

Change Enablement: Reflecting on a Decade of Progress and Opportunities

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Foreword

This is itSMF UK's first whitepaper on Change Enablement. In this paper we set out to understand what Change Enablement looks like in practice today, by interviewing 10 companies.

We posed 8 main questions to the participants, and their responses now make up the 8 sections of this paper. The Executive Summary describes our conclusions and recommended focus areas. In the Addendum we include the original questionnaire and further recommended reads.

Looking Back

In 2016, we were mainly aligning to ITIL v3. At this point, we used the term Change Management.

A Change was used whenever we added, amended or removed anything that could impact IT services. It would predominantly refer to infrastructure, but strictly speaking could apply to anything from processes to documentation (Agutter, et al., 2012).

As Change Management our purpose was to control these Changes to minimise any disruption to IT Services (Agutter, et al., 2012).

Status Quo

Today, most companies align to ITIL 4 and we call it Change Enablement. Our purpose has evolved from that of control to being enablers of successful changes, while still ensuring risk assessment followed by authorising changes and managing the schedule (Axelos, 2020).

We have just entered the age of ITIL 5, the Foundation course being available while the rest of the practice guides are scheduled to be published later this year.

Other factors have also come into play in the last ten years. We have technology that has changed rapidly with Cloud, a buzzword in 2016 but now well embedded and not as dominant as once predicted.

Other factors that rapidly developed include the utilisation of Artificial Intelligence for business tasks. Closely linked to this is the security of data and the ability to recover rapidly to ensure operational resilience – a term that has significantly increased in importance and regulatory enforcement, as highlighted by the European Union's Digital Operations Resilience Act (European Union, 2022) and the Financial Conduct Authority's Operational Resilience (Financial Conduct Authority, 2024) requirements.



1. Context

1.1. Companies Interviewed

Ten companies participated in the survey, with a healthy mix between public and private sector.

Industry sectors supported included:

- Government (national, regional)
- Higher education
- Construction
- Legal & financial services
- Manufacturing
- IT services
- Healthcare

Average yearly change volumes ranged from 300 to 66,000+.

1.2. Frameworks Used

ITIL

ITIL remains the dominant framework, with 8 of the 10 participants using it. Half of the organisations have also adopted not only ITIL 4 terminology such as the name change from Change Management to Change Enablement, but also the behaviours, principles and operating models associated with it. Interestingly, half of the participants found that the name change also brought a change in perception.

7 of the companies have found that ITIL is being used more for the infrastructure type changes, such as deploying monthly Microsoft patches or adding a new virtual server. The process includes conflict detection and maintenance windows agreed upfront for the coming year.

DevOps

DevOps is also being used by some organisations, more for agile development, in which the changes are frequent and quick, often managed through pipelines and microservices. It works alongside ITIL change controls through standard changes, automation, CI/CD pipelines, risk-based approvals and delegated authority models.

Agile

Agile was mentioned in relation to how DevOps changes are being managed, with delegated authority and automation built in. Organisations are using Agile methods such as:

- daily stand-up calls to discuss priorities, trends and lessons learned
- increased automation, particularly in testing
- no agreed change windows.

An interesting point that was flagged was how restrictive the tooling is, less agile-friendly and impacting the registration of agile changes.

1.3. Summary

Across ten public and private sector organisations, Change Enablement is largely ITIL-led and increasingly supported by DevOps, Agile practices, automation and CI/CD, though participants highlighted wide variation in scale, maturity, tooling flexibility and the continued need to balance speed with effective governance and risk control.



2. Process Basics

2.1. Change Enablement Set Up

When considering the structure of Change Enablement in the companies, it varies greatly – from a single person picking up Change Enablement as an additional, functional role, to large full blown Change Enablement teams.

Some organisations are using a federated model, i.e. Change Enablement resources are assigned to certain delivery groups, portfolios or customers.

Other variants were broader ITIL teams sharing responsibilities and someone from a technical team acting as Change Manager for the area.

The following distinct roles emerged from the survey responses:

- Practice or ITIL Product Owner: a strategic role, focussed on defining and developing the standard ways of working within Change Enablement.
- Change Manager: a leading role, often responsible for reviewing High Risk or High Impacting Changes. The role could also be the Change Advisory Board (CAB) Chair.
- Change Analyst or Coordinator: a core role to the Change Enablement function, responsible for reviewing the bulk of the Changes, attending and sometimes also hosting CAB.

The CAB is a consistent part of Change Enablement, but within this the roles again vary. While in most organisations, Change Enablement would also chair CAB, one participant has the operation chairing CAB with the Change Managers supporting them.

A few mentioned how CAB is attended by the Service Desk or Incident Management, for awareness of any ongoing activity and communication.

