Edgar Arroyo

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Module 8 Assignment - “The Dangers of Change Approval Processes”

The Change Approval Process in DevOps is a system in which software changes are reviewed and approved by change control professionals before being deployed to production. This process is designed to enhance stability, security, and compliance in software development.

Effective change management offers several benefits, including improved communication between teams, increased employee engagement, and enhanced customer satisfaction. However, when poorly implemented or handled with complacency, the change approval process can introduce significant risks. Some common reasons for failure include outdated approval methods, poor communication, and siloed teams, all of which can lead to delays, security vulnerabilities, and system failures.

A notable example of the dangers associated with a faulty change approval process is the 2022 Swedbank outage. Nearly a million customers were affected when incorrect bank balances prevented them from making payments on time. The root cause of this outage was an unauthorized change to the bank’s IT systems, which bypassed internal controls. This incident highlighted the critical weaknesses in Swedbank’s change management process, demonstrating how ineffective change control management can lead to severe operational and financial consequences. This incident cost Swedbank $85 million in regulatory fines, underscoring the importance of strong compliance measures in change management.

This case underscores the necessity of refining change management strategies to minimize potential failures. The key lesson from this incident is that change approval processes alone do not entirely mitigate risk. As Bruce Johnston states, “Change is not the problem; it’s unaddressed risk.” Risk is best mitigated by introducing smaller, more frequent changes to a system, ensuring that potential issues can be caught and addressed before they escalate into major failures.

Sources:

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