Introduce Agility into Your Change Management Process

Heavyweight, cumbersome change management can cripple a company's ability to achieve their DevOps goals and deliver change at speed. Sandhata has delivered ground-breaking solutions to our customers, removing the bottleneck of change management and liberating organisations to help unlock the value of their DevOps initiatives.
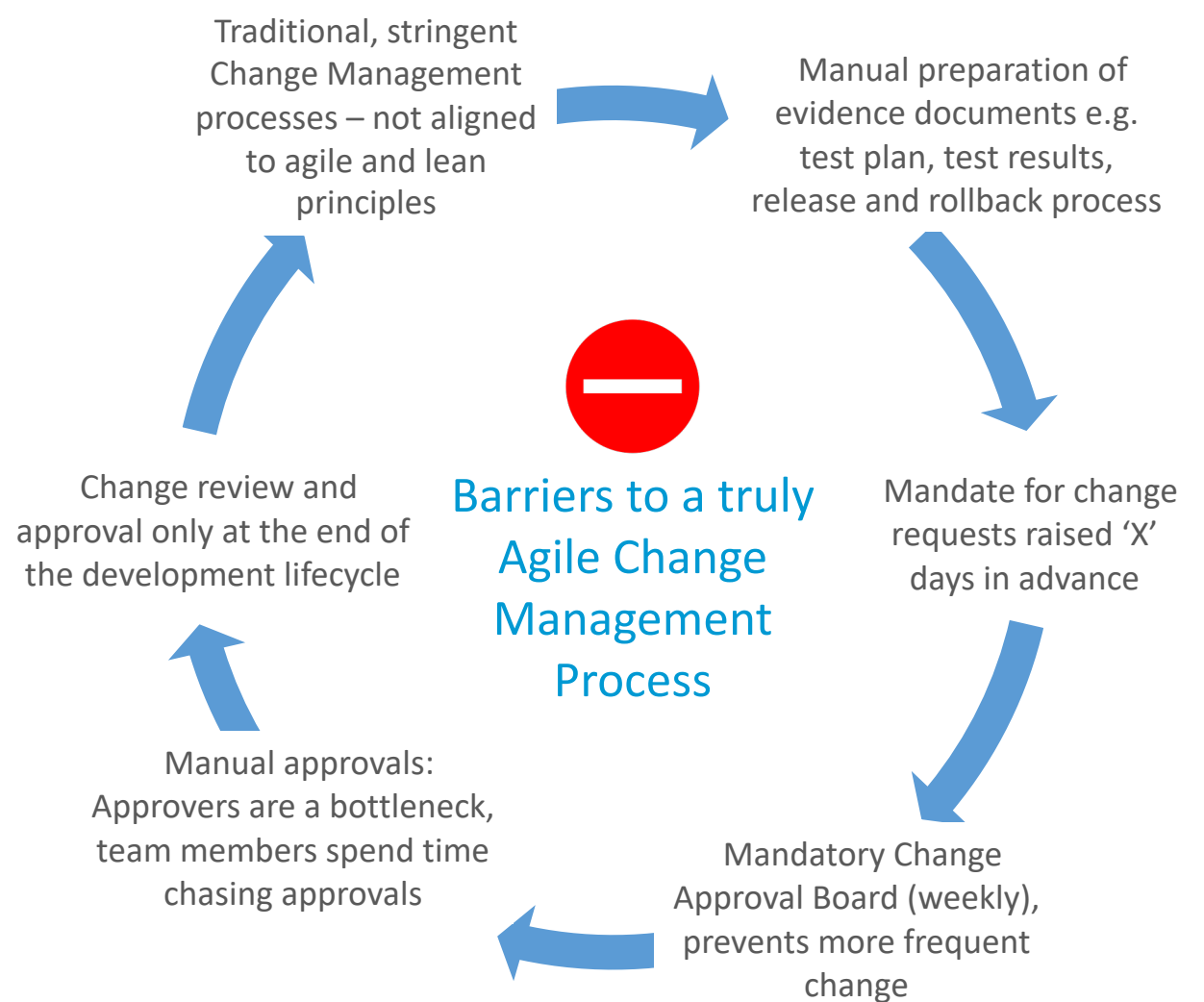
Why are we passionate about Change Management?

Well-backed research has shown repeatedly that heavyweight Change Management processes hamper an organisation's ability to deliver changes fast. Formal, long-winded change management processes also increase change failure rates[1] and can increase employee frustration and burnout.