2.2. How Technology Supports Process

All the participants had a specific tool into which Change Enablement was embedded, whether it be the top market-leading IT Service Management toolsets, or an in-house developed one. These tools all follow the basic Change process:

new → assess → approve → schedule → implement → close

What I found interesting, though, is that those using Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities are not using the built-in capability of the ITSM tool. *Read more about this under [Changes In The Market](#).*

One of the companies uses a third-party tool that connects to their IT Service Management tool to perform risk assessment based on change history, incidents and team performance.

Team performance is also a noteworthy topic. Several participants use the team or supplier's track record of well implemented Changes to determine the risk applied. The risk of the Change, combined with the system criticality and whether it would result in an outage, remains key though when prioritising a Change.

2.3. Links to Other Processes

While some participating companies did not have a logical link between the Change Module and other Process Modules in the tool itself, there are definite links between the practices, the main ones being:

- Incident Management – this is almost universally viewed as the most important connection, from detecting Change-related outages and measuring to determine whether Changes caused Incidents, to the use of Emergency Changes to assist in Major Incident recovery.
- Problem Management – predominantly focussed on learning from unsuccessful changes to prevent recurring failures through analysing Changes and the associated Post Incident Reviews.
- Configuration Management – while Change control is vitally important when it comes to managing CIs, equally Change Enablement is severely hampered without an accurate Configuration Management Data Base. *Read more about this in [Section 7](#) and onwards.*



Other practices mentioned were:

- Request Management, where a Request may result in a Change. There is also an increase in automation between a Request submitted, a Change automatically created and, in some cases, implemented.
- Continuity Management; with any Change two questions should be asked: should this change be replicated in the Disaster Recovery environment and; do we need to update any Disaster Recovery documentation and plans.
- Security Managers / Governance, to risk assess the security aspects of a change.
- Release Management, which indicated a shift in how this practice works alongside Change Enablement.

The feedback on Release Management suggests that it is evolving. Two of the organisations still bundle Changes into Releases, which is predominantly related to Projects, while the others are seeing a shift towards smaller, frequent Releases delivered through DevOps and automation, reducing the dependence on large traditional Release packages. The most common position appears to be that of a hybrid one.

Practices not mentioned, but in my opinion equally important, are:

- Availability Management, where it is key to accurately capture outage windows in Changes, preferably with the associated blackout windows applied to the monitoring tooling. This is important to understand true non-availability.
- Capacity & Performance Management, to ensure sufficient capacity is allocated for the Change and optimising the use of existing Capacity without auto-flexing on Cloud capacity.

2.4. Summary

Change Enablement is structured and supported in notably different ways across organisations, but consistently relies on defined governance roles, CAB oversight, embedded ITSM tooling and strong links to related practices—particularly Incident, Problem and Configuration Management—to balance delivery speed, risk control and service stability.



3. Change Enablement Perception

3.1. Views in Organisations

Across the organisations interviewed, Change Enablement is generally viewed as a necessary governance and risk management capability that helps protect live services, reduce disruption, improve planning, and provide visibility and control over Change activity.

While most recognise its value in maintaining stability, compliance and service quality, some continue to view it as administrative overhead.

Several participants noted a positive shift over recent years from a traditional "policing" role towards a more collaborative "change enablement" approach, where the function is seen as helping teams deliver change safely rather than simply enforcing process controls.

3.2. Does It Vary Between Roles?

Almost all participants reported significant variation in perception across teams, suppliers, regions and levels of seniority.

Senior Leadership & Business Stakeholders

These roles are generally more supportive because they focus on risk, compliance, customer impact and organisational outcomes. This is a positive point to see, because when thinking back 10, 20 years ago, the main challenge at that point was to get senior management onboard.

Infrastructure & Operational Teams

These teams also tend to value Change Enablement because they see the consequences of service disruption firsthand. There are the odd occurrences of older staff who would reminisce about pre-change days, whereas newer staff accept and appreciate the process – this was particularly seen in those with banking backgrounds. However, another participant saw the opposite in that the older staff understood the value of Change whereas the younger staff were more focussed on the quantity of Changes they could get implemented.

In contrast, application and project teams and engineers under delivery pressure are more likely to see the process as an obstacle to speed.

Suppliers & Customers

Several organisations noted differences between suppliers or customers, where their Change processes are either less mature or different to those of the organisation. This hampers delivery, especially in high Change volume environments, where Change Enablement is the "middleman" having to enforce customer process. In those scenarios, engineers can get frustrated with what feels like more bureaucracy forced upon them by Change Enablement, when it is in fact the customer.

