

## change control

### what is change control

"Change Control is a systematic approach to managing all changes made to a product or a system. The purpose is to ensure that no unnecessary changes are made, that all changes are documented, that services are not unnecessarily disrupted and that resources are used efficiently."

Margaret Rouse  
WhatIs.com

The basic purpose of change control is very succinct. The problem most businesses struggle with is how to implement those changes. Many documents have been written and solutions created to control the change process. ITIL even has an entire discipline devoted to change control while solution providers build suites of product offerings designed specifically to control the change process. All cover the following:

- Define the change
- Analyze the impact of the change
- Authorize the change
- Report on the results of the change

From these four steps, control processes can be defined and built for all areas of your company. Because each operational area serves a different purpose, the process itself must be flexible to accommodate the various areas.

### areas impacted by change control

There are multiple areas that change control may impact.

#### *it change*

Change control is frequently identified in an IT environment, with the most focus and the widest range of postings related to it. It also covers a broad range of processes ranging from user access, hardware or server changes to service implementation.



### ***design change***

The change control process here serves the customer, whether internal or external to your company. For example, a manufacturer that makes changes to its product based on the needs of the customer has a change control process that requires reviews by engineering, safety, and operations teams before the customer can approve a final design. A company in the media industry may not need materials reviewed by the customer; instead, it needs internal reviews by the legal and standards teams before final release.

### ***operations change***

Businesses continually change the way they operate and handle their business processes, searching for efficiencies to make operations more cost effective. Changes to processes need to be reviewed and authorized to make sure they don't impact operations in other areas. For example, a company that needs to make rate changes must have those changes reviewed by multiple teams to find out where problems might occur and who would be affected. Additionally, when process changes impact multiple departments, the heads of those departments may need to grant approval before moving forward.

### ***software change***

Companies creating software all go through some sort of change control process where every enhancement is proposed, reviewed, and analyzed before being approved, then developed and tested before release. Each company may handle the steps differently, depending on their specific needs.

## **flexibility is key**

Change Control is a basic component of business operations and cannot be limited to one area within a business. Any software used to track your change control should be flexible enough to cover these multiple areas with simple configuration modifications that don't require detailed programming. If the software has a Change Control module, can it be configured to be used outside of IT, or is it locked down specifically to that area? Does it handle both complex and simple change processes to allow for using just one tool across your entire company? These are questions you need to ask of any software you use to track your specific change control processes.

