Brian Preston

CSD-380

7/13/2025

**The Dangers of Change Approval Processes**

This week, I have been able to dive further and learn that the change approval processes are a necessary part of IT change management. I have learned that they are meant to protect systems and ensure stability; they can sometimes become roadblocks that slow innovation, frustrate teams, and even introduce more risks than they prevent. Being able to research multiple sources, I believe it’s clear that the right balance between control and flexibility is essential for success.

According to an article I found with N-able (2025), ITIL Change Management frameworks are designed to minimize risks and ensure all IT changes align with business goals. However, if approval processes are too rigid, they can lead to bottlenecks and reduced efficiency. I think this is a common pain point for many IT teams who feel constrained by lengthy approval steps. As the article states, “Despite the structured framework of ITIL Change Management, there are often challenges that can jeopardize success.” I felt that this highlights how even a well-intentioned process can go wrong if it becomes overly bureaucratic.

From my experience working on cross-functional projects, I’ve seen how long approval cycles can delay important fixes or updates. Instead of quickly resolving issues, teams sometimes end up stuck waiting for approvals, which can create security vulnerabilities or customer dissatisfaction. Clear documentation and communication are key to avoiding these delays.

The second article from DORA (2025) emphasizes how heavy reliance on centralized change advisory boards (CABs) can actually hurt software delivery performance. The article explains, “Such heavyweight approaches tend to slow down the delivery process... with an accompanying higher impact on the production system that is likely to be associated with higher levels of risk.”

I believe that moving toward more automated, peer-reviewed approvals can help reduce these risks. By empowering teams and shifting approvals closer to the people doing the work, organizations can respond faster and improve overall performance. I think this approach not only makes changes safer but also boosts morale by giving teams more ownership and accountability.

The third article I found is by McCarty (2023) outlines another danger: when change approval processes lack proper controls or oversight, unauthorized changes may slip through, or critical updates may be delayed. According to McCarty, “IT change management controls protect the service organization in managing system changes, either planned or unplanned, and help to minimize disruption, system issues, and production outages if IT change management controls are poorly executed.”

From my perspective, this highlights the importance of balancing strictness with practicality. It is crucial to maintain strong controls and audits to ensure compliance and security, but overly rigid processes can lead to workarounds or shadow IT, where teams bypass official processes out of frustration.

I believe that the key to effective change approval lies in creating a system that is both rigorous and adaptable. Organizations should focus on streamlining processes, using automation where possible, and providing clear communication to reduce resistance and confusion. From my experience, involving teams early and allowing for feedback helps create a culture of trust and continuous improvement.

In the end, while I do find that change approval processes are essential to maintain stability and security, I now have a better understanding that they can also introduce significant dangers if not designed thoughtfully. Heavy-handed approvals can slow progress, reduce agility, and even increase risks. I think a modern approach that combines automated checks, peer reviews, and strong but flexible controls is the best way forward. By rethinking these processes, organizations can stay secure while remaining innovative and responsive.

**References**

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