Change Categorization Tables

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Change Categorization Tables

Organizations are continuing to struggle with determining the appropriate levels of involvement when it comes to categorizing and authorizing changes in the IT infrastructure. This article serves as a template that can be used to start the conversation within your change team. Examples are provided; however, these need to be validated and adjusted for each specific engagement.

Overall Change Categorization

The categorization of changes is done to understand what the approval/authorization process should be for request for changes. To understand the variations, the following table is used as a basis for the change categorization tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urgent?</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Known</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Method?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Known</td>
<td>Known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorized By?</td>
<td>CAB Executive</td>
<td>Change Coordinator</td>
<td>Local CAB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table serves as a guideline for categorizing the change. It is the starting point for classifying the changes as they occur within the organization.

Examples of **Major changes** are:

- Implementing / Upgrading Company wide software
- A Data Centre Move, or Service Desk Consolidation project

Impact is difficult to assess, the Working method is ongoing and due to scope and cost considerations, Senior Management must authorize it before work can begin.

Major changes involve a large amount of build or run time, complex issues or significant dollar expenditures. Once approved, the Major change is passed back to the Change Advisory Board for assessment and scheduling.

Examples of **Significant changes** are:

- The purchase and install of a new Server within the Organization
- Re-segmenting part of the network
- Batch jobs within a certain class
- Introduction of a new application to a small group of customers

Significant changes are defined as changes requiring significant build and/or run time, thus requiring the CAB to assess, authorize and schedule the change.

(Cont’d)
Examples of Minor changes are:

- The movement of an individual from one cubicle to another
- The weekly update of a virus identification file
- The installation of one workstation
- Installation of a standard word processor
- Submitting of a certain class of batch jobs

For Minor changes, lists are made and presented to the local sub-committee at a weekly Change Management meeting to make the members aware of changes within the infrastructure.

**Standard Changes**

There are Minor changes that can influence the status or attributes of a Configuration Item, but are part of standard operational procedures. Change Management will set the guidelines and boundaries for these delegated changes. Within Change Management, these changes are not reported on as individual cases. However some tracking is required. Also the outcome of the change may be report in the process or department where the delegated change (actual work) occurs.

Examples are:

- Password resets done by the Service Desk
- The weekly IPL of the mainframe in the standard maintenance window done by Operations. An IPL can happen to solve an error (reported in the Incident Management process), to implement a change (the IPL is a necessary to implement a change)

In case of delegated changes that change an attribute of a Configuration Item, it is key that there is a link present with Configuration Management to record the change. For instance, Premises Department moves a PC from one cubicle to another. Change Management and Configuration Management are only interested in where the PC is now located. This link is typically done in the form of a Standard Request for Change (RFC)

The Change Advisory Board has the authority to decide that certain Minor changes are delegated to other groups or processes. It is the accountability of the Change Manager and the Change Coordinators to guarantee that sufficient controls and measures are in place. For example documented criteria, previously approved RFC's, procedures and work instructions explaining how the work is to be carried out.

**Change Categorization Tool**

Based on the overall change categorization the following tool is developed to assess the change category. This tool is part of the Request for Change form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT ON BUSINESS</th>
<th>A. &gt; 150 users</th>
<th>B. 50-150 users</th>
<th>C. &lt; 50 users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of users (impacted during implementation or back-out)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Financial implications (Indication, has to be established)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IMPACT ON TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

| 4. Resources required to prepare/implement | A. 3 or more support groups  
B. 2 support groups  
C. 1 support group |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 5. Preparation Effort                    | A. 2 days or more  
B. 8 to 48 hours  
C. < 8 hours |
| 6. Implementation Duration               | A. > 4 hours  
B. 1 – 4 hours  
C. < 1 hour |
| 7. Back-out possibilities                | A. difficult  
B. moderate (1 – 2 hours)  
C. easy |
| 8. Scheduling/outage requirements        | A. During special maintenance window  
B. During normal maintenance window  
C. No outage required |

The Change requestor and the Change Coordinator should fill in the fields that are part of the Request for Change form. The following formula is used to establish the Change category:

\[
A = \text{Major change} \\
B = \text{Significant change} \\
C = \text{Minor change}
\]

The highest answer for all these criteria establishes the category. For example 6 Cs and 1 A will automatically mean a Major change.

The CAB is authorized to change the category if they deem this necessary. If certain questions are not answered, it is up to the Change requestor and the CAB to find the answers.

Related to the Change Categorization is the lead time for submitting the RFC to Change Management before the implementation date.

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The following table shows the lead time for different categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Category</th>
<th>Lead time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>30 calendar days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>14 calendar days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>0 – 3 calendar days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Urgent changes are changes that are not within the standard lead times.

**Conclusion**

As stated above, this document serves as a starting point for teams to begin discussing how to manage and recognize changes in their environment. Decisions need to be made in a cooperative framework and some variance will be expected in the initial attempts. Over time, the process owners and managers will need to refine these criteria as part of a continuous improvement exercise.

**What To Learn More?**

1. **Attend ITIL Practitioner: Configuration, Change & Release Management**, which is being presented in **Chicago** on **September 25 – 29, 2006**.

   Learn how to apply ITIL best practices when releasing changes in the IT infrastructure, while minimizing the adverse effects of such actions. ITIL best practices focus on the integration of key processes, enabling a stable IT environment. This course will demonstrate how the linkage of Change, Release and Configuration Management processes can help to achieve this goal.


2. **ATLAS** – Pink’s ITIL Portal

   Your own Pink consultant-in-a-box! ATLAS is a secure, web-enabled knowledge management system containing Pink’s highly valued intellectual property – ready and waiting for you to access, copy, customize and re-use. You get end-to-end access to expertise, data, tools, templates, communications and task support for IT service management best practice implementation projects.