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Module 8.2 Assignment

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**The Dangers of Change Approval Processes**

Change management consists of various processes in many organizations where a change to an IT service must be approved before it can be officially rolled out. This includes services that are only used internally as well as services that are public products to users. Change management is frequently implemented in DevOps environments. Regardless, with change approval, there will always be at least one enlisted ‘approver’ for a change, and that will never be the same person who is implementing the change.

One of the most common dangers within a change approval process regards the approval members. Many processes implement a group of approvers called a ‘change advisory board’. This board is composed of different representatives of stakeholders to the change. However, the biggest issue with a CAB is that not always will these representatives deserve to have a say in approving the change or not. Oftentimes the representatives will be disconnected and not entirely familiar with the change and its purpose (Stahnke, 2021). This, along with the fact that the board is “heavyweight” and can be time-consuming to wait on, can lead to long delays in approval and failed changes (Dora, n.d.).

Another common problem is “treating all changes equally” (Dora, n.d.). Not every change is the same and therefore, not every change should receive the same ‘approval treatment’. For example, if every single minuscule change with little size and impact needed the approval of various people from different departments, then no change would ever get approved on time. Time and effort should be conserved for those high-risk changes “that require true concentration”.

Despite these issues, there are certain practices that organizations can implement to enforce a more streamlined change management process. One way is to identify the “bottlenecks” in the approval process and ensure the right approvers are assigned to each change. Requiring multiple approvals from different people when it's not necessary can lead to changes taking longer than needed to employ. This can be solved by allowing only one member to approve when it suffices. Simply enabling a peer-review system could also help speed up changes. Another way to support change approval is through a role system. Every potential approver could be assigned one of the following roles dependent on each change: “responsible, accountable, or need to be consulted or informed” (R, A, C, or I) (MyndBend, n.d.). Understanding each person’s role will help teams make better decisions on approvers. Lastly, change approval processes can be sped up through automation. Systems that help create tickets, send notifications to approvers, provide status updates, and more will help enforce better communication standards (MyndBend, n.d.). Better communication means better workflow and more efficient change management.

**References**

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