Country & Culture

Another observation is the difference between teams geographically. Depending on the country and cultural setting in which the service is delivered, one participant found that technical teams from one location complain more about what is required of them than those from elsewhere, while another found that technical teams in different countries had a distinct perception or preference to either be consulted, follow customer instruction, or follow the company's process standards.

3.3. Key Reasons

Participants consistently identified a small number of factors that shape how Change Enablement is perceived. The most common reason for negative perceptions is the **administrative effort** associated with raising, reviewing and approving changes.

However, when looking at this in perspective – the significant effort that Change Enablement teams have expended to simplify, automate and collaborate; and the observation that when Change submissions are complete, planned and well documented, the process is seen as supportive – then it is becoming clear that where Changes are submitted as last



minute, incomplete and poor quality, the process will be perceived as being bureaucratic.

Understanding of risk was another major factor, with those responsible for service stability tending to value the process more highly than those who are not accountable for service stability and who are solely focussed on implementation. Participants repeatedly noted that perceptions improve when individuals understand business impact, service risk, audit and regulatory requirements.

Leadership behaviour was also mentioned, but interestingly the cases referred to were not senior leaders. It was more departmental leaders who, when they were not supportive of the process, their behaviour filtered down to their teams. Supportive leaders create positive perceptions by:

- Explaining value
- Reinforcing governance
- Encouraging compliance

Finally, **changing the terminology and adopting ITIL 4 behaviours** regarding Change Enablement, which was referenced earlier. Half of the participants mentioned specific terminology changes, which brought a change in attitude, arguably across the whole of the Change Process. These changes included phrases like “Change Freeze” being rebranded as “Reduced Change Period”.

They actively drove a shift in focus from where Change Enablement used to be more “policing” to being more collaborative and enabling under “Change Enablement”. One organisation saw more people marking their changes as “completed with errors” since they rebranded from “failed changes”, a classification no one used. They also introduced a culture of learning from errors, with no associated blame.

This is something I have seen previously with another organisation, who aren’t part of this research; their Post Incident Review meeting is called a “No Blame Postmortem”, not just in name but also in how it is approached.

3.4. Summary

Change Enablement is increasingly recognised as a valuable governance and risk capability that protects live services and supports stable delivery, but perceptions still vary across roles, teams, suppliers and regions depending on administrative burden, risk awareness, leadership behaviour and how effectively the practice is positioned as collaborative enablement rather than process policing.



4. Changes Over This Decade

4.1. Changes in the Market

When asked about changes in the market over the last decade, the overwhelming response was that participants have seen an increase in complexity. We are seeing larger and more interconnected technology estates. It is not only a change in technology, but also a change in the way that companies typically outsource.

From a **technology** perspective, we have seen the move to Cloud, with varying versions of it and varying providers, resulting in a greater reliance on such platforms. However, there is still a significant focus on physical infrastructure, especially in sectors such as healthcare where using local infrastructure reduces the risk of latency.

This hybrid approach is also filtering down to suppliers and third parties, where customers are selecting best in class, creating a **microservices** landscape. It then becomes easy to imagine the increased complexity of business and service relationships - different providers, different processes, different SLAs, different tooling. Now add to this complexity the increasing reliance on technology, particularly in critical sectors such as medicine, and the ability to map your business services – what infrastructure are your critical services running on, where is it, who supports it and what is happening on it.

Many organisations are now reporting a move towards **smaller changes and more frequent deployment**. One could wonder whether the combination of Cloud, the increase in applications, the use of DevOps and Agile practices, and potentially even the need to link the microservices landscapes has influenced this, specifically when it comes to CI/CD (Continuous Integration/Continuous Delivery) which stems from software development and is seen increasingly widely.

Whether it is another potential overflow from the more software focussed DevOps and Agile methodology or whether born out of necessity due to sheer complexity, it's clear that there is increased use of **automation and AI**.

We see automation being used in Change creation off the back of an alert, auto-approval, implementing the fix and closing the Change – all without a human touch. Naturally, this would be standard, low risk and low impact Changes.

And then off course, there is the arrival of AI. Participants in the research have seen an increase in Process Mining, which is primarily sophisticated data analysis and process-discovery algorithms, while the newest generation of process mining solutions layers AI and machine learning on top to provide predictions, explanations and recommendations. Organisations are using these technologies to assist in reviewing the quality of the Changes submitted, assessing the risks posed by the Change, and in taking minutes and summarising what was discussed and agreed on the CAB.

