**Module 8.2 – The Dangers of Change Approval Processes**

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**The Dangers of Change Approval Processes**

The change approval process is a workflow the organization follows when there are changes in data, software, infrastructure, and systems. The change approval process aims to reduce the risk of errors, ensure regulatory compliance, and increase accountability. External reviewers or Change Advisory Boards (CABs) typically approve the change approval process. Most companies automate the approval processes with computers, but some may still require manual approvals. Each company has its own process or tools for its change approval process. However, when the change approval process is applied rigidly or poorly designed, it can cause unintended consequences. Time waste, lack of flexibility, risk of information loss, and errors are dangers of change approval processes.

It is essential to understand the purpose of the change approval process. According to DORA, the change approval process has two goals: decreasing the risk of making changes and satisfying regulatory requirements. The change approval process can prevent individuals from having end-to-end control over a process because no author can approve their work. Typically, both goals are met through a heavyweight process. Due to the heavyweight process, it could lead to time waste. The Change Approval Board will approve the change, even for low-risk implementation. According to Octopus Deploy, CABs often significantly increase lead times and WIP since updates are delayed and batched up as they go through the formal approval process. CABs usually meet once a week; a simple change could delay for hours or even a week. It increases the lead time and work-in-progress. Therefore, approval causes time waste, slows down the implementation, and creates bottlenecks.

The Change Approval Process is less flexible when it is applied rigidly. CAB meetings are set on a fixed schedule, and the work is adjusted based on the schedules. They have meetings weekly or biweekly; all changes, even emergency tasks, still need to wait for the next CAB meeting. CAB members have key roles: service desk manager, operations managers, application manager, information security officer, senior network engineer, and business relationship managers. However, some changes don’t require all members to decide; all members still need to be there. The lack of flexibility in CAP will cause implementation delays and reduce agility.

Change approval Processes can increase the risk of information loss and errors. Critical details are missing when using outdated or poorly managed approval methods. Missing puzzle pieces can lead to poorly informed decisions, increasing the likelihood of human errors and costing time, money, and sometimes reputation (CMW Lab, 2025). When the team discovers a vulnerability in an application, the team is working on a patch request. However, the Change Advisory Board meets only once a week. Therefore, it could potentially cause a data breach. When there are a lot of changes in the queue, some of the changes are time sensitive, and by the time the request is approved, the plan may already be outdated. In conclusion, a rigid change approval process could lead to more errors and an information gap.

The change approval process is designed to guard the application to ensure stability, accountability, and compliance. However, when the change approval process is applied rigidly, the organization will face the potential dangers of time waste, lack of flexibility, risk of information loss, and errors.  The dangers of the change approval process can be avoided using modern practices. The risk level can categorize approvals. For some, a lower-risk change can move quickly. Using automation can improve the change approval process as well.

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