

## CHANGE CONTROL BOARD

Change control boards are a critical practice for ensuring stakeholders visibility and control of project requirements and scope changes.

<b>Main Benefits</b>	Raises the visibility of feature creep and reduces the number of uncontrolled changes to the product. Ensures the appropriate stakeholders have a say in project tradeoffs.
<b>Keys to Success</b>	Involving the right set of representatives and fully analyzing the impact of requested changes.
<b>When to Use</b>	Change boards can be used in virtually any kind of environment—business, shrink-wrap, or systems.
<b>Main Risks</b>	The appropriate stakeholders do not participate on the change board. The change board will accept either too many or too few changes.

### Overview

A change board is an approach to controlling changes to a software product. It works by bringing together representatives from each concerned party including development, quality control, user documentation, customer support, marketing, and management, and giving them ultimate authority for accepting or rejecting proposed changes.

### Structure

The change board typically consists of representatives from each party that has a stake in the product's development. Projects may utilize a hierarchy of change boards depending on the project's size and nature.

### Change analysis

The change board's function is to analyze each proposed change. The change should be analyzed from each corner of the classic tradeoff triangle: How will the change affect the product's schedule, cost, and features? It should also be analyzed from the point of view of each organization affected: How will it affect development, documentation, customer support, quality assurance, and marketing? If the feature request is not worth the time it takes to analyze it, then it isn't worth the time it will take to implement it, and the change board should reject the proposed change out of hand.

### Triage

In addition to analyzing each change, the change board has to accept or reject each one. Some organizations refer to this part of the change board's job as "triage," a term from emergency medicine that refers to the activity of sorting injured people into groups so that the people who will most benefit from medical treatment receive it first.

"Triage" has some connotations that are particularly appropriate to the operation of a software change board. Triage connotes that you are allocating a scarce resource, and that there is not enough of the resource to go around. That's true in software. There will never be enough time or

money to add every feature that everyone wants. Triage also connotes that some people will not receive aid even though they desperately need it. In software, some changes that seem as though they are desperately needed will not make it into the next release of the software. Some features will not be implemented, and some low-priority defects will not be corrected. Finally, triage also connotes that you are doing something life-critical. And when you're prioritizing change requests on a rapid-development project, you are definitely performing a job that is critical to the life of your project.

## Bundling

The change board can also group small changes so that developers can handle them in bundles. A series of uncoordinated small changes can be maddeningly distracting to developers in the late stages of a project. Each one requires the overhead of a code review, documentation update, testing, checking files in and out of version control, and so on. Developers appreciate being able to handle small changes in groups rather than one at a time.

## CxOne Support

CxOne provides direct implementation support for change control boards *with the change management materials*. See *CxCheck\_ChangeManagementPlan*, *CxTemp\_ChangeManagementPlan*, and *CxPattern\_ChangeManagementDatabase*.

## Interactions with other Best Practices

Change Control Boards can be combined freely with other best practices.

## Further Reading

McConnell, Steve. *Rapid Development*. Microsoft Press. 1996