Six points that I found interesting in this Automation and AI discussion were:

- Poor and incomplete source data, combined with immature CMDB data and service mapping, hinders the use of it.
- No one is using the AI capability included in the major IT Service Management tools. They either use Microsoft CoPilot or third-party plug-ins that deliver better outcomes and are more cost effective to use.
- Microsoft CoPilot is used to (aside from meeting minutes) analyse exported data, summarise attachments, perform rejection analysis and identify improvement opportunities.
- If you consider what the in-tool AI delivers versus the cost of tokens, when CoPilot is already included in M365, then it simply does not validate the spend.
- Secure customers prohibit the use of it, even the recording of meetings using CoPilot.
- One key concern is that exporting data from a controlled system could result in uncontrolled data.

This leads nicely onto the next topic, where we have seen a stronger focus on something that has happened over the last ten years – **security**. Data has become a sought-after commodity, which hackers and foreign powers are looking to exploit. This has resulted in the increasing need for security, now driven also by regulatory requirements enforced by legislations such as the UK's Financial Conduct Authority's Operational Resilience (Financial Conduct Authority, 2024), the European Union's Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) (European Union, 2022) and NIS2 (European Union, 2022), as well as ISO-aligned governance and audit requirements.

4.2. What is or should be Different

When asked what should be different, one of the most common responses was **automation**. Participants want to see automated checking of quality and approvals, better workflow integration, and more intelligent risk assessment.



Next in line was improved **CMDB accuracy and service mapping**. Participants repeatedly mentioned the quality of it; weak dependency mapping and limited visibility of impact. They want a better understanding of dependencies before implementation.

Participants also want **simpler and less bureaucratic processes**, with reduced administration, plus faster approvals and more proportionate controls.

Better **testing** and impact assessment was another point raised, specifically a call for end-to-end testing environments and greater visibility into SaaS provider changes. This makes total sense when considering what was mentioned earlier about the significant increase in complexity in the market.

Lastly, linked to the previous point, is **greater process consistency**. This was the same whether across multi-supplier environments, multiple internal IT departments or disparate regions.

It is interesting to compare this against the [Challenges](#) and [Wishful Thinking](#) we discuss in Sections 7 and 8.

4.3. What Remained The Same

This was the question with the most unanimous answer – protecting live services.

One participant summed it up perfectly:

"Protecting live services by ensuring changes are assessed, approved, planned, communicated, and reviewed appropriately to reduce disruption."

Risk assessment remains essential and, regardless of automation or agile adoption, organisations continue to focus on understanding impact, assessing risk and the appropriate approvals.

Governance remains necessary, even though CABs may evolve and some approvals may become automated.

Communication remains critical with stakeholder and operational awareness and business engagement remaining fundamental to successful Change delivery.

4.4. Summary

Over the past decade, Change Enablement has had to adapt to increasingly complex, hybrid and interconnected technology landscapes by embracing smaller and more frequent deployments, automation, AI-driven insights and stronger security controls, while its core purpose remains unchanged: protecting live services through effective risk assessment, governance, communication and stakeholder awareness.



5. Measuring Change Enablement

5.1. Measures Used and Reasons

Across the participants, measurement of Change Enablement effectiveness was primarily focused on operational performance, risk reduction, process quality, and service stability.

The most used measures, which could be SLAs or KPIs, included:

- change success rates
- failed or backed-out changes
- changes causing incidents
- emergency change volumes
- change throughput
- quality of change records
- adherence to change schedules
- closure timeliness.

In more mature environments, organisations also tracked unauthorised changes, post-implementation review completion, supplier performance, and trend analysis to identify areas for continual improvement.

Several participants emphasised that these measures are used not simply to monitor process compliance, but to demonstrate that change is being delivered safely, with minimal disruption to live services and customers. *Read more about this in [Focus Areas For Improvement](#).*

5.2. Are Individuals Measured?

Most participants reported that they do not place significant emphasis on measuring individual performance through quantitative Change Enablement metrics. Instead, the focus is generally on team outcomes, service performance, quality of governance, and organisational results.

Where individual assessment does occur, it is usually centred on quality assurance activities such as reviewing change records, validating risk assessments, checking adherence to process standards, and assessing readiness for governance forums. Several organisations indicated that coaching, peer feedback, annual performance reviews, and spot-check quality reviews are preferred over individual KPI scorecards.

5.3. Use of Soft Measures

A small number of organisations used formal stakeholder satisfaction surveys or structured feedback mechanisms to understand the user experience of the Change Enablement process and identify improvement opportunities. More commonly, organisations gathered informal feedback through focus groups, management discussions, stakeholder meetings, service reviews, or business engagement forums.

Several participants indicated that customer satisfaction is an area they would like to develop further in the future, recognising that traditional operational metrics alone do not always provide a complete picture of how effectively Change Enablement supports delivery teams and business objectives.

5.4. Summary

Change Enablement success is primarily measured through service stability, risk reduction, and process quality metrics, with performance assessed largely through team outcomes and stakeholder feedback rather than individual measures.



