

CHANGE MANAGEMENT JOB DESCRIPTION: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Change enablement, also known as change management, is at the core of ITIL[®] service transition. The maturity of an organization depends on how well it facilitates change requests (CR) in response to end-user, technical, functional or wider business requirements.

Careful change management helps reduce the risk exposure and disruption proactively when new changes are instituted within your organization's operations and technologies.

[ITIL](#) provides an effective framework guideline to conduct change enablement and management activities. In this article, we will discuss the key roles and responsibilities involved in change management according to ITIL guidelines. Even if you don't adhere to the ITIL framework, these roles help clarify your change management processes.

We'll look at:

- [The change manager](#)
- [Change advisory board \(CAB\)](#)
- [Emergency CAB](#)
- [The change process owner](#)
- [Change management teams](#)

Change manager job description

Change managers are employees leading the change management programs. These leaders have a background in conducting structured change efforts in organizations.

A certification verifying change management skill is typically desired for a change manager, who will be involved in the following key activities:

- Leading the change management activities within a structured process framework.
- Designing the strategic approach to managing change and support operations that fall within the domain of change management.
- Evaluating the change impact and organizational readiness to limit potential risk.
- Supporting training and communication as part of change management. Activities may include designing or delivering specialized training resources to the appropriate userbase.
- Evaluating the risk of change and providing actionable guidelines on reducing the impact.
- Evaluating resistance in adopting the change at the [user, process, and technology](#) level.
- Managing the change portfolio, which allows the organization to prepare for and successfully adopt the change.
- Authorize minor change requests and coordinate with the Change Advisory Board for changes presenting higher risk.
- Conduct [post-implementation reviews](#) to assess the decisions and performance related to the change request.

Change Advisory Board (CAB)

This is the team that controls the lifecycle of change across all processes as specified within ITIL Service Transition function. The [Change Advisory Board](#) involves high-level members from different domains, including information security, operations, development, networking, service desk, and business relations, among others.

Together, the CAB is responsible for the following activities:

- Supporting the change manager in decisions for major changes.
- Evaluating Requests for Change (RFCs), the available resources, impact of change, and organizational readiness.
- Validating that appropriate tests and evaluation are performed before high-risk changes are approved.
- Documenting relevant processes and activities.
- Supporting the design of change implementation scheduling.
- Reviewing a change implementation process.
- Supporting the design and approving new change process models.
- Using the diverse knowledge base, skills, and expertise of each CAB member to provide a unique perspective before a decision is finalized.



Standard Change

A low-risk change that is pre-approved and follows documented, repeatable tasks.

Example: Service desk request for an IT service

Normal Change

An intermediary-risk change that is not urgent or pre-approved.

A thorough review process is conducted before approving.

Emergency Change

Urgent changes that may present high risks if not addressed promptly.

Examples: Security threats; power outages

Challenges of traditional CABs

A CAB can face numerous criticisms, threats, roadblocks, and problems. Change is not easy and often is not welcome. Rather than be frustrated, you can disrupt, disarm, and plan an effective response.

Don't create a CAB that has too many stakeholders, too many meetings, or that does not prioritize efficiency. You don't want to create more bureaucracy and conflict points.

Ensure the CAB area of responsibility is not overly broad. If you have to manage too many areas, you will diffuse your effectiveness. Have a clear focus area and resist attempts to expand or blur it.

Be careful how your CAB looks at risk. Risks associated with change need to be balanced against the risks of not changing or delaying change. Consider risks to customers, your competitiveness, and future innovations. Rather than considering risk as a stop sign, look for ways to mitigate risk.

Emergency Change Advisory Board (ECAB)

The [ECAB](#) is a smaller body within the CAB that deals specifically with emergency changes. (Emergency changes are [one of three change types](#) according to ITIL.) When the emergency change request is raised, the change manager must conduct a thorough analysis and evaluation before finalizing a decision together with the CAB.

A dedicated ECAB body ensures that the necessary resources and expertise within the CAB is available to make the right decision at the right time. The ECAB is responsible for performing activities similar to the CAB but focused primarily on emergency changes. These include:

- Assessing the relative importance of the emergency change request.
- Supporting the change manager during impact and [risk assessment](#).
- Reviewing the change request, risk analysis, and impact evaluation before the decision is finalized.
- Approving or rejecting an emergency change.
- Evaluating the efficacy of the emergency change implementation process.

Change process owner

The change process owner can have overlapping responsibilities with the ITIL Process Owner, specifically within the function of change management. (For this reason, a separate change process owner may not be required for small and midsize business organizations.)

The change process owner is responsible for defining and supporting the overall process involved in change management. The activities include:

- Devising the process, in support with the change manager and CAB.
- Communicating the guidelines to appropriate stakeholders.
- Facilitating cross-departmental collaboration necessary for change management.
- Evaluating and improving the change management process.
- Reporting on the performance of the process to CAB and change manager.
- Initiating process improvements.

The change management team

[Change management functions](#) are distributed in teams across departments and ITIL functions. Individuals within these teams may be responsible for managing change within a specific organizational unit considering their expertise, skills, and background.

Specific change management teams may consist of three roles:

- **Change requestor.** The individual responsible for initiating, preparing, and submitting a change request. This person may support collection of the necessary business information and engage with the concerned stakeholders before the change request is assigned to the change tester. Additionally, the change requestor also works with the change management team to support impact assessment by collecting data and communicating with other stakeholders.
- **Change owner/assignee/implementor.** The individual is deemed as an owner of the CR throughout the request lifecycle. The change tester may also take the role of the Change Requestor and support the process for creating and submitting a change request. The change

owner ensures that the necessary tests have been performed so that the change request is followed up by appropriate urgency. The change owner would also document the process across the request life cycle.

- **Change approver.** The individual responsible for the initial approval of a change request before it is sent to the change manager and CAB for a final decision. The change approver would communicate with other stakeholders and support the documentation before the request is sent to the change manager. This role is also generic and may be occupied by different individuals at various hierarchical levels of the change management framework. At each level, the Change Approver ensures that the change request has reached the necessary standard of readiness to warrant a decision by the change manager and the CAB.

Difference between a change manager and a project manager

The roles of a change manager vs. a project manager are distinct, focusing on different facets of supporting improvements and organizational change. That said, they are often complementary.

A change manager focuses on people and teams and how they can move from the current state to one that is better for the future. They support people, understand potential impacts of change, and develop communications, training, and support to facilitate adapting to what is new. Ultimately, they promote the adoption of valuable changes with minimal resistance, good communication, and positive outcomes.

As the change manager focuses on the who and why, project managers are concerned about the what and how. They focus on the practical issues of project goals, scope, schedules, budgets, standards, and resources. They manage stakeholder expectations and coordinate people and teams to achieve success on a specific project.

Additional resources

- [BMC Service Management Blog](#)
- [BMC IT Operations Blog](#)
- [Change Management in the Cloud](#)
- [Change Enablement Process & Practice: Essential Activities](#)
- [Lewin's Change Model in 3 Steps](#)
- [Organizational Change Management \(OCM\): A Template for Reorganizing IT](#)