The Pit Crew Advantage

Why Every Observability Platform Needs a Dedicated Operator

How Apto Solutions' Operate Service Delivers the Missing Function in Platform Management

Apto Solutions | aptosolutions.co.uk

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Executive Summary

The global observability platform market is projected to reach $14.2 billion by 2028, growing at an 11.1% CAGR according to Gartner. Organisations across every sector are investing heavily in platforms like Splunk, Dynatrace, Datadog, Elastic, CrowdStrike, and New Relic to gain visibility into increasingly complex, cloud-native, hybrid IT environments. The IDC MarketScape highlights the European market as particularly dynamic, driven by regulatory demands such as GDPR and the rapid adoption of AI-powered observability capabilities. Yet beneath these impressive investments lies a critical gap: almost no organisation has a dedicated team to operate the platform itself. The result is a pattern of spiralling costs, degraded performance, missed security threats, and frustrated users — all eroding the return on what should be a transformational investment.

Consider Formula 1 racing. No team would send a car onto the circuit without a pit crew and race engineer. The driver focuses on racing — extracting every tenth of a second from each lap. The car designers ensure the machine is engineered for speed. But it is the pit crew who keep the car running at peak performance throughout the race: monitoring tyre wear, managing fuel strategy, executing split-second pit stops, and feeding real-time intelligence back to the engineers. Without the pit crew, even the fastest car retires from the race. Yet in enterprise IT, organisations routinely deploy sophisticated observability and SIEM platforms costing hundreds of thousands of pounds — and expect the ‘drivers’ (SREs, security analysts) to also change their own tyres mid-race.

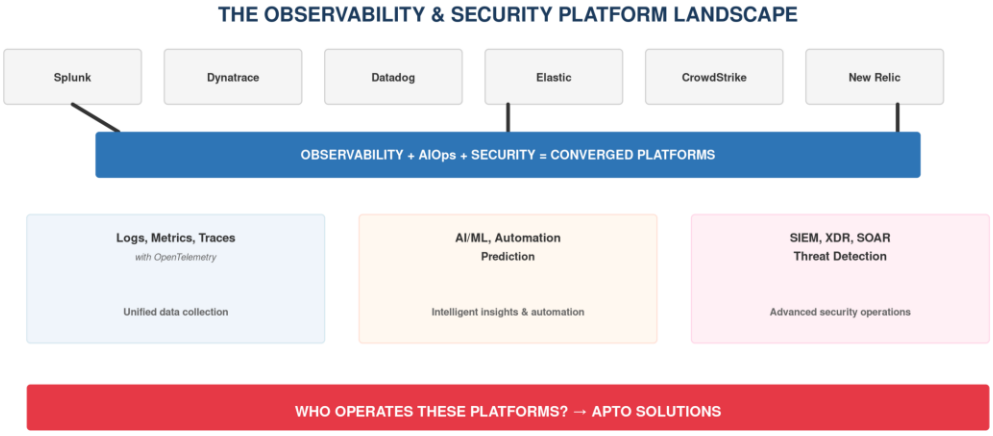
Apto Solutions exists to fill this gap. Our Operate service provides dedicated, expert platform operators who manage the health, performance, cost, and reliability of your observability and security platforms around the clock. We are the pit crew your platform investment demands — and the intelligence we gather as operators creates a virtuous cycle of continuous improvement that no other service model can match. This white paper explains why the Operator function matters, what happens when it is missing, and how Apto’s unique approach protects and amplifies your platform investment.

The Race is On: The Modern Platform Landscape

A $14.2 Billion Market in Motion

The observability and security platform landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation. What began as simple log management and infrastructure monitoring has evolved into a converged ecosystem spanning observability, AIOps, and advanced threat detection. Gartner's Magic Quadrant for Observability Platforms evaluates over 20 vendors, with leaders including Dynatrace, Datadog, and Splunk demonstrating the market's maturity and competitive intensity. The IDC MarketScape for European Observability further confirms Splunk and Cisco's strong positioning, highlighting AI-powered analytics, hybrid cloud support, and regulatory compliance as key differentiators.

