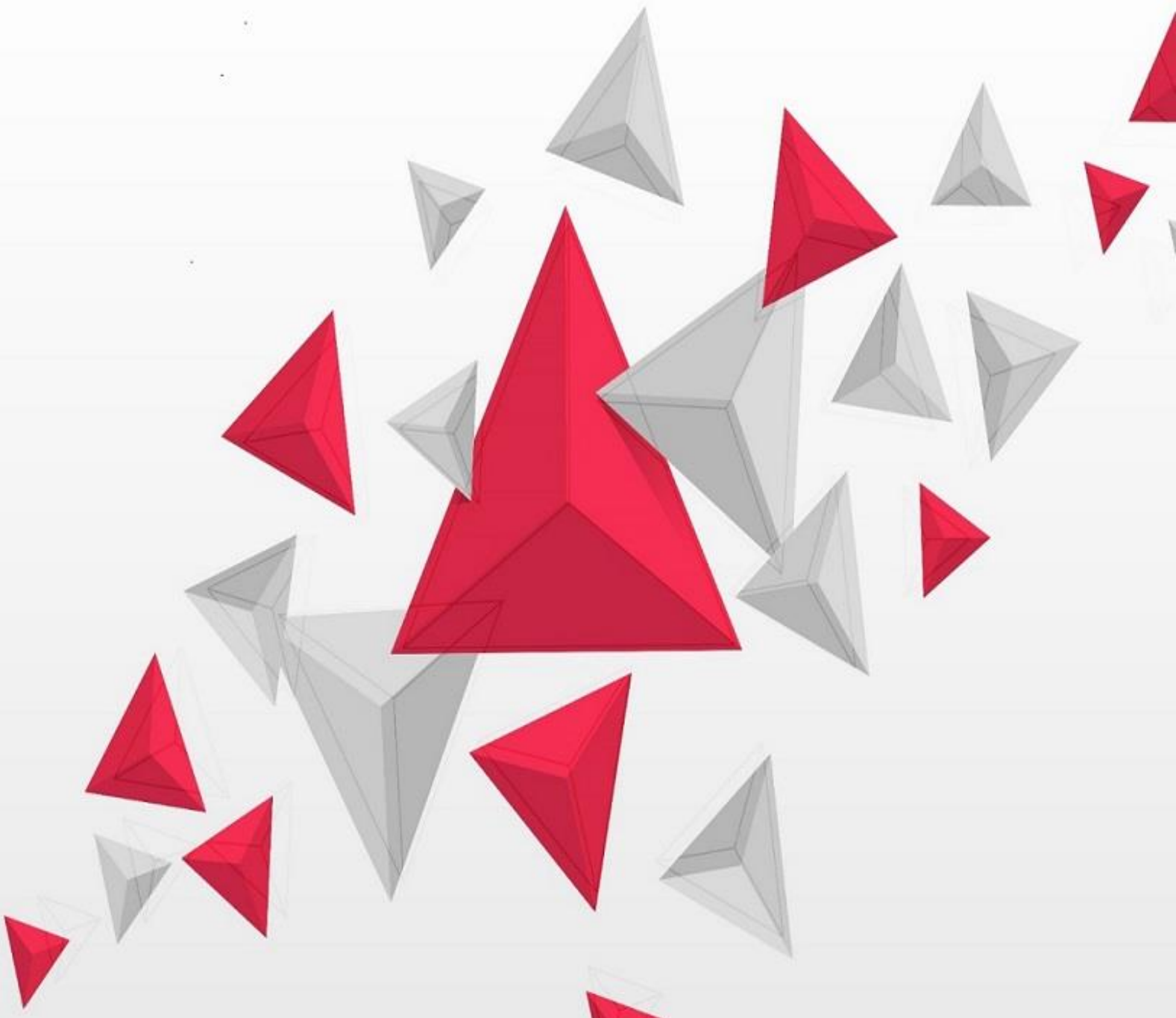


Change Control Log

Guide Book





CHANGE CONTROL LOG – INTRODUCTION

In the previous lessons on change management, we learned how to create change requests and manage the complete process of implementing changes in a project. But shouldn't there be a process as well to *log* and *track* all the change requests (not the changes – notice the difference?) that were made throughout the life of the project?

Well, yes, there *is* one, and it's known as Change Control Log.

Change Control Log or Change Log or Change Register is a record of all the change requests submitted during the lifecycle of a project along with the status of those change requests. This log could be a spreadsheet, Microsoft Excel, or in case of big projects involving extensive changes across multiple teams, dedicated software may also be used to log and track the changes.

Are you ready to dive deep into the details?



ASPECTS OF A CHANGE CONTROL LOG

First, let's see some of the aspects, along with the benefits of having a Change Control Log on your projects.

1. Logs the vitals of each and every change

A change request log records pretty much all the critical details against all the change requests like the nature of the change being requested, its impacts, its status of approval along with the implementation schedule and date

2. It gives the complete picture of the progression of the project along with the way

Due to changes in business direction, technological advancements, or changes in the market, the priorities of a project might change midway in its execution, and changes have to be incorporated into the project functionalities/scope. The changelog shows all the changes that have been proposed for the project throughout the project duration in 'one single' document.