6. Communicating and Celebrating Success

6.1. How it is Communicated?

Across the organisations interviewed, Change Enablement success is typically communicated far more formally than it is celebrated.

Most participants reported sharing success through monthly KPI and SLA reports, governance meetings, CABs, service reviews, dashboards, supplier reviews, and stakeholder forums, with updates provided to senior leaders, service owners, operational teams, suppliers, risk functions, and other key stakeholders.

Examples of how successes are communicated included:

- Celebrating key milestones such as the 1500th Change in a previously fragmented environment.
- Teams or individuals acknowledged through commentary in reporting.
- Positive stakeholder feedback and process-improvement outcomes rather than structured recognition.
- Competitive reporting between teams that encourages recognition of strong performance.

6.2. How is it Celebrated?

In contrast, formal celebration of success is less common. Many participants described a culture where successful Change Enablement is viewed as the expected outcome, often summarised as "no news is good news", because its primary purpose is to avoid disruption and protect services.

Where success is recognised, it is typically through management acknowledgement, team recognition, internal communications, reporting commentary, milestone celebrations, awards programmes, or highlighting successful projects and process improvements.

Examples of how successes are formally celebrated included:

- Quarterly CEO award where any person can be nominated, with organisational recognition and a monetary award.
- Internal recognition scheme, which depending on the level can include a monetary award. The recognition and accompanying comment are shared in a fortnightly departmental-wide update.
- Rewards for staff who contribute to reducing the backlog of open changes.

6.3. Summary

Organisations use communication as a key mechanism to demonstrate value, reinforce good behaviours, share lessons learned, and support continual improvement, while recognition tends to be more formal and linked to exceptional achievements rather than routine operational success.



7. Challenges

When asked what Challenges respondents face, the following were raised, listed in order of frequency:

7.1. CMDB & Service Mapping

During the interviews, nearly all the participants mentioned the lack of an accurate CMDB and the associated Service Maps that would better enable them to understand the potential impact of a Change. They reported poor quality CI data and incomplete CI data within the CMDB.

This makes it difficult to understand change impact, assess risk, identify dependencies, and communicate effectively with stakeholders.

Many organisations continue to rely on spreadsheets or individual knowledge rather than trusted data sources, creating risks when experienced staff leave or when changes affect complex, interconnected environments.

7.2. Cultural Adoption

As seen earlier, some recognise the value while other still perceive it as bureaucracy or administrative overhead. Several organisations described ongoing efforts to demonstrate value, improve engagement, simplify processes, and shift perceptions from governance being a barrier to delivery towards Change Enablement being a partner that helps teams deliver safely and successfully.

7.3. Speed versus Governance

The ongoing pressure on teams to deliver at speed especially around what seems to be predominantly application deployment or project work, contributes to this challenge to balance the need for rapid delivery while retaining appropriate levels of control.

Participants frequently described the tension between enabling faster change and ensuring sufficient oversight to protect live services and minimise disruption.

This raised the question of where the Change process was included in deployment or project planning. A Project Manager should be aware of the requirement for Changes to be raised and should include this, along with the associated lead times, in their planning.

7.4. Cloud & SaaS Visibility

The growth of Cloud and SaaS services has introduced new challenges around visibility and control. Participants noted that provider-managed services can limit access to underlying technical details, making it harder to assess risks, understand dependencies, and predict the impact of externally driven changes.

As more services move to the Cloud, organisations are increasingly seeking better ways to understand and manage changes occurring outside their direct control.

7.5. Testing

Another challenge highlighted was limitations in testing environments. The complexity of modern estates means that organisations often struggle to replicate production environments to test how systems would be impacted. This makes it more difficult to assess potential risks before implementation and increases reliance on human judgement when evaluating the potential consequences of change.

7.6. Process Simplification

A recurring aspiration across the interviews was to simplify Change Enablement processes without weakening governance. Participants spoke about reducing unnecessary administration, introducing more automation, streamlining approvals for low-risk work, and making processes easier for delivery teams to follow.

The overall goal was to make Change Enablement more proportionate, efficient, and supportive of modern delivery



practices while maintaining the controls needed to protect services and manage risk effectively.

7.7. Summary

The most significant Change Enablement challenges are poor CMDB and service mapping accuracy, balancing delivery speed with governance, cultural adoption, limited cloud visibility, testing constraints, and the need to simplify processes while maintaining effective risk management and service protection.