This convergence is not merely a vendor marketing exercise — it reflects a fundamental shift in how organisations must approach digital resilience. Modern IT environments generate unprecedented volumes of telemetry data across logs, metrics, and traces. OpenTelemetry has emerged as the de facto standard for vendor-agnostic telemetry collection, enabling organisations to instrument their applications consistently regardless of which platform they choose. Meanwhile, the boundaries between IT operations and security continue to blur, with platforms now combining observability with SIEM, XDR, and SOAR capabilities in unified solutions.



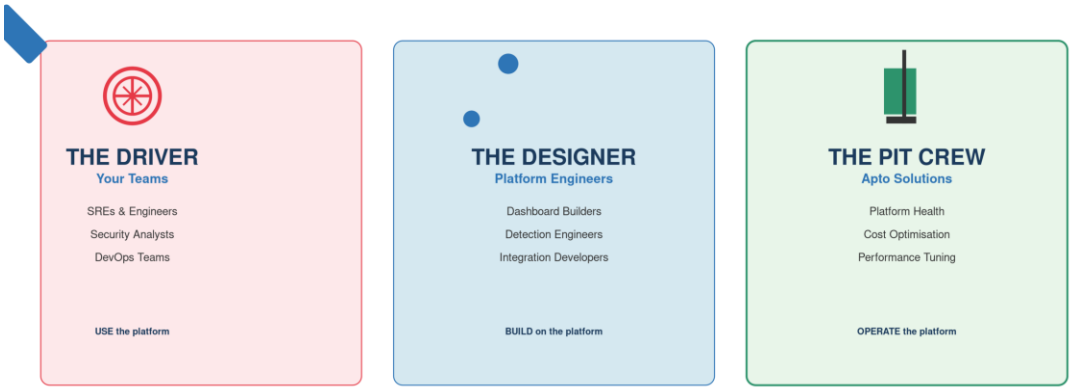
The implications are profound. These platforms are more capable than ever — but they are also more complex to deploy, configure, tune, and maintain. Gartner explicitly notes that **operational complexity and cost management** are among the top challenges organisations face. The IDC MarketScape reinforces this, observing that European organisations struggle to find skilled professionals who can both manage and optimise these platforms effectively.

The Cars Have Never Been Faster

In Formula 1 terms, the cars have never been faster, more aerodynamically sophisticated, or more technologically advanced. A modern F1 car has over 300 sensors generating 1.5 terabytes of data per race weekend. Similarly, a modern observability platform ingests terabytes of telemetry daily from thousands of sources — cloud infrastructure, containers, microservices, APIs, security endpoints, and user sessions. The capability is extraordinary. But capability without operational excellence is merely expensive potential.

Three Roles, One Platform: The F1 Model

Every successful Formula 1 team operates with three distinct, specialised functions working in concert. Each is essential; none can substitute for the others. The same model applies to enterprise platform management — yet most organisations are missing one of the three.



ALL THREE ROLES ARE ESSENTIAL — BUT MOST ORGANISATIONS ARE MISSING THE PIT CREW

F1 Role	Enterprise Equivalent	What They Do	Focus
The Driver	Users (SREs, Analysts, SecOps)	Query data, investigate incidents, monitor dashboards, hunt threats	Getting value from the data
The Car Designer	Builders (Platform & Content Engineers)	Build dashboards, detection rules, data pipelines, integrations	Creating capability
The Pit Crew	Operators (Apto Solutions)	Platform health, cost optimisation, upgrades, capacity planning, troubleshooting	Keeping the platform at peak performance

The Driver — Your Users

Your SREs, security analysts, DevOps engineers, and business users are the drivers. They are the reason the platform was purchased. They query data, investigate incidents, monitor dashboards, hunt threats, and extract the business intelligence that drives decisions. In most organisations, these users are well-staffed — they are the visible beneficiaries of the platform investment. But just as an F1 driver cannot win a race alone, these users depend entirely on the platform being healthy, fast, and reliable beneath them.

The Designer — Your Builders

Platform engineers and content engineers are the designers. They build the dashboards, create detection rules, design data pipelines, develop integrations, and onboard new data sources. These professionals are scarce and expensive — the Gartner report notes a persistent skills shortage across the observability market. Builders are critical, but their work is episodic: they create capability, then move on to the next project. They are not monitoring the platform health at 3am on a Sunday.

