Bryan Cabrera
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Module 8.2 Assignment

The Dangers of Change Approval Processes

Change approval processes can be essential for maintaining control in a business or software development environment. It can help ensure the quality of changes that are made, can minimize errors as well as mitigate security risks. Change approval processes can even improve resource allocation within an organization making everything that makes up the process more efficient in the long run. That being said, change approval processes can also present significant risks if it is not properly managed or implemented. Below are some potential dangers that can arise from the creation and/or implementation of change approval processes.

Increased Bureaucracy and Delays:

With any changes made to a business of any size the implementation is key to the success or failure of the change in question. Therefore, any complex approval paths within an organization can end up slowing down the implementation of any change approvals which can then lead to missed deadlines. Missed deadlines especially if repeated can then lead to lost/missed business opportunities. As an example, say there's a subset of a business that has requested an update of a feature due to security flaws/concerns. Since a change has been requested, it has to go through different paths and avenues in order to even get approval for it to be built. Generously, let's say it takes a day for the proper executives to read the change proposal, another to approve it, a day to build/test the feature, and the last day to push the feature to production. That's four total days in which the original system with the noted security flaw was still in use and public to customers due to the fact that the process for approving the change/update took time that could have possibly been used to build the newer version sooner.

Resistance or Lack of Engagement

Another danger that can occur is that if the process to approve changes is overly complex, employees can often resist changes in the first place due to knowing of the upcoming complexity involved. This type of resistance can eventually lead to decreased morale or productivity to these internal stakeholders as they'll get used to an environment that has unnecessary complexity involved with trying to implement any change in the workplace. An example of this could include a software development team that is hesitant be innovative by creating updates or new features to a given platform because they're under the impression that any changes will have to go through a lot of red tape and lengthy bureaucracy leading to a platform that doesn't strive to improve or compete with other similar platforms. While not the only factor this seems similar to what happened with MySpace, not they had a complex change approval process because I'm not aware of such issue but the platform in general had different bugs and issues therefore, when a new platform by the name if Facebook arrived that was consistently innovating with adding new features it was only natural that customers looked to leave MySpace for this new product that had few issues.

Budget issues and Resource Mismanagement
Another danger is that poorly managed or implemented approval processes can end up leading to overly increased budget and resource use, again due to delays that may have been caused or poor planning in general which can lead to reworks of different types. What this could look like in the real world is that a project or feature could end up undergoing multiple redesigns due to inconsistent/complex approvals which naturally end up increasing costs as time goes on.

Ultimately it is clear that if executed poorly, change approval processes can introduce certain dangers into a business or organization which could negatively affect those involved in a manner of ways. Therefore if organizations are considering implementing new or updated change approval processes they should consider some recommended best practices which include streamlining workflows in order to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, and to encourage open-door communication to reduce employee resistance.

Sources used: The Real Costs of Poorly Managed Change
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