8. Wishful Thinking

When posed the question of “if you had a magic wand, what would you improve” participants answered with the following, again in order of popularity:

8.1. CMDB & Service Mapping

Unsurprisingly, this was by far the most popular topic nearly all participants asked for. It included more accurate configuration data, stronger service mapping, clearer dependency information, and improved visibility of relationships between systems and services. They want clearer visibility of affected services, applications, users, suppliers, and infrastructure to support more informed decision-making.

8.2. Speed versus Governance

With the speed and volumes of Change, another top hit was greater automation of quality checks, approvals, reporting, validation activities, and governance processes. The objective was consistently described as reducing administrative effort, increasing efficiency, and allowing teams to focus on higher-value activities. When considering AI, they emphasised the need for AI that could be trusted, understood, and safely incorporated into governance and decision-making processes.

8.3. Process Simplification

Linked to the previous point, participants want to see processes that are easier to follow, more proportionate to risk, and less administratively demanding. Simplification was viewed as a way to improve adoption, reduce resistance, and support faster delivery while maintaining governance.

8.4. Testing

Several participants highlighted the need for stronger testing approaches, particularly where complex environments make it difficult to validate changes before deployment. Desired improvements included better test environments and more confidence in release readiness.

8.5. Wider Process Consistency

Participants wanted greater alignment in processes, behaviours, and governance across organisational boundaries. Given that most firms and IT Service Management tooling follows the ITIL Framework, it does raise the question – why are we still seeing this challenge? Surely with how the market has shifted to a “best in class” approach when selecting suppliers, this should be less of an issue.

8.6. Cultural Adoption

Some participants focused less on technology and more on people. Their desired future state involved better communication, stronger understanding of Change Enablement's value, improved collaboration, and greater engagement from technical and business stakeholders.

8.7. Summary

Participants' top improvement priorities were accurate CMDB and service mapping data, increased automation to balance speed and governance, simpler and more risk-based processes, stronger testing capabilities, greater organisational consistency, and improved stakeholder understanding and adoption of Change Enablement.



9. Executive Summary

Across the organisations interviewed, we see that successful Change Enablement is increasingly about proportional governance rather than simply applying more control.

The practice is evolving to support increasingly complex, hybrid and interconnected technology environments characterised by Cloud adoption, DevOps practices, automation, AI-assisted analysis, and more frequent deployments.

While delivery models and technologies have changed significantly over the last decade, the fundamental purpose of Change Enablement remains unchanged: protecting live services through effective risk assessment, governance, communication and stakeholder awareness.

Organisations generally view Change Enablement as a valuable governance capability that enables safer delivery, although perceptions continue to vary between leadership, operational teams and delivery-focused technical teams.

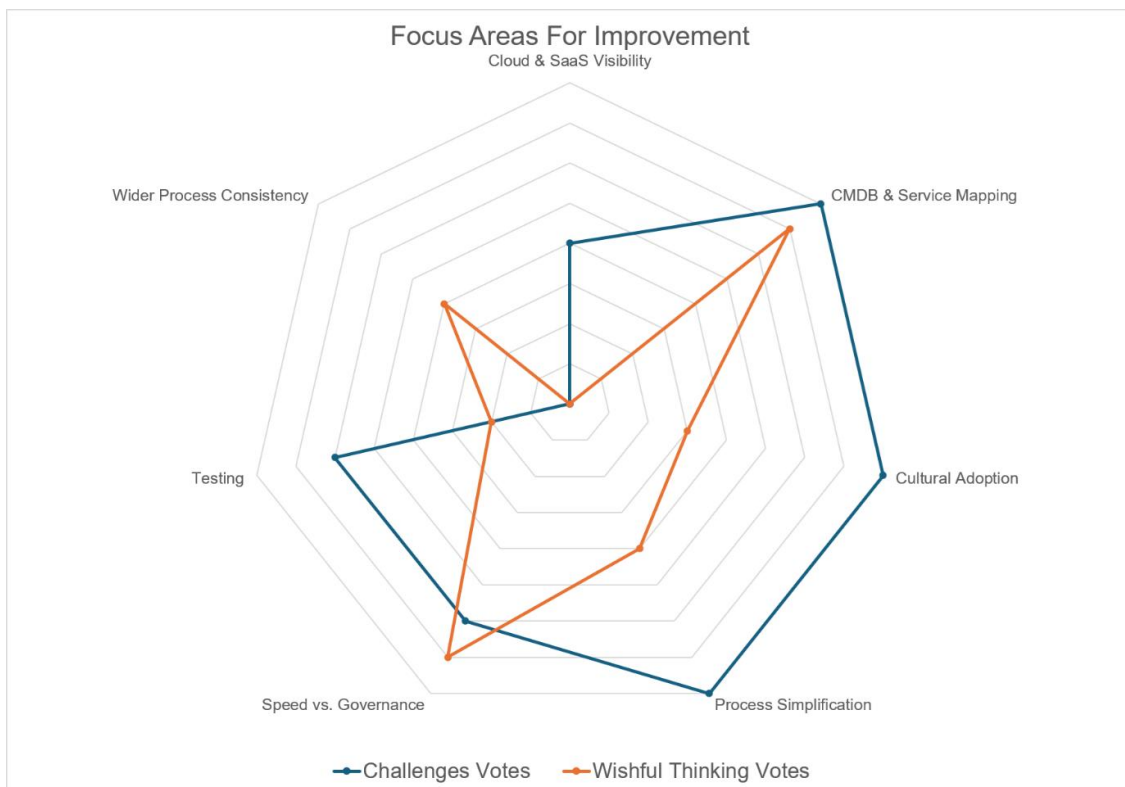
Success is predominantly measured through operational outcomes such as change success rates, service stability, incident prevention and governance effectiveness, rather than individual productivity metrics.

