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Module 8 Assignment

Change management can be described as a necessary but cumbersome task in many organizations, and sometimes, we talk ourselves out of fully engaging with it. Managing change takes time, and sometimes, it can take longer to manage a change than to implement it. While engineers generally make safe and successful changes, managers approve these changes, and the business stays informed, the process of change approval can become so drawn-out that it diminishes the speed and flexibility organizations need to thrive. Change approval processes, especially when outdated or poorly designed, can inadvertently slow down innovation, which is especially detrimental in fast-paced environments like DevOps.

Some companies struggle with inefficient or inadequate change management practices. Instead of structured and consistent systems, many organizations rely on a hodgepodge of intranet documents, post-it notes, and institutional knowledge to manage change. This ad-hoc approach often results in confusion and a lack of accountability. These processes are not true "processes" at all but more like informal declarations or wishes from management that don't ensure systematic approval or oversight of changes. This can lead to poor execution, increased risk, and frustration from team members who are trying to make improvements but are slowed down by unclear and ineffective systems.

One of the major challenges in improving change approval processes is to find a balance between control and speed. The introduction of tools like JIRA can provide a much-needed framework to streamline the process, but it’s crucial to avoid over-complicating things. When it comes to DevOps, the change approval process must operate at DevOps speed—fast, efficient, and minimally disruptive. This can be achieved by simplifying the approval workflow, ensuring that only necessary parties are involved in approvals, and automating certain aspects of the process. For example, using a Python script to automate JIRA change requests for low-risk, zero-downtime changes can drastically reduce the friction in the process, allowing engineers to focus on what they do best: solving problems.

By automating change requests through a simple script, organizations can significantly reduce the time spent on administrative tasks. A change request script can generate and submit JIRA tickets with just a few lines of code, eliminating the need for engineers to manually fill out forms or track down approval signatures. This type of automation not only saves time but also ensures that changes are consistently processed through the right channels, reducing human error and the chance of missed approvals. A well-designed tool will guide engineers through the process, ensuring compliance without creating unnecessary barriers.

The simpler the change approval process, the more likely it is to be followed consistently. When engineers are provided with a straightforward and automated way to request approvals—such as a one-line script for routine tasks—the process becomes ingrained in their workflow, and they are more likely to adopt it regularly. Complexity is the enemy of consistency, and reducing the friction in the approval process makes it easier for engineers to comply without sacrificing speed or efficiency.

Sources:

[The downsides of heavy change management | LaunchDarkly](https://launchdarkly.com/guides/reconciling-change-management-and-continuous-delivery/the-downsides-of-heavy-change-management/)

[Fundamentals of change management: The change review and approval process](https://www.assurancelab.cpa/resources/change-review-and-approval-process?)

[A Change Approval Process at DevOps Speed | Daniel Goosen](https://djgoosen.com/2019/12/07/a-change-approval-process-at-devops-speed/)

The dangers of poorly implemented change approval processes are clear: they can slow down innovation, create inefficiencies, and increase risk. However, by automating parts of the approval process and simplifying workflows, organizations can achieve a balance between control and speed. A lightweight yet effective change approval process that integrates seamlessly with existing tools can empower teams, improve compliance, and maintain the flexibility that modern organizations need to thrive.