

# Change Management: some things to consider

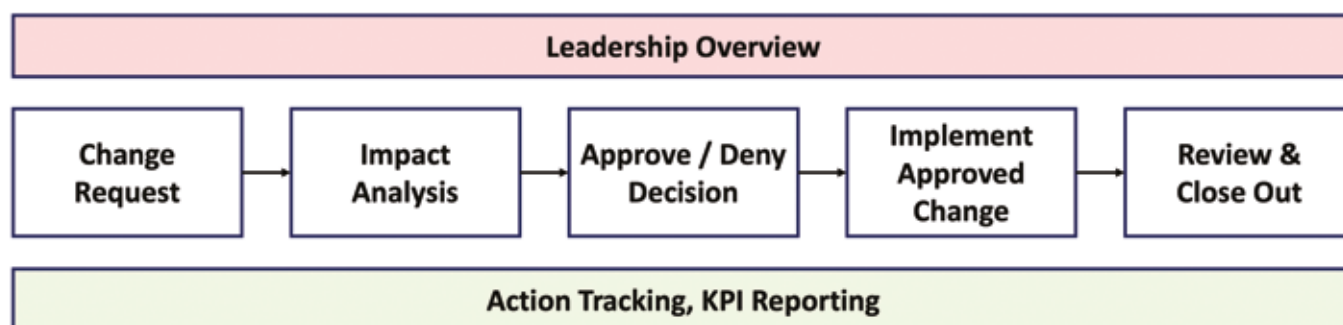
During some recent discussions, the topic of Management of Change was raised. Clearly, this is a critically important topic for industry and having a robust, accessible and well understood process for managing change regardless of scope or scale is vital for successful risk management.

What do you need to consider to manage change successfully? Regardless of whether your change management process is analogue or digital, there are five fundamental steps that should be followed: -

Report should also be assessed at this stage. This stage will generate actions. These need to be assigned an owner and tracked through to completion.

## Approve / Deny Decision

One of the biggest challenges with any change management process is balancing the need for rigorous assessment and approval while avoiding a hugely bureaucratic process that is difficult to use and beset with delays and bottlenecks. The danger here is that either changes are not properly assessed, or the change process is bypassed completely! The personnel involved in this stage of the change management process (seniority, functional expertise etc.) should be



## Change Request

A clear definition and understanding throughout the organisation of what constitutes a change underpins the entire process. It is therefore worthwhile investing time and effort to get this definition right, training it out across the organisation and regularly auditing the process to make sure the correct definition is being applied. Once it is established that a change is required, an owner for the change should be assigned. This is typically the person requesting the change, although it can be assigned to anyone within the organisation. The change should be clearly defined at this stage, along with justification for why the change is necessary and whether the change will be permanent or temporary. Getting the change properly defined at this stage allows a proper assessment of what it impacts on, who needs to be involved in the approval process and the degree of rigour of any risk assessment.

## Impact Analysis

With the required change correctly defined, its impact can now be properly analysed. This may need the application of several different assessments, from simple risk assessment through to a multi stage hazard study. This stage should also consider potential impacts on occupied buildings, human factors, DSEAR / HAC, COSHH, PUWER, pressure systems and fire risk assessments to name but a few. An exhaustive list of the potential assessments that are applicable to your organisation and site should be defined within your management of change process and those selected recorded as part of the change documentation. The impact on operating permits or your site's COMAH Safety

commensurate to the potential risk(s) of the change being undertaken. This further emphasises the importance of properly defining the change at the beginning of the process. By doing this, bottlenecks in the approval process and 'signature chasing' are minimised allowing the change to be properly assessed and efficiently approved. It is however a good idea to have your EHS function involved in the approval process of every change to drive consistency. Implement Approved Change: If during the implementation stage it becomes necessary to deviate from the change that has been approved, this deviation must be fully documented, assessed and approved prior to start up to make sure it does not invalidate any of the completed impact assessments. Actions from the impact assessment process should be tracked and closed out. A pre-start up safety review should be considered to ensure everything is in place to ensure everything is ready for commissioning and start up.

## Review & Close Out

It is not uncommon for changes to remain 'open' for longer than they should after implementation. It is important to have a robust review and close out process to stop this from happening. This should ensure all actions are closed and records are updated to as built status for permanent changes, and all temporary changes are fully removed in a timely manner. Targets around closure should be set and tracked by senior site leadership as a process safety KPI.

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