The Pit Crew — The Missing Operator

The operator is the pit crew and race engineer. They ensure the platform itself — the data running through it, but the platform infrastructure, configuration, performance, and cost profile — is in peak condition at all times. This role encompasses 24/7 health monitoring, proactive capacity planning, cost optimisation, upgrade management, performance tuning, and vendor liaison. It is a continuous, operational discipline — not a project.

Here is the critical insight that Apto Solutions Operate was founded upon: almost every organisation in the market has drivers and some builders, but almost none has a dedicated operator. Competitors and in-house teams staff Users and Builders, but the 24/7 Operator function simply does not exist. This is the gap Apto fills — and it is the most consequential gap in the entire platform lifecycle.

The Missing Pit Crew: What Happens Without an Operator

When an F1 car does not receive proper maintenance between races, components wear, performance degrades, and eventually the car retires from the championship. The same pattern plays out — more slowly but just as certainly — when observability and security platforms lack dedicated operational management.

Cost Overruns

Without active licence management, data volume governance, and cost optimisation, platform costs escalate relentlessly. Gartner highlights cost management as a top concern, with organisations frequently experiencing 15–25% annual cost increases driven by unchecked data ingestion growth, unused indexes, redundant forwarders, and poor licence utilisation. The IDC MarketScape confirms that European organisations are particularly sensitive to these cost dynamics given the additional compliance overhead of GDPR and data sovereignty requirements.

Performance Degradation

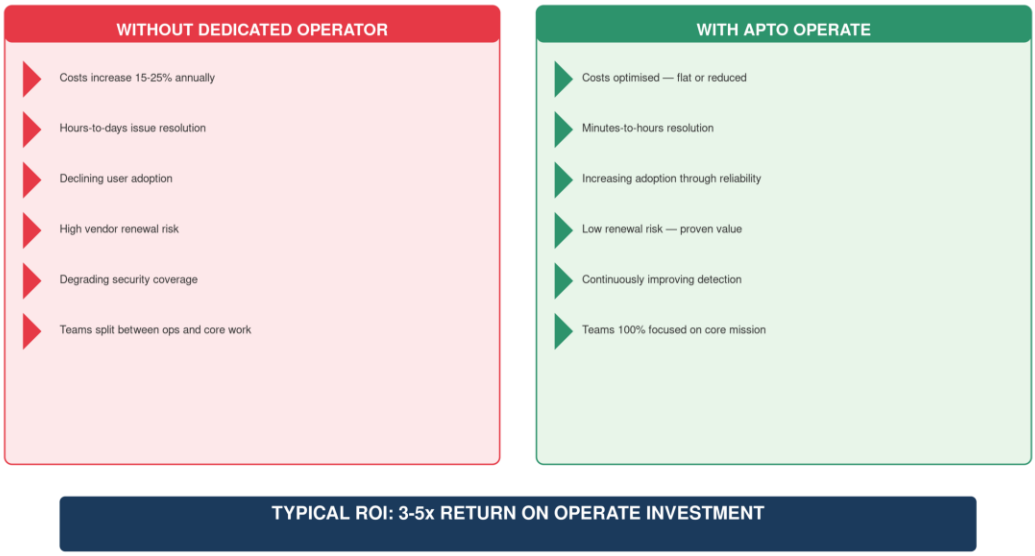
Search performance degrades incrementally. Knowledge objects accumulate without governance. Infrastructure sizing falls behind data growth. Saved searches and reports consume resources without review. Nobody is actively tuning the environment because nobody owns that responsibility. Users experience slow dashboards, failed or skipped searches, and unreliable alerting — and begin to lose confidence in the platform.

Security Blind Spots

In converged platforms that combine observability with SIEM and threat detection, the consequences extend beyond operational inconvenience into genuine security risk. Detection rules become stale as the threat landscape evolves. New data sources are onboarded without proper parsing or correlation. MITRE ATT&CK and other framework coverage gaps widen. The platform gradually transforms from an active security tool into a passive data lake — collecting everything but detecting nothing.

The Vendor Relationship Erodes

Platform vendors invest heavily in customer success because renewals are their lifeblood. When a vendor’s own telemetry shows that a customer is underutilising the platform — low search volumes, stale dashboards, growing but unqueried data — the renewal conversation becomes adversarial. The customer questions value; the vendor struggles to defend pricing. Both sides lose. A dedicated operator transforms this dynamic entirely, ensuring the platform demonstrates measurable value that makes renewals straightforward.