Despite progress, organisations continue to face several common challenges. The most significant is the lack of accurate CMDB data, service mapping and dependency visibility, limiting the ability to assess impact, understand risk and make informed decisions.

This is compounded by limited visibility of provider-managed cloud and SaaS services, increasing environmental complexity, difficulties replicating production environments for testing, and ongoing tension between delivery speed and governance requirements.

Many organisations are also working to overcome perceptions of Change Enablement as an administrative burden while seeking to simplify processes, improve adoption and reduce manual effort without weakening governance controls.

9.1. Focus Areas for Improvement



When overlaying the points raised in Challenges with the Wishful Thinking ones, it shows two clear areas for improvement – CMDB & Service Mapping and Speed versus Governance.



9.2. CMDB & Service Mapping

The research indicates that organisations should prioritise improving their CMDB and Service Mapping. It is easy to believe that the data needs to be near-perfect before it can be used, but this is not the case.

Earlier this year, a case study proved how a company started with a less-than-perfect CMDB, but it was still used by the organisation and the accuracy improved drastically within 6 months.

Another example is from a case study covered at the itSMF UK ITAM and Leadership event in 2025. An organisation made an extract of their CMDB available to the operation who were instructed to use it as their single source of truth. Where they believed any of the information to be incorrect, they were asked to contact Service Asset & Configuration Management who would correct it. The result of this was both the CMDB Accuracy and Patch Compliance improving to >99%.

9.3. Speed versus Governance

First and foremost, determine what controls genuinely reduce risk. These should be the ones focussed on, as the others have the potential to simply add administrative effort. When considering regulations and market requirements, valuable governance points are:

- Maintaining Service and CI (remember, this includes documentation such as disaster recovery plans) Mapping as part of Change
- Risk Assessment
- Appropriate approvals, relevant to the risk
- Service protection, avoiding intolerable disruption, by coordinating the schedule of change
- Record, test, implement and verify in a controlled manner.

Within an organisation, start with a collaborative session with those teams always pushing for speed. It is important for them to understand precisely what is required of the Change process (and thereby them), and the associated timelines.