3. It helps control scope creep and prevents project failure

Scope creep is defined as change and expansion to the project's scope once the development has started. Uncontrolled changes to the project scope are detrimental to the success of any project as the project goals are continually shifting, and the project manager along the team are trying to aim for a moving target!

A BA can be a great savior of the project if he maintains the change control log as it helps everyone realize the number of changes happening to the project and its impact on the project schedule and quality.

4. Assist a project to maintain its schedule

For time-critical projects, usually, a limited number of change requests are allowed during the project tenure. Now, suppose no one is keeping track and log of the change requests the project was subjected to. In that case, there is a strong chance that the project may implement more change requests than what was initially decided and agreed upon, resulting in a possible impact on the schedule.

A combination of a change control log and a proactive BA ensures this does not happen!

5. Acts as a supporting document in the events of negotiations and disputes

The projects can sometimes take unpredictable turns, and since all the projects have financial and legal clauses, it's best to be prepared for such situations.

A change control log shows the nature of changes requested for the project, the approving authority, and the impacts of changes and can be used in defense of the complete project team in case of schedule slippages or project quality-related arguments by the customers.



HOW TO CREATE A CHANGE CONTROL LOG

Let's learn how to create a change control log now.

There are two sections within a Change Control Log, with the first one containing the details of the project and the customer, while the second one containing the exact details of the project-related changes.

Let's look at the first section.

- **Project Name:** Contains the project's official name as per the statement of work (SOW) or contract.
- **Project Code:** The internal project code is entered here.
- **Department:** The name of the department to which the project belongs, like Finance, IT, or Marketing, comes here.
- **Customer:** The official name of the customer as per the statement of work or contract is entered here.
- **Project Manager:** The complete name of the manager in charge of the project
- **Client SPOC:** The full name of the customer's single point of contact (SPOC), who should be contacted for any project-related discussion.

Coming to discuss the second section:

- **Request No.:** Each change request has a unique identifier that is given when the change requests are created (It's the RFC number in our RFC form), and the same is entered here.
- **Module:** The module's name or the project section to which the requirement in the change request belongs, like registration, settings, or dashboard module, should come in here.
- **Change Request Title:** The change request should be given a title to quickly identify and differentiate different change requests. For the sake of readability, this title shouldn't ideally be more than 8-10 words.

- **Change Request Description:** The description of the change requests goes in here. You can even copy the 'Change Description' from the RFC form.
- **Requester:** The name of the requester or the stakeholder who has requested the change should be listed here (You can get these details from the 'On behalf of' field in the RFC Form).
- **Initiator:** The name of the person who has initiated the change request on behalf of the requester will come in here (You can get these details from the 'Raised By' field in the RFC Form).
- **Initiation Date:** The date on which the change request was initiated
- **Planned Estimated Effort:** The effort that was estimated before the development or the implementation of the change request started, i.e., planned. Efforts are usually in staff hours.
- **Actual Effort:** The effort that was spent on implementing the change request. For comparison, the actual effort should have the same measurement type as staff-hours or staff-days as that of estimated effort.
- **Status:** The current state of the change request, which could be anyone from Initiated, Under Discussion, Rejected, Approved, In-progress, Completed, and Closed
- **Severity:** The severity of the change requested, i.e., Critical, High, Average, or Low
- **Target Closure Date:** The date on which the implementation of the change request requirement was planned to be finished.
- **Actual Closure Date:** The date on which the implementation of the change request requirement was actually finished.
- **Comments:** Contains any notes, justifications against why the change requests were rejected, or any other helpful information.



CHANGE CONTROL LOG - BEST PRACTICES

1. Be proactive and prompt while recording changes

In the thick of simultaneous project responsibilities, the business analyst may be lax in updating all the changes promptly, and then he might forget to log those changes altogether!

Thus, it's best to log the changes as and when they happen - such a practice will ensure that the changelog remains up to date with the project's latest state of things.

2. List each and every change request and not just the change

While the changelog is updated, it should be made sure that all the change requests, whether they were approved or not, should be updated in the changelog. Some analysts confuse it with keeping only those change logs that are sanctioned and implemented in the project.

3. Share the Change Control Log with the complete team periodically

It is imperative to save the change control log at a shared project location so that all the project stakeholders can access the same. Also, it's a best practice to share the latest version of the log with the team (especially the client stakeholders) once a month and highlight the changes that had taken place in the previous month.

Such a practice ensures that changes and change requests do not go unnoticed. In the event of multiple changes requests (which itself is a significant project risk), the attention of the client stakeholders can be called upon.

4. Take the Change Control Log as a means to reiterate the importance of effective change management

In continuation of the previous point, it's always beneficial to walk the client stakeholders through all the changes listed in the log over a call/face-to-face conversation. Also, in case the business analyst or the project manager sense that the amount of changes requests is increasing, or the client is not very enthusiastic about reviewing/prioritizing the changes, then they can educate the client about the benefits of robust change control.

Following such practices ensures everybody is aware of what is best for the project and is equally committed to success.