While DevOps is being implemented across the board, many organisations are unable to reap the rewards of their streamlined processes and automated deployment pipelines as the change approval process is still a barrier.

We have worked with large organisations to streamline their Change Management process, to introduce automation and accelerate change while simultaneously improving stability and quality. We advise on the strategy, processes, cultural alignment and toolsets.

Barriers to a truly Agile Change Management Process

- Traditional, stringent Change Management processes – not aligned to agile and lean principles
- Manual preparation of evidence documents e.g. test plan, test results, release and rollback process
- Mandate for change requests raised 'X' days in advance
- Mandatory Change Approval Board (weekly), prevents more frequent change
- Manual approvals: Approvers are a bottleneck, team members spend time chasing approvals
- Change review and approval only at the end of the development lifecycle

How do we help our customers overcome the Change Management barrier?

Consultancy services		Delivery services
Identify stakeholders & drive the Change Management strategy to continuously enable fast, high quality change	Upgrade CAB from a policing body to strategic governance and capability management	Build a tailored Change Management process which accelerates change and drives quality improvements
Identify bottlenecks in the current process, reduce inefficiencies with lean and agile practices	Align the culture and mindset in delivery teams with Agile Change Management processes	Introduce automation to validate and enforce high quality change
'Shift left' review and approvals to the early stages of delivery	Effectively communicate the Change Management process to ensure efficient usage	Facilitate building solutions (e.g. APIs) to integrate the Change Management process with CICD automation

1. Taken from '2019 Accelerate State of DevOps Report': "… introducing more approvals results in a slower process and the release of larger batches less frequently, with an accompanying higher impact on the production system that is likely to be associated with higher levels of risk and thus higher change fail rates."

CASE STUDY Part 1

Implementing an Agile Change Management Process (ACMP) in a global Bank

Business Challenge

Our clients had introduced Agile software practices, continuous integration and end-to-end automation of their lifecycle. But still they were struggling to see real business benefit of their DevOps initiatives and efficiency gains because every change was delayed by their mandatory 6-day change approval window.

The stringent Change Management process, enforced to try and mitigate the risk of poor-quality change was penalizing high performance teams and was identified as a bottleneck to our client's vision of delivering 'ideas to production, safely in a day'.
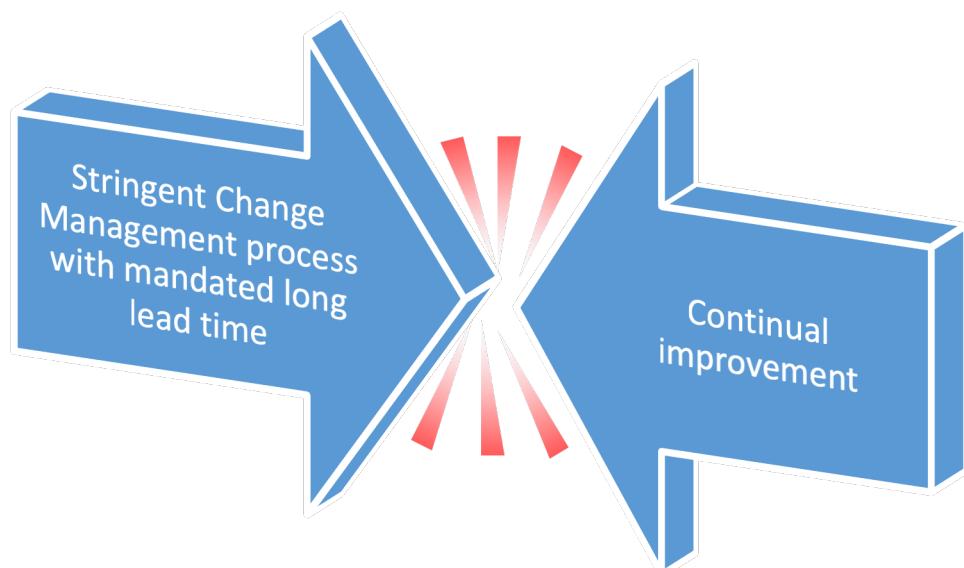
The Result

ACMP has been rolled out enterprise-wide. The new process supports same day change by:

- **Reducing change lead time from 6 days to 15 minutes.**
- **Removing mandatory Change Approval Board (CAB) signoff and automating end to end approval.**
- **Increased test and deployment automation drastically improves efficiency and stability.**
- **Reducing the cost of each release up to £8,000**

In the first year of this project, 80 applications were onboarded into ACMP, removing the Change Management Process as the bottleneck for their deliveries. Division heads have set adoption targets for their teams given the business benefits already realised.