WITHOUT DEDICATED OPERATOR
Costs increase 15-25% annually
Hours-to-days issue resolution
Declining user adoption
High vendor renewal risk
Degrading security coverage
Teams split between ops and core work
WITH APTO OPERATE
Costs optimised — flat or reduced
Minutes-to-hours resolution
Increasing adoption through reliability
Low renewal risk — proven value
Continuously improving detection
Teams 100% focused on core mission
TYPICAL ROI: 3-5x RETURN ON OPERATE INVESTMENT

The Apto Operate Service: Your Dedicated Pit Crew

Apto Solutions' Operate service provides a comprehensive, dedicated operational management function for your observability and security platforms. We act as the expert Operator — ensuring the platform itself is healthy, cost-optimised, and reliable at all times. This builds unmatched trust, delivers measurable value, and generates unique intelligence that no other engagement model can produce.

24/7 Platform Health Monitoring

Our operators continuously monitor the health of the platform infrastructure — not just the data flowing through it, but the search heads, indexers, forwarders, collectors, and ingestion pipelines that comprise the platform itself. We detect and resolve issues before they impact your users, maintaining the kind of proactive operational posture that Gartner identifies as essential for mature observability practice.

Cost Optimisation and Licence Governance

We actively manage data volumes, licence utilisation, index lifecycles, and storage tiers. Our operators identify redundant data sources, optimise ingestion pipelines, right-size infrastructure, and ensure every pound of your platform investment delivers value. In our experience, dedicated cost governance typically reduces platform costs by 15–30% within the first year while simultaneously improving data quality and coverage.

Upgrade, Patch, and Change Management

Keeping platforms current with vendor releases, security patches, and feature updates is critical but operationally demanding. Our operators manage the complete upgrade lifecycle — testing, staging, deployment, and validation — with proper change management disciplines and zero-downtime objectives. This ensures your platform benefits from the latest capabilities, including the AI and ML features that both Gartner and IDC highlight as key differentiators. We also offer source and version control.

Capacity Planning and Performance Tuning

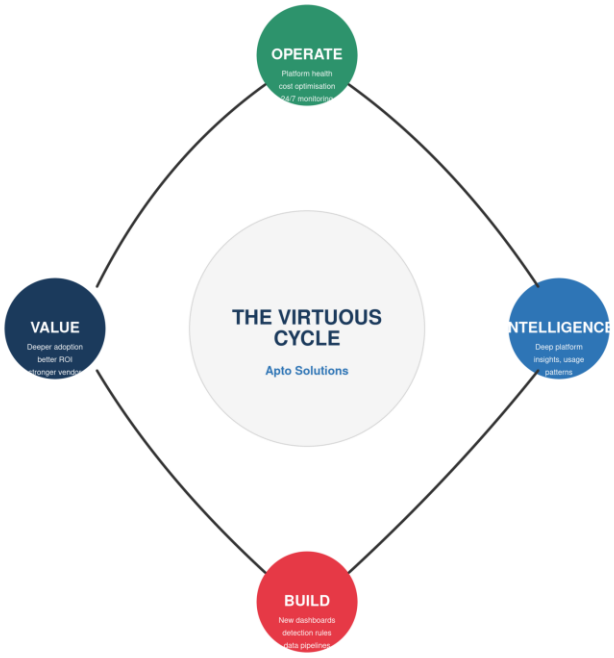
Based on continuous monitoring of data growth trends, search patterns, and resource utilisation, we proactively manage capacity to prevent performance degradation. Our tuning work encompasses search optimisation, knowledge object governance, dashboard efficiency, and infrastructure right-sizing — the operational disciplines that keep a platform performing at its best throughout its lifecycle. The transitions from reactive to predictive.

Incident Management and Vendor Liaison

When platform issues arise, Apto operators diagnose and resolve them rapidly, drawing on deep platform expertise and established vendor relationships. We act as your expert intermediary with the platform vendor, ensuring you benefit from the latest best practices, roadmap developments, and support escalation paths. This vendor liaison function is particularly valuable during major incidents, migrations, and renewal negotiations.

