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**The Dangers of Change Approval Processes**

Change control, according to Harvard University, is the process of identifying, monitoring, and providing the documentation for authorized changes during the development process. Having a solid change control process in place can help to reduce disruption and error, however its implementation can sometimes cause issues if done incorrectly. The downfalls of an improper change control process can sometimes even lead to more issues than they solve. One of the complications that organizations run into when designing a change control procedure is the scalability of the process. The more complex the procedure, the longer it will take and the more hands it will have to touch to be approved and worked. An organization that does not adjust the size and complexity of their change control procedure may end up slowing things down with rigorous controls. Assurance Lab is an audit company that helps organizations ensure they are maintaining compliance with various standards. SOC2 compliance requires secure processing of client data, and to maintain that compliance, change control events must be documented. In their blog, “Fundamentals of Change Management: The Change Review and Approval Process”, Assurance Lab stresses the importance of change approval and distribution of duties. To maintain compliance with SOC2, all changes should be approved and the party approving that change should be determined ahead of time. Distribution of duties ensures the person who made this approval is different than the person who requested the change. They also emphasize overall documentation of the change in each of its stages. Without following these guidelines, organizations run the risk of undocumented changes, lack of direction, and inability to reference the changes during audits. Many of these pitfalls are resonated in an article published by DORA, a company dedicated to optimizing software delivery and operations performance. DORA echoed Harvard’s point of how treating change equally can become inefficient. Interestingly, DORA recommends less reliance on a change approval board (CAB) to approve changes. According to their own research, they found a correlation with negative performance and reliance on a CAB. Instead, they suggest peer review and continuous testing to catch errors. It is more efficient to blend comments, reviews, and approvals into the team’s development platform for rapid response and more accurate feedback. Ultimately, while change control is necessary, finding a balance is equally as important to save organizations from insecure changes while also ensuring they do not bottleneck themselves by overkilling their procedure.

Work Cited:

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