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**The Dangers of Change Approval Processes**

According to Tahir Abbas, **Change Approval** is the process of evaluating, authorizing, and scheduling changes to IT systems and infrastructure. It involves a formal process of assessing the impact, risk and feasibility of proposed changes, and deciding to either approve or reject the change based on predefined criteria. Furthermore, the change approval process not only ensures that changes are properly planned, tested and implemented in a controlled and efficient manner, but also ensures that the changes align with the organization’s objectives, minimizing risks, and meeting the needs of stakeholders. (Tahir Abbas, 2023). However, the change approval process can have several downsides and pitfalls, such as having an outdated approval method. For instance, many change management projects require orthodox approval methods involving multiple levels of management, large committees, predefined windows to make changes, and a separation of duties. Thus, having to go through all these steps reduces the efficiency of the organization.

Another downside for the change approval processes is the conflict of misaligned incentives. It is common for the Development and Operations teams to have misaligned incentives; whereas, Developers want velocity while operations want stability. (Dzone.com, 2024)

Reliance on a centralized Change Approval Board (CAB) to catch errors and approve changes is another pitfall in the change approval process. This approach can introduce delay and often error. CABs are good at broadcasting change, but people who are far removed from the change might not understand the implications of those changes. (Dora.com, 2024)

Another pitfall of change approval processes is that organizations more often use additional processes and more heavyweight approvals when faced with stability problems in production. These additional processes not only drive up lead times and batch sizes, but also create a vicious cycle and make things worse.

Finally, to mitigate these dangers and challenges, organizations and companies focus on implementing the following four steps:

The first one is moving to a peer-review based process for individual changes, enforced at code check-in time, and supported by automated tests. The second one is finding ways to discover problems such as regressions, performance problems, and security issues in an automated fashion as soon as possible after changes are committed. Furthermore, the third one is performing ongoing analysis to detect and flag high risk changes early on so that they can be subjected to additional scrutiny.

As for the fourth one, organizations focus on looking at the change process end-to-end, trying to identify bottlenecks, and experimenting with ways to shift validations into the development platform.

Overall, since the change approval processes are critical for the growth of organizations, it is recommended to continuously review and adapt these processes to ensure they remain efficient and effective.

**Resource:**

Change Management Institute. (n.d.). Change Approval Process in ITIL Change Management. Retrieved July 14, 2024, from <https://changemanagementinsight.com/change-approval-process-in-itil-change-management/>

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