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Q: Does your change management process include updating infrastructure as part of CM?

A: No. One thing I learned from my ITIL V2 Release and Control class: Change Management is a lot easier with Configuration Management and Release Management. However, we don't currently have either to support change management.

Q: How is a change approved prior to the implementation plan?

A: The change approval is what we call a "business approval." This is a high-level approval of the concept behind the change. The team assigned the change request is responsible for including any CAB or Management Board feedback into the implementation plan for their particular change, and our "change scheduler" role is responsible for watching for conflicts between changes.

Q: When Rita started on V2 slide, she talked about the importance of their process docs, adhering to the process and management support. How did they document, where did it live, what was the procedure for changing and how was it published to everyone?

A: I printed it out if people couldn't find it themselves, if we needed to change the process, we would have discussions, write up changes to the documents, and get approval by the Management Board. Then it would get published and posted for all to have. We use Microsoft Word with diagrams to create the documents.

Q: Tracking and auditing slide - Audit attended CAB or you had a report from Audit presented at CAB?

A: It was a way for us to audit the tickets, before, quarterly there would be a report on no impact changes, to be more efficient, we would put that report into each CAB, so everyone could see them. Folks wouldn't be able to slide an RFC by approvals. By "audit" we didn't mean an external or internal auditor—we meant "checking."

Q: Not sure if you covered this earlier, I had a customer stop by: To have CAB 1x/week, what is your required minimum lead time?

A: We have a noon deadline, that any change that needs to be put into the agenda has to be in by noon on Friday, with sponsorship with that person's higher up, saying that change needs to be made. CAB is held Mondays at 10:15 AM.

Q: Was it a lot of effort to set up the Google calendar?

A: Yes and no. Yes, because I had been asking for this for a year, proposing, talking to different people, had a change ticket in that never went for approval, tried to get buy in for it, then we had someone on our Infrastructure team who put in a Request for Change, and explained that he figured out how to make it work when it went to CAB and got approved immediately.

Q: How do you get [your ITSM tool] to update your Google calendar automatically?

A: One of our very smart system administrators used Google spreadsheets, which has a VB-like scripting language. This spreadsheet uses Google APIs to create calendar entries, pulling from external URLs populated with change information we extract from our ITSM tool.

Q: Was there a big cultural change necessary when moving from CM V1 to V2? If so, how did you handle it?

A: Yes. However, V1 was a *huge* change: for one, it was a big shift in our culture to get in a room and talk with folks that you may have not spoken to before. People were very receptive to the change from V1 to V2, because V1 was so painful. We did some great training for our colleagues. We had to establish the sense of urgency and the guiding coalition that Kotter talks about in his eight-step

organizational change model. I thought with the “V2” improvement, we’d reduce the number of steps in our process, but instead we made it more complex, when we addressed some of the biggest problems and we realized what else we could do to improve the process.

Q: How many change windows do you have?

A: We are extremely fortunate that since the 1990s we have had a change window of Saturday from 7am-Noon on virtually everything. We have done a lot explicitly and implicitly to keep everything in that window. However, certain kinds of low-risk changes can be done outside that window.

Q: How did you acquire management support to lay down the rules on when to submit an RFC?

A: Initially, it was the interim CIO who told everyone they had to follow the process.. Then, the new CIO saw the value – there were fewer outages, and that got it rolling, and people were more willing to use the RFC’s, and the deadline is noon the day before the CAB. How do you get people to create RFCs at all? You have to lay out that there are no unauthorized changes at all, and directors have to support that decision. This is anchored in our culture and a social norm now.

Q: Would you publish the rules you use for triaging between Local, CAB and MB?

A: Let’s pretend we didn’t have change management. Someone would make a change, and it might go badly, and they would be in trouble for it not going the right way. Now, I am very aware of Deming’s research that over 90% of defects are caused by the system rather than by people, and it’s easy to blame people for issues with the system they are working within. However, this concept of accountability for your work is very helpful. If you leverage that concept, it helps you make a lot of great decisions about triage, on the escalation process. We let people approve things on what they feel comfortable with, and if they don’t, it will be escalated. It’s about what risk the managers feel they are willing to take.

Q: How do you track unauthorized changes, and what are the consequences?