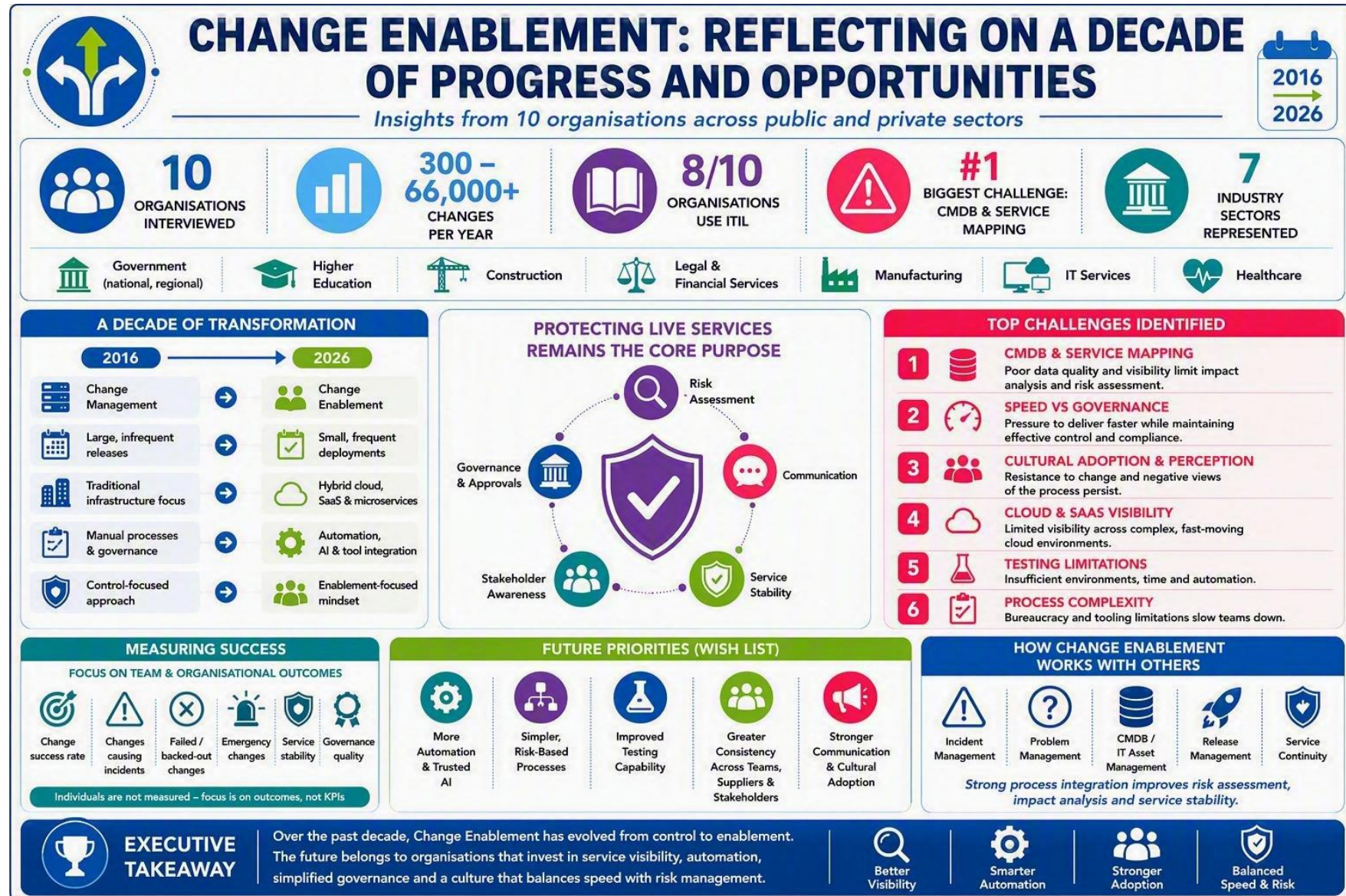
A recommendation would be for a Change Enablement representative to attend planning meetings to provide support by ensuring the necessary Changes are raised in time, not necessarily having to raise it themselves.

Standard Changes are also relatively straightforward to identify, script and implement – the more technical teams are engaged, the more likely they are going to collaborate to help make such Changes happen.

These Standard Changes have the potential to become ideal candidates for automation.

When it comes to AI, I believe that the quality of data is seen as a larger blocker than it necessarily is. I discussed this point earlier this year with a company specialising in AI, who confirmed this.

10. Infographic





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Recommended Reads

- [Service Configuration and IT Asset Management Whitepaper](#)
- [ITIL AI Governance Whitepaper](#)



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Whitepaper Questionnaire

The following are the questions we discussed.

1. Information for context:
 - a. What type of organisation are you working for - private, public, sector.
 - b. What is the rough size of IT estate you support (Configuration Items or Volume of Changes per year).
 - c. Are you using any best practices e.g. ITIL, SIAM, DevOps.
2. Process Basics
 - a. How is Change Enablement set up? Roles / Team / Function.
 - b. Extent to which change is embedded in tooling? Do you use any AI capability?
 - c. How do you prioritise Changes? Priority = impact x urgency; time-driven; whoever shouts the loudest.
 - d. What links do you have to other ITSM processes?
3. How is Change Enablement perceived in the organisation?
 - a. How is Change Enablement viewed in your organisation?
 - b. Does this perception vary between teams / suppliers or with seniority?
 - c. And finally, what do you believe are the key reasons for those perceptions?
4. If you look back to Change Enablement over the last 10 years:
 - a. What has changed in the market?
 - b. How have you made use of these changes in the market?
 - c. What is (or should be) different in how you deliver Change Enablement?
 - d. What has remained the same?
5. How do we measure Change Enablement?
 - a. What measures does your practice use and why? SLAs, KPIs, other?
 - b. Do you measure the individuals in your Change Enablement team?
 - c. Finally, do you employ any soft measures (Customer Satisfaction, employee satisfaction, etc.) in measuring Change Enablement effectiveness?
6. How do we celebrate Change Enablement success?
 - a. How do you communicate your success, with whom, and when?
7. What challenges does Change Enablement face?
 - a. What are the biggest challenges you face running Change Enablement?
8. Wishful thinking
 - a. With the benefit of a magic wand, what would you do to improve?



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