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Module 8.2

CSD 380

**The Dangers of the Change Approval Process**

**Introduction**

A change approval process is a structured system that a company or organization may use to assess, review, and approve changes to their system or infrastructure before such changes are actually implemented. The overall goal of this process is to minimize risk and ensure accountability, however, an improperly designed change approval process can actually do the opposite. In this paper, I will talk about some of the dangers that are often associated with such a process.

**Risks**

1. **Slows Productivity and Innovation**

Many of the traditional-sort of change approval processes can often delay or slow innovation. Approval processes that go through Change Advisory Boards (CABs) are one particular example of this, as they often rely on inconvenient and cumbersome meetings that involve long, lengthy reviews. In turn, this process can slow down the deployment of updates or features, even crucial ones. In environments that are constantly moving, such as DevOps, such delays can hurt a team’s agility or response to customer needs.

1. **Too Much Red Tape**

Approval processes that are particularly rigid can be the cause of teams becoming demotivated. Software developers may feel somewhat discouraged from proposing new ideas or implementing new changes on account of the amount of red tape they will have to bypass just to arrive at a solution. Such a dynamic can stifle creativity and lead to an increase in employee dissatisfaction and frustration.

1. **Others Will Find Workarounds**

When a process is extremely restrictive or overly time-consuming, employees will often bypass them entirely to meet a deadline or please a manager. This can lead to changes being made that encountered no part of the approval process, meaning that the changes made were unauthorized. This practice will lead to a risk in modifications that have not been tracked properly, which could cause a lot of strife in the case that such change causes a security vulnerability or crashes a system.

1. **No Accountability or Transparency**

If an approval process is not transparent, it can lead to a lot of confusion about who is responsible for what and, in turn, who to contact when something is needed or if something goes wrong. In the case that something then goes wrong, it can be difficult to pinpoint exactly who is accountable since the process is very convoluted. This will, in turn, cause a delay in figuring out what the problem could be, which will harm the system overall.

1. **Handling Low-risk Changes in an Inefficient Way**

It appears that quite a few change approval processes treat every change—regardless of size—with a high level of scrutiny. This sort of approach wastes a lot of time and resources on routine updates that could be done faster through automated tools or a simplified approval process.

**Conclusion**

Change approval processes can be astronomically helpful in maintaining changes and their effects on an organization, the inefficiencies that they cause can hinder growth if the process is not properly managed. When adding a change approval process, implementing things such as the automation of low-risk approvals can make a world of difference in whether the process will be productive or not.

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