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Reducing Cycle Time and Improving the Quality of Decision-making for IT Emergency Change Management Through Communications Enabled Business Processes

Challenge	Scenario
<p>The Avaya IT Change Management team responds 24x7 to change requests and manages emergency changes during an expedited Service Level Agreement (SLA). During off-hours, on-call managers responsible for making decisions about change requests needed to stay within close driving range of their laptop computers for secure access to the Avaya network. This impacted their work-life balance and caused delays in the process. Coordinating teleconferences with the change requestor and/or other required parties also slowed the process. As a result, the turnaround time for emergency changes could be hours. The team member requesting the emergency change would need to wait around to ensure that it was implemented properly, and the team members responsible for change management felt “chained to their PCs.”</p>	<p>Avaya’s IT organization leveraged Avaya’s Communications Enabled Business Processes (CEBP) solution to reduce human latency and improve the quality of decision-making for its mission-critical IT emergency change management process.</p>
Value Created	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase speed of decisions and implementation of change through automation – reducing time-to-approve from hours to minutes • Increase quality of decisions – ability of the change manager to connect quickly with the technical expert requesting the change and/or other stakeholders • Enhance quality of life (productivity of IT staff) – less waiting time • Beat SLAs of IT infrastructure (operations and customer satisfaction) 	

Basking Ridge, New Jersey — Avaya provides Intelligent Communications solutions that help companies transform their businesses to provide competitive advantage. More than 1 million businesses worldwide, including more than 90 percent of the FORTUNE 500®, use Avaya solutions for Communications Enabled Business Processes, Contact Centers, Unified Communications, and IP Telephony.

Avaya’s IT organization leveraged Avaya’s Communications Enabled Business Processes solution to reduce human latency and improve the quality of decision-making for its mission-critical IT emergency change management process.

Lorie Buckingham, CIO for Avaya, stated, “CEBP has enabled our IT Change Management team to reduce its cycle time from hours to minutes. The automated conferencing capability has improved the quality of decision-making significantly by easily and quickly engaging

all stakeholders to make better decisions. At the same time it has improved life balance management for those involved, since they don’t need to be tied to their PCs while on call.”

IT Change Management Overview

Many companies today use industry best practices and open standards for IT management such as Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL), Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI), and Control Objectives for Information and related Technology (COBIT).

A Gartner research report states, “Since 2000, increasing business process reliance on IT has caused the IT organization to formalize its processes and procedures, starting with incident and problem management (to respond faster to outages) and following with IT change management (ITCM) — to better control change and reduce the number

of incidents... Many IT organizations have intensified their focus on process design, using the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) as their guide... Because ITIL suggests focusing on IT service support first, this contributes to the attention and investment in change, configuration and release management.” (Gartner, Inc., “Best Practices in Change, Configuration, and Release Management,” 9 August 2007, Ronni J. Colville, Kris Brittain)

According to David Jaques, Director of IT Change Management for Avaya, “Within this IT change management context at Avaya, we have defined emergencies as situations causing a loss of service or severe usability problems to a large number of users or a mission-critical system. For example, there may be a fan that stops working on a server, and if you don’t take action, the server may overheat and shut down, so you want to get that swapped out pretty quickly. In other emergency situations there may be a potential for a security breach and you need to get something fixed right away. Or there may be a business critical application that is working but you know it is running very slow. Those are the kinds of emergency changes that we are involved with. The need for well-informed decision-making within this environment is based on the principle of limiting the number of emergency changes simply because any time you interrupt the stable production environment, you open the door to problems.”

Challenge

Avaya, as part of the best practices for managing its IT infrastructure effectively using the ITIL model, leveraged an HP Service Desk central ticketing application to trigger change requests, relying on its Emergency Change Approval Board (ECAB) to meet commitments of responding to requests and managing exceptions during an expedited SLA. The most significant pain point in the emergency change process arose during “off hours” situations where staff were sometimes not near their computers. For optimum security, change managers were required to access HP Service Desk through a secure Avaya network to obtain the details they needed to make decisions.

“The change requests that came after hours posed unique communications challenges,” Jaques explained. “The on-call Change Managers were required to stay near home or take their laptops with them if they left home for any extended period of time, because that was the only place they could see the issues involved in the change request. Arranging teleconferences with the requestor or other required parties ate up additional time. So not only was their work-life balance compromised, they also had to make decisions in a greatly compressed time frame to meet the SLA.”

CEBP Accelerates and Enhances Mission-critical IT Decision-making

The Avaya Communications Enabled Business Processes solution opened up new possibilities for making better-informed decisions in shorter amounts of time, with less intrusion.

Avaya Communications Enabled Business Processes (CEBP) is a software and services solution that enables integration of Intelligent Communications into business applications and processes to reduce human latency, create competitive advantage, and achieve ROI. Avaya CEBP provides business processes and applications with the ability to sense events, respond, and track real-time multi-channel communications between decision makers. Communications Process Manager (CPM) is a key part of the Avaya CEBP portfolio of products, along with Avaya Event Processor capability and Avaya Global Services.

According to Mark Whatman, IT Architect for Avaya, “We selected the emergency ITIL change management process to automate using CEBP because it was a process enhancement that would benefit the Avaya IT organization in many ways. We also felt that all IT organizations would have the same need and would benefit in the same manner that we would. The criteria we used were:

- selecting a process that’s well defined and for which the interface is well understood within the organization;
- focusing on a process that is based on standards and for which use cases have been done; and
- targeting a process that operates on a real-time basis.

