

## **When Project Management Is Wrong For Your Project**

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One new office, two new offices, three new offices, more... If planning for major, repetitive projects at your organization sounds like the childhood game, "Hot Potato," maybe formal Project Management is just what you don't need...

The company where I previously worked embarked upon a major building and acquisition program, adding new medical clinics at an average rate of one a week.

When we began this aggressive program, we treated each new clinic like a project. And, indeed, it was a project as we assessed the impact on our existing configurations and placed orders with our many network, hardware, and application suppliers.

However, there were not enough project managers in the world to continue to treat the addition of each new clinic as a standalone project!

Then I realized that what we were doing was actually an ITIL Standard Change wrapped around a Change Authorization Model. The Standard Change was the standard portfolio of IT services for a new clinic, and the Change Authorization Model was the delegated authority level to initiate the addition of a new clinic.

Based on my own experience as a Project manager working in IT, following I describe how we scrapped formal project management and used ITIL Standard Changes and Change Authorization Models instead – with dramatic improvements in efficiency and quality at the same time.

### **Standard Changes and Change Models**

ITIL introduces Standard Changes and Change Authorization Models. It defines a Standard Change as a change that is done frequently and follows an established path. As such, it does not follow the full Change Management process, thus consuming fewer resources and streamlining the delivery of the Change.

The ITIL states the requirements for a Standard Change as follows:

- A defined trigger initiates the Request for Change
- The tasks are well-known and proven
- Authority is effectively given in advance
- Budgetary approval will typically be preordained or within the control of the Change requester
- The risk is usually low and always well understood

A Change Authorization Model depicts varying degrees of delegated authority to a Change Manager according to pre-set parameters that relate to:

- Anticipated business risk
- Financial implications
- Scope of the change

A Standard Change always identifies the impact of a change. Typically constructed with the assistance of the Capacity Management Process, Standard Changes can run the gamut from small (e.g., a new workgroup printer) to large and complex (e.g., a complex or large infrastructure change).

One of the prime attributes of a Standard Change is the identification of the size, or scope, of a change, thereby

streamlining yet another portion of the Change Management process.

Change Management maintains control over Standard Changes, for example, by requiring that monthly status reports document the number and type of Standard Changes carried out that month.

## **When a Project Isn't Really a Project**

To establish IT services for a new clinic required that we provision wide area network circuits and local network equipment, configure network equipment in our home office, wire the local area network, order desktop workstations and printers, purchase software licenses, configure application servers and databases, and conduct user training – virtually continuously.

In this situation, how would you measure improvement in the efficiency of your Change Management Process?

Efficiency is very much a quantitative measurement, measuring the volume of resources or funds committed to making a change, as well as measuring the time required to make a change.

The adoption of a formal Change Management process as documented in the OGC Service Transition book puts a powerful tool at the command of the IT department. In its quest to meet the dual objectives of benefiting the organization by introducing change and the protection of the live infrastructure, it allows the mature IT operation to transform itself into a Change machine.

In other words, Change becomes the business of IT.

However, this transformation does not come without a cost. Coincident with change and bringing change in the infrastructure under control comes more formality and documented policies and procedures. Yes, unfettered Change Management can become – bureaucratic! And bureaucracy, even though it provides much control, can ultimately lead to inefficiency and higher costs.

An efficient Change Management process weds Standard Changes and Change Authorization Models together to create a path through the Change Management process that swiftly identifies the authorization and impact of a proposed change and allows work teams to initiate and execute the pre-defined Change steps.

## **Summary**

Although the New Clinic Change Model was complex, it worked extremely well and cut provisioning time and resources dramatically, primarily due to three reasons:

1. The initial Change Management process provided a collaborative environment in which all of the IT groups, the business, and outside suppliers participated and came to understand each other's processes and concerns.
2. The initial projects were well documented, and the documentation could be easily converted into tasks and procedures for establishing new clinics.
3. Extensive reporting gave everyone a quick bird's eye view of the status of the clinic provisioning, as well as historical record of what we had accomplished in such a short period of time.

The bottom line is the ability to undertake a high rate of change, streamline resource and time requirements, while maintaining an accurate and effective Change Management process.