Joshua Kelbley

Darren Osier

7/13/2024

Assignment 8.2

While designed to ensure stability and minimize risks, change approval processes often introduce significant inefficiencies and frustrations within organizations. One of the primary dangers of traditional change approval processes is the substantial increase in processing costs. According to a report by Lucy Payne, approval processes often involve multiple layers of management and extensive back-and-forth communication. This is time-consuming and costly, as it involves high-level personnel with expensive time. Payne points out that the average cost to process a single invoice can be up to $15, significantly affecting a company's bottom line when multiplied by the monthly invoices. The inefficiency is exacerbated when approvals are redundant, such as multiple checks on the same VAT number, which do not add value but merely delay the process.

Operational delays are another significant issue caused by cumbersome change approval processes. As highlighted by a case study from Legacy Supply Chain Services, these traditional methods can hinder the implementation of new IT Service Management (ITSM) tools like TeamDynamix. The study notes that inefficient approval methods, such as mandatory wait periods and the need for multiple approvals, often lead to a 9x increase in inefficiency. This not only slows down project timelines but also frustrates employees who are eager to implement beneficial changes. The misalignment of incentives between development teams (focused on velocity) and operations teams (focused on stability) further complicates the approval process, leading to stalled projects and missed opportunities for innovation.

The bureaucratic nature of change approval processes can severely impact employee morale. The process can feel arbitrary and demotivating when approval chains involve individuals far removed from the actual work. A study by Puppet, as cited in an article on DevOps change management, emphasizes that traditional change management practices are often seen as hindrances rather than aids. The requirement for approvals from distant management levels, who may need more understanding of the change's context and urgency, can lead to significant delays. This demotivates employees and fosters a culture of resistance to change, where team members feel their initiatives are constantly blocked by unnecessary bureaucracy.

Given these challenges, organizations must adopt more streamlined and efficient change approval processes. Payne suggests that companies should critically evaluate which processes truly require approvals and eliminate redundant checks. Organizations can reduce the time and cost of these processes by leveraging modern tools that integrate approval workflows and provide transparency. For instance, tools that allow approvals via mobile devices or automating routine checks can significantly enhance efficiency.

Legacy Supply Chain Services' successful implementation of TeamDynamix highlights the benefits of using structured and scalable ITSM tools to streamline change management. The key is to involve the end-users—the help desk employees—in the tool selection process to ensure that it addresses their practical needs and challenges. This approach improves the selection process and increases user buy-in and satisfaction, leading to more effective change management.

Automation and standardization are pivotal in overcoming the inefficiencies of traditional change approval processes. According to the Puppet report, organizations that standardize their deployment practices and automate their workflows experience higher success rates in change management. Automation reduces the need for manual approvals and enables real-time feedback, accelerating the deployment process and reducing the risk of errors. Standardized tools and processes ensure consistency and predictability, making it easier for teams to adapt to changes and for management to maintain oversight without micromanaging every step.

The dangers of traditional change approval processes are clear: increased costs, operational delays, and reduced employee morale. However, organizations can transform their change management practices by critically assessing the necessity of each approval, leveraging modern ITSM tools, and embracing automation and standardization. This enhances efficiency and fosters a more agile, motivated workforce ready to embrace change and drive innovation.

Works Cited

Coetzee, W. (2021, November 18). *3 key considerations to change your approval processes from roadblocks to value drivers*. 3 key Considerations to Change Your Approval Processes From Roadblocks to Value Drivers. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-key-considerations-change-your-approval-processes-from-coetzee>

Stahnke, M. (2021, January 22). *Change Management Is Broken: Here’s How To Fix It*. Change Management Is Broken: Here’s How To Fix It. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from https://dzone.com/articles/change-management-is-broken-heres-how-to-fix-it

TeamDynamix (n.d.). *Implementing A New ITSM Tool – Creating A Strategic Vision for Project and Change Management*. Implementing A New ITSM Tool – Creating A Strategic Vision for Project and Change Management. Retrieved July 13, 2024, from <https://www.teamdynamix.com/blog/implementing-a-new-itsm-tool-creating-a-strategic-vision-for-project-and-change-management/>