Their business units are now able to respond in hours to market demands and customer needs.
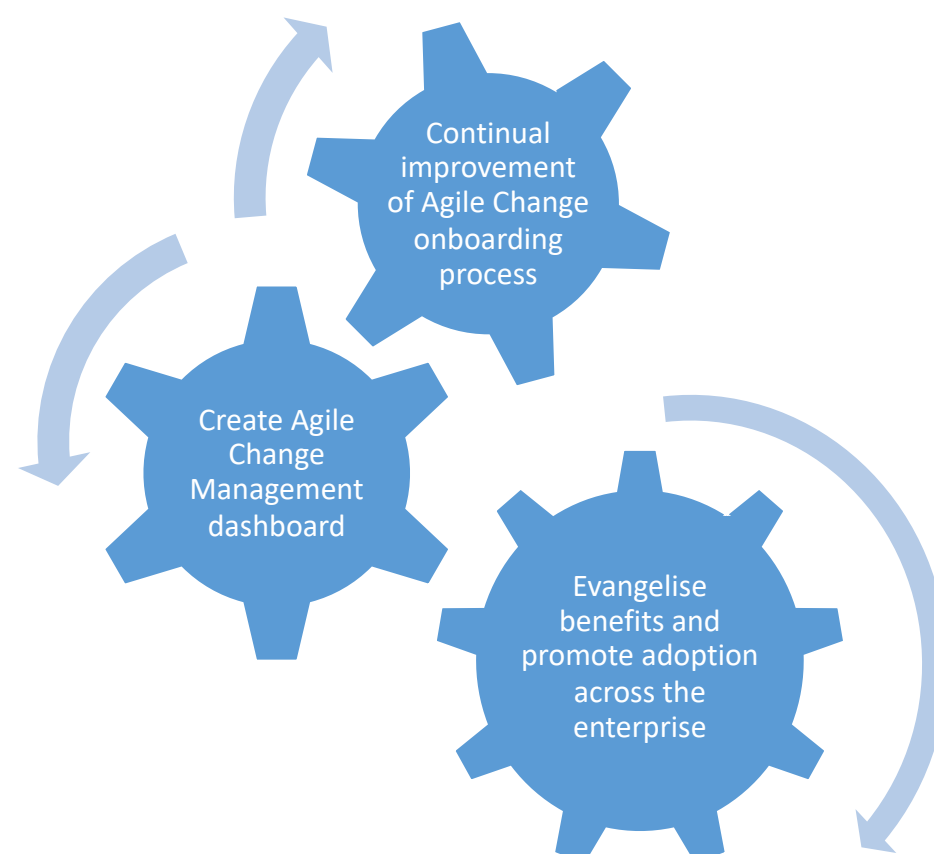
Business Benefits

- Change Lead time: 6 days to 15 mins
- 8x more changes released
- 30% fewer high impact business incidents
- CAB signoff no longer required

Sandhata's Solution

Our team created and managed a stakeholder working group to define and deliver an optimised Change Management process (AMCP) to enable agile teams with rapid and frequent production deployment.

A pilot phase was initiated with 10 teams, along with an ongoing continuous improvement approach. A rich set of APIs were created enabling change requests to be raised directly from automated Continuous Delivery pipelines.

