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The Dangers of Change Approval Processes

Before understanding what the dangers of a change approval process are, it is important to understand what a change approval process is in the first place. A change approval process is a system that exists within an organization that allows individuals to propose changes to a policy, project, or operation. The propositions are then reviewed and assessed to evaluate what type of impact those changes would have, which then results in wither approval or rejection. The best way to explain this process is that it is a control method for managing changes within an organization.

While the change approval process sounds like a beneficial concept, it may be hard to understand how there are dangers to be associated with this. The dangers that are associated with this process are varied but important to understand as they can be detrimental towards the health and stability of a company. Firstly, it is important to understand who should be assigned to manage an approval process. One of the dangers that will be covered starts from a lack of proper managerial organization. An approval process should have specific members in charge of monitoring the inquiries/propositions; therefore, the organization would have to evaluate if they would want a single approver, tiered approval, multiple approvers, or a change advisory board. In the article, *Guide to the IT Change Requests Approval Process,* a detailed explanation of each of these concepts is broken down into what it would entail. For example, a single approver would involve a “change manager” who will assign approvers to certain tickets based on the roles and responsibilities of the approver. Following this type of approval can also be dependent on the level of change it requires, such as if something was more critical it would call for an approver, whereas if not it may go straight through. Understanding what is called for the organization is important or else it begins to fall into the dangers of utilizing the control style. If an approver does not understand what their specific roles are and thus not executing them properly, they may be approving invalid , or faulty tickets. Thus, meaning that they approve proposals that don’t directly align to their approval responsibilities. Having faulty organization will result in bad accountability, responsibility, and lack of having informed approvers. Additionally, a lack of organization within the business can result in having a backlog of tickets occur that slow down production and have a damaging impact on the overall business by creating a bottleneck.

Understanding the structure that is necessary to maintain a change management is vital, and the pervious article did great in showing what is necessary for a proper change management. However, also understanding more of the dangers that are associated with this lack of structure is just as important. Despite the last article briefly glossing over it, bottlenecking is not the only danger associated with poor structure. The article, *The Real Costs of Poorly Managed Change,* highlights just how determined a poor structure can be. While it is beneficial for a organization to want to implement such a beneficial idea, there has to be a follow-through matching the approach to utilizing change management. If there is no structure, then the company may fall into one of the following problems:

* Project delays
* Over budget costs
* Reworking and repetitiveness
* Unavailable resources

From these occurrences, two stand out to me the most: project delays and budgeting. When considering a project, as we have understood, some vital things are established with the client such as the time of product release and overall cost. If there is a lack of support then a project will be prone to delays due to a lack of submitted approval that are being waited on, and with more time comes more costs. Since there was a result in unexpected need for redesign and reworking, additional funds will be called for and essentially results in a domino effect. While these concerns happen internally, long-term consequences arise as well. The stakeholders and client’s relationship will become unsupported due to lack of consistency in agreements of time and budget. Therefore, the consensus would be unsatisfactory, which could tarnish the reputation of the business as well. Additionally, since the team would be constantly waiting for approval can also impact on the overall work culture. The employees will begin to feel less valued as they may be frustrated with the lack of support in change requests and diminishing team morale.

All these dangers are exceedingly damaging to the overall health of the company, which is why it is completely necessary to understand more about the proper implementation of a change approval process. While understanding the dangers are important, the article, *Streamlining Change Approval,* allows an organization to get on the right foot to not fall victim to those consequences. Essentially there are two main goals that an organization should focus on when implementing a change approval. The first should consider the decrease in risk changes, and the overall regulatory requirements needed to be satisfied. The goals have numerous ways to be approached but a common type of approach is through heavy weight process. A heavy weight process includes a team that is external from the organization which is proposing the change such as a change Advisory Board such as mentioned from the first article. However, these implementations or processes are not necessarily the best as some of them have a negative connotation or impact on the overall delivery of software performance. Therefore, if we want to follow more aligned to develop goals then there are different approaches that could be utilized. When approached that should be implemented when considering changing approval process is using peer review to assess the goals. Having peer review is great for a segregation of duties because it ensures that the goals are still being aligned with what the other team members are desiring. This concept may seem a little rudimentary but it's very vital because it could be missed therefore this will include having things such as reviews, comments, and other types of approvals that are overall captured in the development platform from the team. Ensuring that there is also proper monitoring is vital to ensure that these changes that have gone through are not defective or implementing bad practices within the product or overall production. Without continuous testing and monitoring there is no way to tell if the product is having a bad effect throughout the software process. By utilizing these two forms of processes, it can already elevate how implementing a change approval process is integrated more appropriately within your organization. Therefore, the overall goal of this change process should be that it is fast and reliable and can even be relied upon for any emergency changes as well. And while this article does a great job in highlighting what needs to be met to integrate a change of rule process it also does a phenomenal job in highlighting what can be a pitfall to these as well. One thing that truly stood out was how treating all changes should not be equal. This goes back again to our previous articles and where there's going to be different levels of changes that are met such as something that is more critical, or something lower in severity. If these two tickets were treated equally then the overall change review would be inefficient, and it could result in a defective software product.

Overall implementing a change approval process is not a bad idea. If anything, it's extremely smart as it will help improve the functionality of the product as well as its reliability. However, just with anything that is implemented within an organization it needs to be implemented correctly. If there is no structure in having a change approval process, then the whole idea could come falling and be unfortunately damaging towards the organization.

References:

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