CEBP has enabled our IT Change Management team to reduce its cycle time from hours to minutes. The automated conferencing capability has improved the quality of decision-making significantly by easily and quickly engaging all stakeholders to make better decisions. At the same time it has improved life balance management for those involved, since they don’t need to be tied to their PCs while on call.

“Basically, our ‘off-hours’ emergency change management process faced the same kind of communication ‘pain points’ that you’ll see in many mission-critical functions, which involve meeting the SLAs for timing and quality while balancing out the lifestyle needs of the employees. We believed that CEBP would be an optimal solution in this use case.”

Mark Whatman, Avaya IT Architect

“The approach that was based on these criteria proved helpful because it enabled us to develop a use case quickly and, essentially, to walk before running. In the case of deploying CEBP for ITIL emergency change management, we were able to move from initial use case determination to launch within five weeks.

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Avaya Communications Process Manager, the key software portion of CEBP, provides pre-built communication web services that simplify and reduce the time to integrate Intelligent Communications into business processes. These services include

- **Advisory Service**, which sends an advisory with a subject and text message to selected recipients. Based on user preference settings, the advisory is delivered by phone or email, SMS.
- **Notify & Respond Service**, which notifies users about a business event and prompts for a response, which can then be sent back to the originating application to trigger other activities such as escalations or delegations.

- **Notify & Conference Service**, which sends a notification to designated recipients inviting them to join a conference. Recipients can respond via phone if they wish to join and are then automatically connected to the conference.

“CEBP automated the notification and response communications required for off-hours emergency change management, reducing human latency and bringing new levels of intelligence to the process,” Whatman concluded.

The IT emergency change management team has experienced several benefits through CEBP, including:

- Increasing the speed of decisions through automation
- Increasing quality of decisions
- Enhancing quality of life (productivity of IT staff)
- Beating SLAs of IT Infrastructure (operations and customer satisfaction)

Better Informed Decisions Within the Response Window

As new users of CEBP, Jaques and his team have been impressed with the capabilities to remove many of the risks of human latency during the off-hours emergency change management process in order to enable better quality decisions.

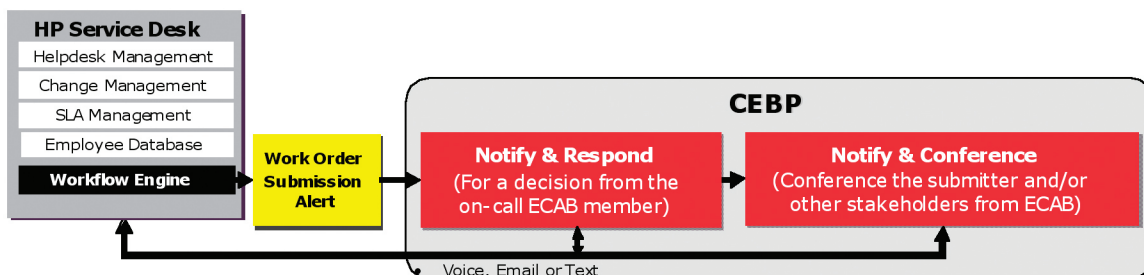


Figure 1: Emergency Change Management Process Utilizing Avaya CEBP

IT Emergency Change Management Process Summary: An emergency work order submission with a specified SLA triggers a real-time notification on a preferred device (vs. the need to login into HP Service Desk application to view list) to the “on call” ECAB member, who can either approve or reject the work order. The ECAB member can bring the submitter or other stakeholders into a conference for deliberations. If the work order is not approved within a specified time period, a notification is escalated to the supervisor of ECAB.

“CEBP has given us the opportunity to get engaged in the review more quickly, and in a way that is much less intrusive on our personal lives. We are still looking at the same window, the same SLA, but now we are able to get more information more quickly to make a better decision within that time. The solution has enabled us to be notified of a change quickly, and, even more importantly, it has provided us with enhanced tools for contacting the right people to make the right decision... The results are in and we have reduced our time-to-approve from hours to minutes.”

David Jaques, Director of IT Change Management for Avaya

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we can ask questions and quickly become engaged with other change managers or members of the ECAB through the conferencing capabilities. The gap between being notified of a request and having access to the details no longer exists. The results are in and we have reduced our time-to-approve from hours to minutes.”

Future Possibilities

Future opportunities within Avaya will be focused on accelerating our customer-facing business processes using CEBP.

ABOUT AVAYA

Avaya delivers Intelligent Communications solutions that help companies transform their businesses to achieve marketplace advantage. More than 1 million businesses worldwide, including more than 90 percent of the FORTUNE 500®, use Avaya solutions for IP Telephony, Unified Communications, Contact Centers and Communications Enabled Business Processes. Avaya Global Services provides comprehensive service and support for companies, small to large.

For more information visit the Avaya Web site: www.avaya.com.

For more information on how Avaya Intelligent Communications can take your enterprise from where it is to where it needs to be, contact your Avaya Client Executive or a member of the Avaya Authorized BusinessPartner program, or access other collaterals by clicking on **Resource Type** under **“Do Your Research”** at www.avaya.com.