What's next? The Roadmap for ongoing improvement
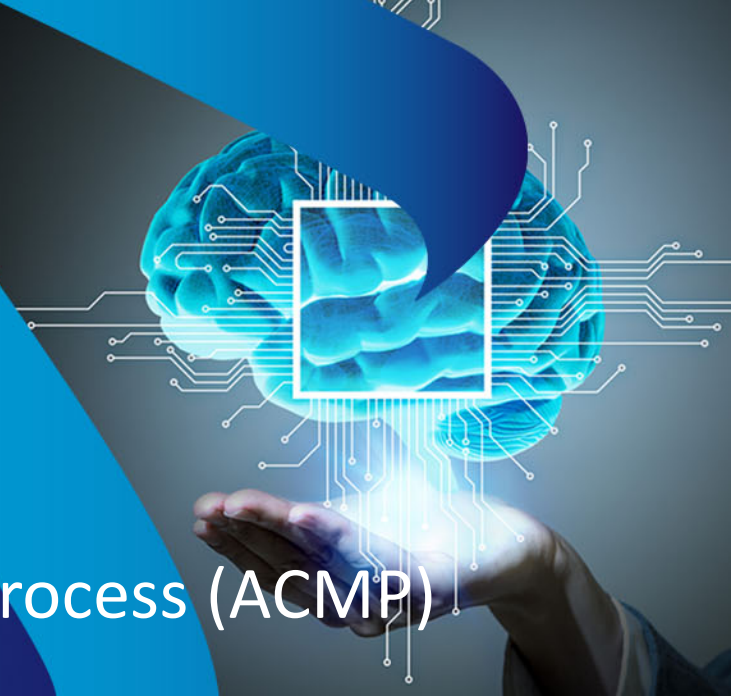
CASE STUDY Part 2

Wider business benefits of Agile Change Management Process (ACMP)

Direct value of ACMP for one team in a global Bank (references provided on request)

Starting point for Team X:
Each release requiring 6 weeks of coordination/lead time for document prep and a 2 day weekend release involving 20+ staff releasing every 2-3 months.
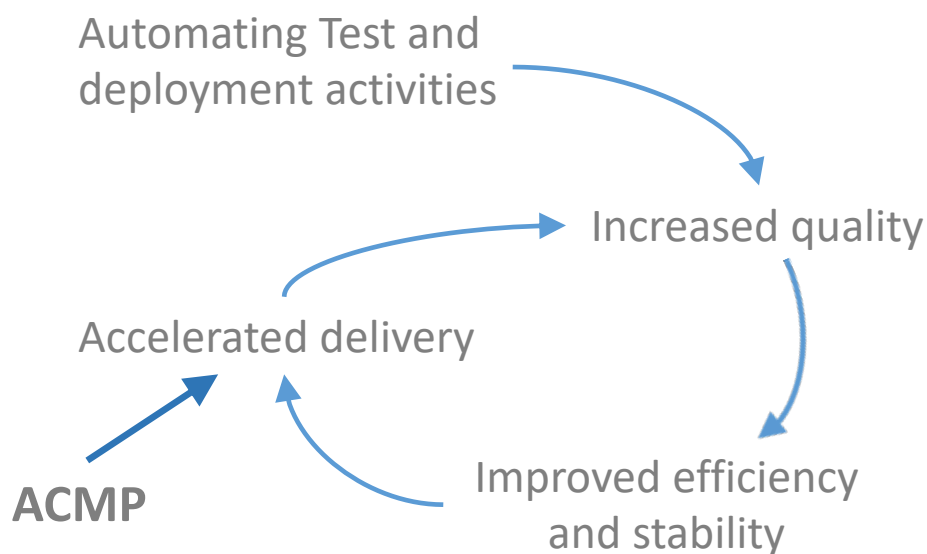
ACMP →

End point for Team X after adopting ACMP:
A regular midweek cycle taking 1 hour to organise the documents and 1 hour to release by Operations Team.

Speed and stability go hand in hand

The 2019 Accelerate State of DevOps Report shows that speed of delivery and system stability are not an either/or. Elite performers deliver frequently AND maintain high quality. This results in fewer bugs and incidents, and a lower cost of adding new features. ACMP is a critical enabler of frequent deployments.

Automating Test and deployment activities

Increased quality

Accelerated delivery

ACMP

Improved efficiency and stability

✓ **Commercial / Tangible Benefits**

- Lower risk change with no priority 1 incidents within 6 months of implementation.
- Direct 'on day' savings of £8k per release.

