Effective Change Management Strategies

Michael Parker, VP of Professional Services
Newmerix Corp.

Application Lifecycle Management (ALM) is a fairly recent topic that has received a lot of attention lately. Several vendors have emerged under the umbrella of ALM with solutions for monitoring landscapes, workflow, documentation, and change management. Unfortunately, it's not always clear what the real value of ALM is, nor do many companies have a comprehensive strategy for realizing this value. This whitepaper describes the best ways to approach ALM and some criteria for evaluating processes and tools for most effectively managing upgrade and maintenance changes within your Oracle applications .

Lifecycle Management

Oracle® provides customers with best practices pre-configured into end-to-end business processes. Many companies change these configurations as business requirements change. Most IT leaders have completed global deployments of major enterprise applications. Many are still in the midst of deployments or follow-on upgrades. How do you enable IT organizations to deliver strategic value and lead changes to your business?

Business Process Changes – Overcoming Competition, Improving Customer Service, Cutting Costs, Improving Quality; the list of new and ongoing strategic business initiatives is never ending. Each initiative has an impact on the underlying infrastructure of the business. Compounding top-level business strategies are departmental initiatives for improvement. Whatever their origin or nature, the by-product of today's relentless pursuit of process optimization is quite simply – change.

Implementing Best Practice Frameworks – Today's IT leader is fundamentally different from those of the past. The CIO has a seat at the executive table and is no longer dedicated to providing systems support. As a result, leading IT organizations implement best practice frameworks like ITIL, COBIT, Six Sigma or CMM. The result is measured contribution to the overall organization. CIOs exceed their mandate to be responsive to change and are agents for change in their organizations. IT agility is expected, and the business applications governed by IT must respond to this new mandate in kind.

Mergers and Acquisitions – In many industries organic growth is insufficient to deliver adequate shareholder value. Shareholder expectations for growth lead large organizations to grow through merger or acquisition. The unprecedented pace of M&A activity over the past few years has resulted in tremendous operational challenges for IT organizations. Integrating, replacing and modifying applications as a result of M&A activity generates massive amounts of change to business processes and enterprise applications.

IT Deployment Processes Inefficient – Today the prevailing method for managing change to Oracle implementations is through an amalgamation of manual processes. Typically the manual change process is supported by a collection of electronic documents, paper documents, email, phone calls, face-to-face meetings and general disarray. Compounding the inefficiency and errors often found in these practices is the inability for auditors to independently verify that effective controls are in place.

IT Governance – Besides the Finance department, no other department has been harder hit by corporate governance regulations (e.g. Sarbanes-Oxley, CSOX, J-SOX, CLERP9, LSF, and L262/2005) than IT. Regulations have created an enormous burden on IT. Periodic audits are time consuming and painful events. Sarbanes-Oxley requires an organized process for change management. From business request to technical work, a workflow is needed and documentation must be collected. Change control boards need access to information. There are six general tenets that have emerged for managing IT Governance regulations with the Oracle application lifecycle:

Change Migration Process Documented and Enforced

Change Approvals Defined and Signed Off

Complete Project Documentation Stored, Versioned, Associated with the Project

Testing Complete and Acceptance of Testing Signed Off

Change Migration Security and Separation of Duties Followed

Migration Data for Reporting and Audits Collected

Traditionally, the above processes have been executed manually. That approach will not stand up to the scrutiny of a formal audit. Corporate governance regulations require that these processes be verifiable and tamper-proof.

Point Solutions Offer Limited Capabilities – While alternatives for managing change exist, they are generally focused on a single aspect of the Oracle lifecycle. The capabilities offered by these tools are rarely best-of-breed. Their fragmented nature effectively prevents IT and Business Leaders from holistically managing the application lifecycle. A strategic alternative is required in order to meet departmental and organizational benchmarks for responsiveness and service delivery.

Documenting Business Processes – Capturing the professional expertise of application users is the biggest challenge when testing application changes. Without this knowledge, testing teams only test the obvious or the familiar. As a result, application users are often responsible for acceptance testing which takes them off their day job. If you could document your end users' process knowledge, you could turn that knowledge into automated test scripts, process guides for auditors and training materials for new employees.

Application Testing – Manual application testing is time-consuming, inefficient, unproductive and lacks repeatability. As a result, deployment cycles are slower and less predictable and the quality of application changes is not rigorously verified. As other stages of the application lifecycle slip their own deadlines – defining requirements, assessing fit-gap, impact analysis, configuration, etc. – the testing cycle is chronically shortened, leaving very little time for diligent manual testing. As a result, manually testing application changes jeopardizes the continuity of the production system, compliance with IT Governance and cost control. The more customized the application, the greater the risk.

Lifecycle Management by Newmerix

To meet these challenges a holistic approach is required. Newmerix Automate! for Oracle is the only comprehensive application lifecycle management suite designed to manage the entire lifecycle of change across Oracle environments. To enable IT organizations to exceed the demands of their business partners, no other approach delivers Configuration Management, Change Management and Release Management as effectively or efficiently as Newmerix Automate! for Oracle

Newmerix Automate! for Oracle is comprised of three modules that operate both independently and in unison. These are: Automate!Change, Automate!Test, and Automate!Control.

> Automate!Change integrates with Oracle to enable IT Organizations to achieve consistent and business-driven Change, Configuration and Release Management as well as enforceable Sarbanes-Oxley compliance.

> Automate!Test enables IT Organizations to dramatically lower the cost of testing changes while speeding test cycles of greater breadth and depth to ensure predictable release cycles of exceptional quality

> Automate!Control integrates with Automate!Test and Automate!Change to provide an overarching command center to manage the entire lifecycle of change from the request stage through to deployment and training. Automate!Control provides a single simple command center for lifecycle management and auditing.