A: It’s really been the managers who have been enforcing the need for an RFC. Looking at our metrics, we can see how many change tickets we have open, and how many have closed. Managers can see if RFCs are not entered and whether the metrics are representing the work they’re doing. The managers want their team’s work to be shown through metrics. The goal is to have no unauthorized changes. When there is one, it’s dealt with through the manager and noted in the system.

Q: Why did you decide to Approve the Change prior to testing - and then leave scheduling at the end? Do you face more scheduling contention with that approach?

A: We wanted to do the business approval before much work had been done. There’s a continuum: from total uncertainty—we have no idea what this is—to total certainty, where we know exactly what it is. We prefer to have an earlier approval, where less is certain, at the expense of having to “juggle” changes as they’re scheduled. In our environment, we haven’t had enough contention with high volumes of conflicting high-priority changes to warrant redesigning our change scheduling process.

Q: Explanation of earlier question: For a Thursday change to be reviewed at CAB it has to be on Friday's report - but the same is true for a MONDAY change. So Monday's lead was 1 business day but Thursday's lead was 4 days. Is there a required minimum lead time for ALL changes (ie, 3 calendar days, 5 business days, etc)?

A: The deadline for our CAB is Fridays at noon, if a change comes in at 1PM Friday, it's going to wait a whole week, the maximum delay will be 6 business days, but there is no required minimum, so if a change comes in at 11:59AM on Friday, it can go to the CAB on Monday. We are trying to balance with people having it together, and allowing them to ask questions.

Q: There's a deadline for something to be submitted for CAB, but do you have a deadline for when a request has to be submitted for scheduling prior to an implementation of it?

A: The change schedulers are in the team that is going to implement the change. They will ask why you are rushing this through, and they will push back because their team is the one that gets hit with it. This also encourages the "right" people to be involved in recommending improvements: for example, our app/dev groups and implementers got together to create release schedules.

Q: Regarding the change windows... every weekend is available for every type of change?

A: Yes, but we'll have a few times when they're busy (homecoming, scheduling etc) where we won't do big changes, but generally, yes. There can be a "requested date", and look at the calendar/staff/other resources, and what other changes are already scheduled, and then based on that, they will have a conversation to schedule further.

Q: Does your RFC process require impact analysis information to assist in the decision making process? If so, what information do you require for appropriate impact analysis?

A: Configuration Management is great for change management. We are not really doing it, though, so our process is to ask a whole bunch of people. It's not the greatest solution, but the whole CAB will see the change, and the management board can have the discussion about why are we doing this/does it make sense/can we do it another way? We don't have a lot of data outside people's heads and teams for what the impact of certain changes are.

Q: How many changes do you review in a week?

A: It varies. We close about 100 changes a month, so roughly somewhere between 20 and 30 a week.

Q: Do you have regular CM training sessions using something like Live Meeting, or do you a video that staff can look at?

A: We have a several links that go to training documents when people bring up a change. One links to "Creating a Change Request 101". We have even color coded the required fields to make it easier to create the RFC. The managers of each area do a good job of training new staff to use the tool and telling them what change management is. We do some "Service management and IS" courses as well. We also make ourselves very accessible as to staff that need assistance.

Q: Are you doing Knowledge Management?

A: We don't have a formal tool integrated into our ITSM tool. We use Google sites as our current knowledge management tool, which has worked for us because there's a very low threshold for creating/editing knowledge.

Q: Are problem management and configuration management processes employed? If yes how do you use it

A: Configuration management: no. Problem management: we've been working on some gradual steps to sell problem management, rather than a "big bang" push, and this gradual process has built higher level buy in as well as staff awareness. We've had a problem management pilot, and through that process found a really big issue that none of the individual teams could have shown

was such a big issue. We've gotten some stuff going there, and we hope problem management will help people understand the differences between the underlying issues and the changes to fix the problem.

Q: If a change was implemented with no complications and was not backed out, BUT it did not fix the problem, what number is that (1 thru 5)?

A: It's a 5. We would then put in a new change for another fix for the problem. It was very helpful for us to define what an RFC is: RFCs represent one "time-locked" change. We don't use the same RFC to represent 3 separate points in time. For one, the tool has a single-valued field for implementation date, and we want a log of when anything changed. If RFCs are related they can be linked together.