be-showing-yesterdays-data

For help with this work, see the scope of Remote Business Control.
https://systems.kavaliero.com/en/services/remote-control