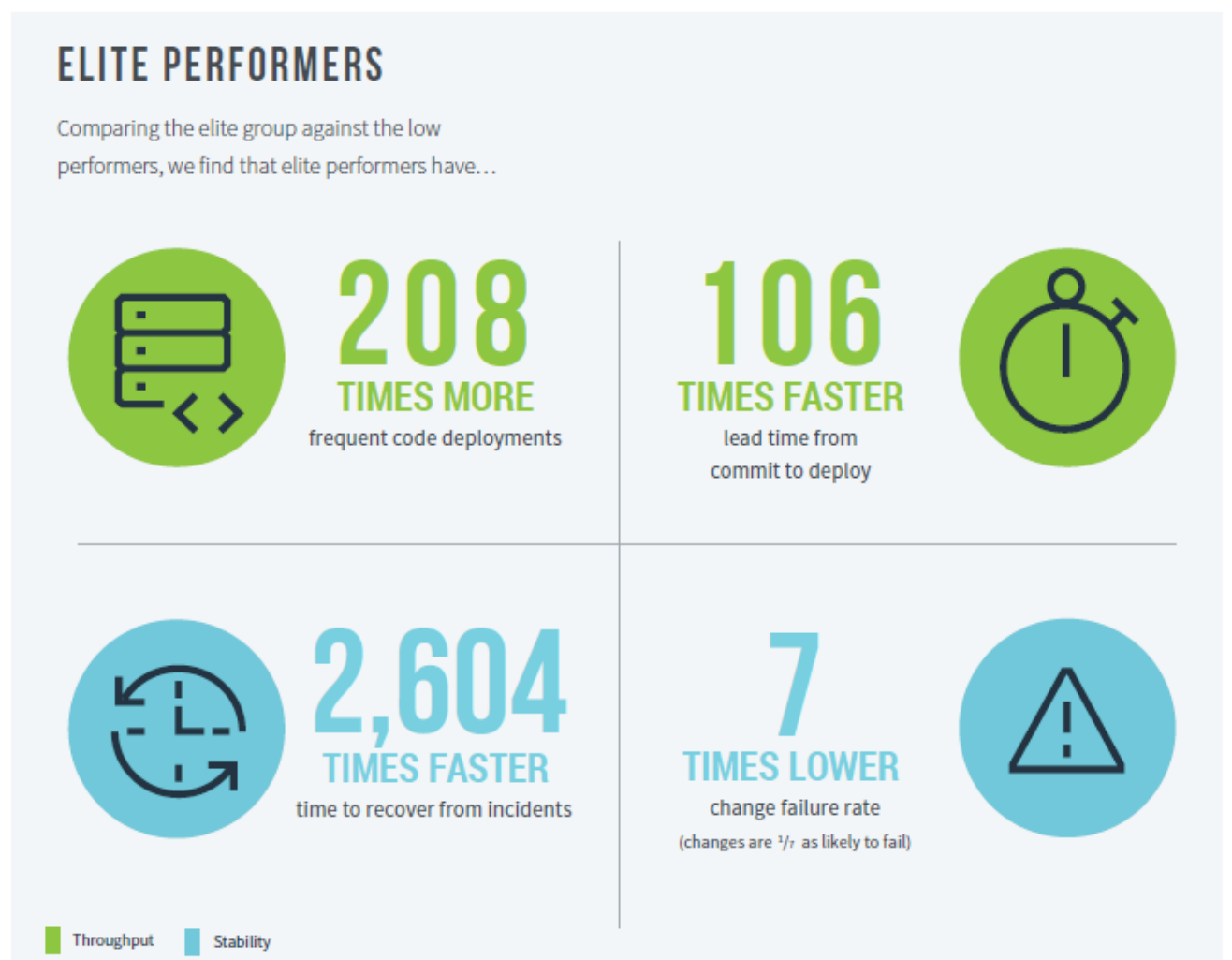✓ **Non-commercial / Intangible Benefits**

- Releases moved from weekend to midweek improving work life balance.
- Dev Team reenergised to focus on Ideas to Production (Business Value) instead of fire fighting and change bureaucracy.

ACMP underpins organisational efficiency driving elite performance

Research[1] demonstrates that the capabilities we enable and encourage with ACMP are statistically predictive of increased organisational performance along with increased job satisfaction and reduced burnout, rework and deployment pain.

Organisation performance including:
- Commercial, e.g. profitability, productivity, market share
- Non-commercial, e.g. operating efficiency, customer satisfaction, quality, and achievement of organisational goals

ELITE PERFORMERS

Comparing the elite group against the low performers, we find that elite performers have…

208 TIMES MORE frequent code deployments

106 TIMES FASTER lead time from commit to deploy

2,604 TIMES FASTER time to recover from incidents

7 TIMES LOWER change failure rate (changes are ¹/₇ as likely to fail)

Throughput   Stability

1 and image above Taken from '2019 Accelerate State of DevOps Report'