

The Dangers of Change Approval Processes: Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Introduction

Change is an aspect of life that we all encounter every single day. It is an inevitable aspect of personal and professional growth and adaptation. However, in the professional world, the processes through which changes occur can introduce significant risks. This paper explores the dangers associated with change approval processes with emphasis on project management and IT systems, and discusses strategies to mitigate these risks.

Dangers Involved with Change

Implementing changes without thorough evaluation can lead to operational disruptions. For instance, introducing a new software system without proper testing or training can result in system downtimes, errors, or delays, impacting productivity and customer service. A more laid back approach in approval mechanisms can lead to unauthorized changes being implemented. These changes may bypass necessary permissions and could result in modifications that the organization doesn't need or isn't prepared to handle, leading to unnecessary expenses. Another form of change that can involve stakeholders that may resist proposed changes due to fear of the unknown, concerns about increased workload, or perceived risks. This resistance can manifest in decreased productivity, negative attitudes, and even direct opposition to new processes or systems. There can also be financial risks involved when it comes to change. Approving change requests without fully analyzing their financial impact can lead to unanticipated cost increases, potentially exceeding the project's budget.

Another key role in a professional setting involves adequate levels of communication. The more changes introduced, the more communication is required between team members and stakeholders. Increased communication needs can lead to miscommunication, resulting in confusion, delays, and mistakes in the implementation of changes. Multiple change requests can cause the original project goals to become less clear, leading to a loss of focus. This can reduce the overall quality of the project deliverables and create confusion regarding the project's purpose.

Mitigation Strategies

To address these risks, organizations can implement several strategies such as:

- Implement a Structured Change Control Process: Establish a formal process for evaluating and approving changes to ensure that all potential impacts are considered.

- Keep Stakeholders in the Loop: Engage stakeholders in the change process from the outset to ensure their concerns and insights are addressed.
- Provide Training: Offer training programs to equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to changes effectively.
- Clear and Frequent Communication: Maintain open lines of communication to keep all parties informed about changes and their implications.

Conclusion

While change is an essential aspect involved in organizational growth, if poorly managed, change approval processes can introduce significant risks. By recognizing these dangers and implementing appropriate mitigation strategies, organizations can navigate change more effectively. This will help to ensure that it leads to positive outcomes rather than unintended consequences in the long run.

Resources

<https://www.manageengine.com/products/service-desk/it-change-management/key-challenges-in-change-management.html>

<https://blog.invgate.com/change-management-risks>

<https://www.pmi.org/learning/library/best-practices-effective-project-management-8922>