Joe Huffer

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CSD380

Professor Sampson

Assignment 8.2: The Dangers of Change Approval Process

To begin, it’s important to acknowledge what the Change Approval Process is. The Change Approval Process plays a vital role in IT and in software development as an approval procedure intended to minimize risk, maintain a form of compliance, and align changes with business objectives that a company might, or rather should, have. However, traditional methods regarding the Change Approval Process can often rely on manual approvals which introduce one example of inefficiencies and risks regarding the procedure. This paper will serve to explore the potential pitfalls of traditional change approval, their impact on performance, and strategies for improvement – and exploring the following articles that led me here: [myndbend.com](https://www.myndbend.com/guide-to-the-it-change-requests-approval-process/), [Dora.dev](https://dora.dev/capabilities/streamlining-change-approval/), & [LaunchDarkly](https://launchdarkly.com/guides/reconciling-change-management-and-continuous-delivery/the-downsides-of-heavy-change-management/).

First, of three reasons, I’ve gathered is that Change Approval reviews can quickly slow down the time it takes to get a product to market. When delivering software, as stated in the 2019 *State of Devops Report*, heavyweight approval systems correlate to longer lead times, larger batch sizes, which then can result in higher failure rates. These delays reduce potential for agile implementations and can lead to missed opportunities in terms of innovation – and sometimes the market demands a rapid release structure. LaunchDarkly highlights that frequent and smaller changes are more effective, as they allow for teams to gather user feedback quickly and still maintain efficiency.

Next, and this is slightly referenced in the previous points, but it’s focus deters any redundancy. Here we’re discussing the increased risk and failure rates of items impacted by Change Approval Processes, specifically the impact that a bureaucratic impact management has on the process. Research from the link from Dora indicates that formal reviews from external members of an organization are not associated with lower failure rates, and often leads to riskier large-batch deployments. To clarify, when a batch becomes too large, the impact on the project is large. When the impact is larger, the risk of failure increases because there is now a greater chance of options, some of which being errors, slower workloads/workspeeds, or even burnout and frustration.

On the topic of frustration, I’d guarantee that in our class there are some who already have either full exposure to Change Approval or even a diluted version of this process. In that, I’m sure we’ve all encountered a situation where requiring a response back can throttle work that has a deadline to be completed by. There are systems you put on top of those systems (check-ins, Canned responses detailing SLAs, communication), but the bottleneck still remains. LaunhDarkly and Myndbend reference that frustrations and stalled processes can result in bottlenecks, and that it’s important to concisely outline approval hierarchies so that accountability can be withheld.

In conclusion, this essay serves to outline 3 major issues that can take place when implementing and following Change Approval Processes. To summarize, we can see those issues manifest as slowing down of work product and systems, bureaucratic delays, and frustration among users trying to do their job. It’s also important to note that there are benefits to a well-structured change control system, all of which can be covered in a separate essay.

Works Cited

DevOps Research and Assessment (DORA). "Streamlining Change Approval." State of DevOps Report. 2019. <https://dora.dev/capabilities/streamlining-change-approval/>.

LaunchDarkly. "Reconciling Change Management and Continuous Delivery: The Downsides of Heavy Change Management." LaunchDarkly Guides. 2024. <https://launchdarkly.com/guides/reconciling-change-management-and-continuous-delivery/the-downsides-of-heavy-change-management/>.

Myndbend. "Guide to the IT Change Requests Approval Process." Myndbend Resources. 2024. <https://www.myndbend.com/guide-to-the-it-change-requests-approval-process/>.