The Virtuous Cycle: From Operate to Build

The most powerful aspect of Apto's model is not any single operational function — it is the intelligence that dedicated operations naturally generate. Because our operators are embedded in your platform environment every day, they develop a uniquely deep understanding of your data landscape, usage patterns, and optimisation opportunities that no periodic assessment or external consultant can match.



This intelligence creates what we call the Virtuous Cycle. Our Operate service builds trust and generates insight. That insight surfaces opportunities: 'These 12 data sources are ingested but never queried in any dashboard or detection rule.' 'Your search performance would improve 40% if we restructured these knowledge objects.' 'A new MITRE ATT&CK technique is trending that your current detection rules do not cover.'

Our Build service (Operate attach) — offered as a complementary add-on — leverages this intelligence to proactively propose and deliver expert content engineering: new dashboards, detection rules, data pipelines, integrations, and data source onboarding. Because these recommendations emerge from genuine operational insight rather than generic best-practice checklists, they are precisely targeted to the customer's actual environment and deliver immediate, measurable value.

The cycle reinforces itself: Operate generates intelligence, intelligence drives Build, Build deepens platform adoption, deeper adoption demonstrates value, demonstrated value strengthens the vendor relationship, and a strong vendor relationship de-risks renewals and drives roadmap alignment. This is the model that makes Apto invaluable to our customers — we restore their focus and save them money — and indispensable to our platform vendors — we de-risk their renewals and drive deeper product adoption.

In Formula 1, the best pit crews do not merely change tyres — they feed real-time telemetry intelligence to the engineers who design the next performance upgrade. That continuous feedback loop between the pit lane and the factory is what separates championship-winning teams from the rest of the grid. The Operate-to-Build cycle is Apto's version of that feedback loop.

The Business Case: ROI of Dedicated Operations

The financial case for dedicated platform operations is compelling. For most organisations, the annual cost of Apto Operate represents a fraction of the platform licence cost — typically 10–20% — yet it protects and amplifies the entire investment.

Metric	Without Dedicated Operator	With Apto Operate
Annual Platform Cost Trend	15–25% year-on-year increase	Optimised — flat or reduced through active governance
Mean Time to Platform Issue Resolution	Hours to days — no dedicated responder	Minutes to hours — 24/7 expert operators
User Adoption Trajectory	Declining — frustration with performance	Increasing — platform is fast and reliable
Vendor Renewal Risk	High — poor utilisation visible in vendor telemetry	Low — demonstrable value and deep adoption
Security Detection Efficacy	Degrading — stale rules, ungoverned data	Continuously improving — proactive tuning
Internal Team Focus	Split between platform ops and core role	100% focused on core mission
Compliance Posture	Reactive — scrambling for audit evidence	Proactive — continuous audit trail and governance

Like a Formula 1 pit crew, the cost of Apto Operate is marginal compared to the platform investment itself — but without it, you do not finish the race. The platforms that deliver the greatest return are invariably those that receive dedicated operational attention. Apto Operate ensures your platform is one of them.

Why Apto Solutions

Apto Solutions is the only specialist firm in the UK market positioned specifically as platform Operators — not resellers packaging break-fix support, not consultancies delivering one-off implementations, and not staff augmentation firms providing temporary resource. We are dedicated, expert operators who embed ourselves in your platform environment and take ownership of its health, performance, and value delivery.

- Deep multi-platform expertise spanning Splunk, Elastic, CrowdStrike, Dynatrace, Datadog, and emerging observability technologies
- Genuine understanding of the convergence between observability, AIOps, and security — enabling us to operate platforms that span all three domains
- Vendor-agnostic philosophy — we operate whatever platform you have chosen, and our intelligence helps you make better platform decisions over time
- A proven Operate-to-Build model that creates measurable, recurring value rather than one-off project deliverables
- UK-based team with the agility, partnership ethos, and deep technical specialism of a focused firm — not the overhead and rigidity of a global SI
- Track record of transforming platform vendor relationships from adversarial renewal negotiations into collaborative partnerships

Ready to Give Your Platform the Pit Crew It Deserves?

Whether you are running Splunk, Elastic, Dynatrace, CrowdStrike, Datadog, or any modern observability or security platform, Apto's Operate service ensures your investment delivers maximum value — every single day.

Get in Touch

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Apto Solutions — The Operator Your Platform Deserves