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Hi, it's Margaret Maloney. I think we should talk about how you can make change control part of your formula for success. I'd like to share some equations with you, equations I learned about change control. This is my version of how I learned the importance of change control, the hard way. Well, you don't have to. I'm a no regrets kind of gal and so I won't say that I have regrets from some of my past projects, but I sure have some lessons learned that I might have acquired the hard way and one of those is definitely about change control. Because when I was a new project manager, here's what I thought. If my customer called and asked for something, I should just do it, because happy customer equals good project management career. And so I thought that announcing any kind of requirement as a change, if my customer called and asked for it, I thought that was a bad thing. So I had this little equation in my head, announcing new requirements as a scope change is bad news. And so I didn't do it, because I didn't want to have bad news. I didn't want to make my customer upset with me. Well, the problem with that is one day, there we are sitting in our post project wrap up. And the question comes up, why were you and the team five days past the deadline? And I said, it was because of the changes that we've been asked for and my sponsor looked across the table at me with a blank look on his face and said, what changes? Everything you did for us was in scope and this picture portrays what I wanted to do at that moment, which was probably throw all my papers and things at him, because I was so angry. And luckily, I knew enough not to take on my sponsor in a meeting like that and that it would be career limiting. But I was so mad, because I thought well, what kind of partnership was that? You called and asked for things, we did them. The price was five days. Now you're turning around and saying, what changes. And as a extra dagger to my heart, he added on. You guys were just late, because you always run late. So I was fuming, but who was it I should really have been mad at? And if you're saying you, yourself, Margaret, you're right. I needed to be angry at myself, because I had no process in place and so what I was learning the hard way was my first equation. Announcing new requirements as a scope change equals bad news, leads to equation two. Undocumented changes plus a politically savvy customer plus a naive project manager equals embarrassment and inability to account for differences in timeline and budget.

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In other words, skipping change management equals undocumented overages plus poor customer perception. So now I'm late, I can't say why other than to say that we did changes for you, but I have no proof. And they have a customer looking at me saying, I didn't ask for any changes and you guys are always late. So certainly, this led to a moment of a little bit of stepping back project management soul searching. I wanted to do a good job. I wanted my customer to be happy. I never wanted to have that conversation ever again, cuz I was tweaked to the max. And so, I realized that I needed to learn about a little thing called change control and so we continue on. And the next project comes up, cuz I worked with the same sponsor for quite a bit. Despite how I'm telling the story, we had a good working relationship. But I think he knew at the beginning what I was supposed to do and why was he going to teach me my job, if it was to his advantage for me not to know that I was supposed to keep track of changes. Right? So the next time when he called and asked for a change, I said that's an update. That's a change in scope and we will do it, if you fill out a change request and he said, no. Of course, he said no, because he never had to do that before, did he? I gathered my two ounces of courage and stood up to him and said, then we won't do it. Where we wound up that time was I filled out the change request. He grudgingly signed it, but at least I had some documentation, but here's where I arrived at. Change management without customer participation equals documented overages good, plus poor customer perception still not good. Better, but not good. Well, some of the lessons learned that I picked up were, you should have a change [LAUGH] management process. This might be the time where you look at the screen right now and say, duh, but I didn't know. And if your current environment doesn't have one and by the way, this was a place where project management was new. So we didn't introduce a process and have people help build the process, so that there is ownership and buy in. Don't make your process so complex that it's confusing, cuz here's what will happen, people won't use it. And when I say, they won't use it, I don't just mean they won't submit changes. I mean, they'll find other ways to get their changes accomplished and so people not submitting changes isn't necessarily a good thing. There are plenty of good changes and suggestions that occur during the lifetime of a project that we want to capture. We just wanna make sure we capture them correctly. You should never have to apologize for expecting customers, sponsors or anyone to issue change requests. It's a good business practice. It's why it's a recommended best practice. We don't want to take company time and money and treat it like we have a blank check. Change control and change request keep track of where we spent our time and money. It's a responsibility, really and documented changes support better estimating for the future. When we estimate some of our best estimation comes historic data and lessons learned. How do we get that without capturing this information? What I learned eventually, right? And the hard way was this equation. Skipping Change Management = Poor Customer Service. And if I had learned this at the beginning, I wouldn't have had to go through all those other equations and all those steps. But then I wouldn't have had all these great stories to tell you either, right? So tradeoffs. Those were

the equations I learned as I told you at the beginning, the hard way. But of course, you won't have to have that experience. Thanks for listening to my story. I feel better already. Bye for now.