The Dangers of Change Approval Processes

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**Abstract**

Many companies use Change Advisory Boards (CABs) to check for changes before they go live. Though the goal is to keep systems safe and meet rules, CABs often slow things down and do not stop failures. Studies show that waiting for formal approvals makes teams move slower and recover from problems more slowly without cutting down mistakes. Other common issues, like poor communication, unrealistic and unclear goals, and weak planning, make up to 70 percent of change efforts fail. A simpler way is to use a Quick Impact Score to send high risk changes to the CAB and let smaller updates go through faster. This method manages changes and controls efficiency and concise.

Change review processes are meant to protect live systems while they meet legal regulatory requirements. In reality, they often add long waits, push more work into queues, and block quick fixes. In today’s fast market, delays can mean lost time and extra costs. It is important to evaluate how CABs work, fix communication gaps, and choose a lighter, risk‑based approach, so teams can move fast without sacrificing safety or quality.

**The Problem with Traditional Change Advisory Boards**

Traditional CABs meet on a set schedule, often once a week. A fix that takes an hour to write might wait days for approval. This delay makes teams bundle many changes together, and large bundles are harder to deploy. Research shows that relying on external approvals leads to slower lead times, less frequent deployments, and longer recovery times, yet does not lower failure rates. In short, CABs add slowdowns without benefit, thus they are not cost effective to address the changes.

**Common Change Management Pitfalls**

Changing efforts also fail when key steps are missed. When leaders withhold essential information, staff must guess what will happen starting rumors and causing speculations to spread. If messages are mixed, so that different teams or executives hear different stories, trust breaks down, fostering confusion amongst the management and personnel. Being under budgeted and plans lacking essential detail can affect projects to be over budget and over schedule. Change must be more than a one‑time event. Without ongoing support, teams fall back into old habits. There is a need for updated guides, regular training, feedback surveys, and tracking of results to continuously improve the skillset of team members.

Finally, many change plans ignore team dynamics and environment. Staff will worry due to the uncertainty about the changes that may bring. They become worried about their roles, time, and stability when changes are not handled consistently and effectively. Distrust with leadership and fellow team members will foster due to the uncertainty. Employee collaboration, growth, skillset, and retention suffer due to uncertain changes that impact product and work quality.

**A Risk‑Based Approval Model**

Streamline change can be simplified by rating change by impact using a Quick Impact Score. Teams will assess different factors such as how many users are affected, cost, security risks, and rule compliance. Each change is evaluated and labeled low, medium, or high impact. Low‑impact changes move ahead automatically or with a brief check. Medium-impact changes need only a single manager for approval. High‑impact changes go to the full CAB. This approach can cut CAB work by about 80 percent, so the board focuses on the most critical elements. Other steps, such as peer code reviews, automated deployment checks, and clear meeting agendas, help keep quality high without slowing the flow. Simple tools and dashboards can automate routine tasks and share updates in real time.

Relying on a heavy‑handed CAB for every change gives a false sense of security while slowing down teams and raising risk. By fixing communication gaps, respecting culture, and using a Quick Impact Score to route work, companies can keep control of important changes and let routine updates move fast. Moving from a one‑size‑fits‑all review process to a risk‑driven model lets teams deliver value more quickly and safely.

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