Managing Changes with the SAP Solution Manager

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Your Sales team has succeeded in creating new opportunities for your product in a completely new customer group. This, however, now requires certain changes in Sales Order Management. IT dutifully commits to implementing this change in the tight timeframe needed — but later, some undesired side effects start appearing: the Accounting team wonders if any revenue will come in, as they can find no accounts receivable entries for this customer group! Have any invoices ever been created?

Does this scenario sound familiar? If you're like most organizations, there is similar room for improvement in your own change request processes. With the new change request management functionality of SAP Solution Manager — SAP's standard application management solution for the complete solution life cycle — scenarios like this can be easily avoided. Now:

- Change requests need to be approved before they can enter the execution phase

- After changing a business process, testing is required as part of the standard workflow

- Release of changed functionality is only possible after all test results have been approved

SAP Solution Manager's new change request management functionality helps business and IT handle all steps related to changes because it offers an approval workflow, project

management features, and even the management of all related transports.

At the same time, SAP Solution Manager helps clarify business goals. As a common platform for all SAP solution-related changes, it provides clear status reporting of all changes, past and present. Business and IT have an opportunity for better mutual understanding of their respective goals because SAP Solution Manager provides both with access to all information around any change, using their respective and specific terminology and perspectives.

What's more, change request management inside SAP Solution Manager covers all points — from the gathering of requirements to implementation, deployment, operation and optimization — over the full life cycle of an SAP solution. As such, change request management serves as a best practice as defined by the ITIL services methodology and should be considered a crucial process for successful management of any SAP solution.[1]

To help customers jump-start their solutions, SAP Solution Manager offers three pre-configured change request management scenarios:

[1] The IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) consists of a series of best-practice documents that form a methodology for service management and delivery. For more information, see www.itil.org. For more on SAP's approach to solution lifecycle management, see the "Take Note!" column by Franz-Josef Fritz in the October-December 2004 issue of *SAP Insider* (www.SAPinsider.com).

- Business changes, such as implementation of new business processes, or even upgrades that result in fully documented implementation or upgrade projects

- Housekeeping activities, which typically occur at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, monthly), including application of SAP patches

- Hot fixes — urgent changes that require instant customer attention yet still need to be tracked

Change request management is fully integrated with other SAP Solution Manager functionality including support desk, upgrade, or implementation support. SAP Solution Manager is delivered to SAP customers as part of their regular maintenance. This new functionality will be made available in two stages: first, the hot fix scenario has been made available with the SAP Solution Manager 3.2 Ramp-Up in late September 2004, with the full functionality to follow in Q1 2005.

For more information, please visit **http://service.sap.com/solutionmanager**. ■

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