**The Dangers of Change Approval Processes**

Change approval processes are a fundamental aspect of IT and business operations, intended to manage and mitigate risks associated with changes in systems and practices. However, these processes are not without their drawbacks. This paper explores the dangers and challenges posed by change approval processes, drawing on insights from various industry sources.

1. **Inefficiency and Delays**
   * One of the primary criticisms of change approval processes is that they can significantly slow down operations. According to ITSM.tools, excessive change approvals can create a bureaucracy that hampers agility and delays responses to market or operational demands (ITSM.tools, 2023). This can be particularly detrimental in environments where rapid iteration and responsiveness are critical.
2. **Innovation Stifling**
   * Change approval processes can also stifle innovation by creating barriers to implementing new ideas or technologies. As noted by Split.io, the rigidity of approval processes often requires extensive justification and review, which can discourage innovation and risk-taking. This conservatism can lead companies to miss out on opportunities or lag behind more agile competitors (Split.io, 2023).
3. **Resource Drain**
   * The administrative overhead associated with managing a change approval process can also be considerable. The need for detailed documentation, reviews, meetings, and approvals can consume significant time and resources that could otherwise be used more productively. Furthermore, the focus on process can divert attention from the actual work of improving and operating the business.
4. **Conflict and Morale**
   * Change approval processes can lead to conflicts within organizations, particularly when approvals are perceived as arbitrary or unfairly withheld. DZone discusses how rigid processes can lead to frustration among team members, especially developers who may feel their professional judgment is not trusted (DZone, 2023). This can erode morale and reduce the overall effectiveness of teams.
5. **Compliance and Complexity**
   * While designed to ensure compliance and mitigate risks, the complexity of change approval processes can sometimes lead to errors and oversights. The more complex the process, the higher the likelihood of something being missed or mishandled, which can ironically lead to increased risks rather than reducing them.

**Conclusion** While change approval processes are intended to control risks and ensure stable operations, they must be carefully managed to avoid inefficiency, stifling innovation, draining resources, causing conflict, and adding unnecessary complexity. Organizations should strive to design these processes to be as streamlined and transparent as possible, to support rather than hinder their operational and strategic goals.

**References:**

<https://www.givainc.com/blog/itil-change-management-process/>

<https://itsm.tools>