Jaci Brown

380 Mod 8.2

The Dangers of Change Approval Processes

Change approval processes can have an important place in businesses, but not all changes should be treated equally. In terms of software development, change approval can lead to several large problems, like delays in the anticipated timelines, uncaught or expensive last minute repairs, and employee gymnastics through red tape.

Several options exist to avoid many of these pitfalls. For starters, not all changes have the same impact. *TopDesk* recommends implementing a quick impact score. This type of system would act as a filter on what gets sent to the CAB. Smaller changes with little to no significant impact would not require more approval than standard testing or peer review. As the significance increased, perhaps levels of reviews increase, but within a smaller scope of specialized area managers, like the database administrator or head of security. Hopefully limiting full review board action for only full impact, completely transformative changes [2].

In addition to limiting what types of changes should require what type of approval, the increasingly standard practice of continual testing provides more security than an uninformed CAB member who focuses on HR or accounting. Continuing to use development best practices this way can help to avoid becoming too dependent on the CAB. When developers are so accustomed to changes taking months, they may not prepare the best quality code, assuming they will have time to improve it, or that the CAB will catch any truly dangerous changes [1].

A CAB with too much power can stifle the creative process of developing secure, stable, and innovative software. Red tape can slow progress to a full stop by disallowing adaptation for the sake of maintaining the norm. In addition to the main power existing outside the development team, teams with already stifled change approval processes likely suffer from poor communication. The product owner wishes may be made known to the developers, but the CAB as intermediaries, could negate key parts due to lack of understand either of the scope of desired outcome of the change [3].

Overall, a change approval process is not inherently bad. However, the system can quickly overflow if the flow is not managed properly. Using some of the above-mentioned techniques should help create a medium ground where major changes are agreed upon by significant members and smaller impact changes are handled quickly and efficiently in their respective departments.

Notes

CAB- Change Advisory/Approval Board

Sources

[1] <https://dora.dev/capabilities/streamlining-change-approval/>

[2] <https://www.topdesk.com/en/blog/change-proces/>

[3] <https://dzone.com/articles/change-management-is-broken-heres-how-to-fix-it>