Change & Release Management

Goals

Change and Release Management aim to increase the efficiency of changes by proven control methods.

Preconditions

The main point for Change and Release Management is the awareness that each change in a productive environment has to be controlled by a change (and release) process. Of course also each change has to be documented.

Ideally there is a support by Configuration Management or it will be implemented in parallel.

My principles

I prefer the classical well proven procedure, in detail:

1. You tell me your goals and the circumstances (budget, resources, schedule, etc.)
2. I analyze together with you the current situation ...
3. ... and compare the result with your goals.
4. On that base I am able to recommend the best roadmap to success.
5. You decide and we commit together the next actions.

6. And of course I am going to support you in the phase of implementation.

Tasks

ITIL offers a generic change (and release) process, but in reality it is necessary to have more than one derived process to manage the variants of urgency.

Typically we need different variants of processes for:

- Emergency changes
- Configurations changes or more in general standardized services
- Application changes, handled in release packages

Especially Emergency Changes need pre-authorized procedures to avoid the delay by an approval phase. Procedures, triggered by Monitoring, follow the same ideas.

Standardized Services usually need an approval. That can be managed by an access check (like checking credit cards in online shops) or in front of the execution. The main point is to bind the approvers by SLAs/OLAs as well as the execution staff. - Ideally you achieve able and controllable processes. Sometimes it is better not to deliver as soon as possible, but to a well defined time stamp. (A removal van has to come at the agreed time and not 2 days earlier or later.)

Changes usually bundled in releases may have different meaning (minor, significant, major) and will thereby become approved by different approval boards. The decision has to be prepared by the Change Manager in order to:

- (Strategic) importance and urgency
- Costs versus benefits
- Risks and impacts

The Take into Production has to be ensured by fall back procedures and must offer:

- Free of (new) bugs
- Execution (and validation) within the agreed period

Don't forget the rollout process.

As a base for potential improvements each release will be audited by a Post Implementation Review.

Results

If Change and Release Management controls each change in the productive environment, then risks and efforts can be reduced, which means:

- Reducing costs
- Increasing stability of the productive environment.

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