Manage Business Process Change – Newmerix Automate! for Oracle enables IT Organizations to assume a leadership role by strategically and proactively implementing changes to applications in line with business initiatives. Automated testing increases quality and speeds the delivery of your changes. Orchestrated change management reduces the risks of delays and enables change to occur within Corporate Governance guidelines. Whether your organization is Overcoming Competition, Improving Customer Service, Cutting Costs, Improving Quality, or implementing department-level changes, Newmerix Automate! for Oracle delivers capabilities to exceed the expectations of your business.

Enable Efficient and Verifiable Automated Processes – Newmerix Automate! for Oracle enables application teams to create structured and automated workflows for implementing changes in Oracle environments. Sophisticated capabilities to manage approvals, regulate exceptions and notify stakeholders are incorporated into the change management process. At every phase in the process activities are automatically logged and preserved to enable auditors to easily verify that processes are compliant with regulatory and organizational guidelines and that an ethical separation of duties has been preserved. With Newmerix Automate! for Oracle, the need for managing change through manual processes, electronic documents and personal interactions is eliminated.

Leverage Comprehensive Capabilities – Unlike narrowly focused tools available from other vendors, Newmerix Automate! for Oracle offers IT Management a way to holistically manage all aspects of the application lifecycle in way that is integrated with the Oracle architecture. Through each phase of the application lifecycle Newmerix Automate! for Oracle automates manual activities, documents unverifiable processes, and orchestrates managerial visibility into the complete breadth of lifecycle activities.

Enable Mergers and Acquisitions – Newmerix Automate! for Oracle streamlines the changes to business applications that result when two business entities join forces. Enabled by Newmerix Automate! for Oracle, orchestrated change management reduces the risks of delays. Changes occur within Corporate Governance guidelines.

A Web-based console that enables planning to begin ahead of the transaction and workflows can be established. Then once the transaction is complete, the deployment of changes can occur effectively and efficiently while ensuring that premature initiatives are avoided.

Implement Best Practice Frameworks – Newmerix recognizes the value of delivering IT Services in alignment with Best Practice Frameworks like ITIL, COBIT, ISM3, Six Sigma or CMM. For example, the capabilities delivered with Newmerix Automate! for Oracle align with the following ITIL Disciplines:

Configuration Management

> All change requests are configured to require documentation prior to approval for export from Development.

> System objects are backed up prior to changes and are restorable.

> Comparison reports show the changes that have been applied to one object relative to another.

> Impact analysis reports display possible overwrite conditions when synchronizing changes between parallel development systems.

Change Management

> Highly flexible change workflows are defined and enforced.

> Approvals and notifications are integral to the workflow configuration.

> All actions are logged for management and auditing purposes.

> Automated testing ensures adequate coverage and comprehensive documentation as proof.

> Automated business process documentation generation ensures business processes are understood and approved.

> Complex change tasks are automated relative to established best practices for automation and consistency.

Release Management

> All changes require appropriate technical and business approvals prior to release to production.

Automatically Manage Projects – Newmerix Automate! for Oracle eliminates the challenges associated with managing Oracle Projects. Sophisticated Change Management capabilities enable application teams to establish several types of migration paths that map to a specific category of change. With Newmerix Automate! for Oracle approvals may be delegated and even sequenced to enable approval hierarchies. Newmerix Automate! for Oracle removes costly delays associated with manual approval procedures. Notifications and approvals occur within the application. These capabilities enable a dramatic increase in productivity for Oracle application teams. As a result Newmerix Automate! for Oracle enables IT Organizations to deliver changes to Oracle deployments with greater efficiency, predictability and speed.

Ensure IT Governance Compliance – Newmerix Automate! for Oracle enables IT Organizations to comply with Corporate Governance regulations like Sarbanes Oxley, CSOX, J-SOX, CLERP9, LSF, and L262/2005. Newmerix Automate! for Oracle enables compliance through the following six areas:

Document, enforce and verify project process

Document, enforce and verify project approvals

Archive, version-control documentation associated with individual projects

Automatic testing and verifiable test result acceptance

Securely manage projects and control separation of duties associated projects

Collect project data for reporting and audits

Newmerix Automate! for Oracle enables IT Organizations to establish several types of migration paths that map to a specific category of change. For example, a path for customizations, another for support packs, etc. Different configurations determine the paths through the landscape. The browser-based dashboard enables stakeholders to view and manage the status of project requests. Newmerix Automate! for Oracle removes costly delays associated with manual approval procedures. Notifications and approvals occur within the application. Project movements can be immediate or scheduled, and happen automatically once approval is granted. With Newmerix Automate! for Oracle approvals may be delegated and even sequenced to enable approval hierarchies.

Through Newmerix Automate! for Oracle, all electronic documents associated with projects (even requirements) are automatically archived, versioned and associated with specific service requests. With a Web dashboard, Newmerix Automate! for Oracle enables your organization to view and manage the status of projects. Further, through the dashboard, service requests are collected, prioritized, organized, and tracked from proposal through to completion. Stakeholders are automatically informed when the project is updated.

Newmerix Automate! for Oracle establishes an authorization matrix to determine what change authority each user has in each system. This is enforced transparently to users and effectively mitigates security concerns and maintains separation of duties to ensure that users are prevented from promoting changes which they developed without necessary authorization.

Finally, Newmerix Automate! for Oracle records every action taken in the change process. If necessary, auditors could pull these reports themselves. Newmerix Automate! for Oracle provides a comprehensive structure for reporting real activity including all of the details that are required meet audit requirements.

Documenting Business Processes – Newmerix Automate! for Oracle automatically records and documents the activities of application users as they use the application to do their work. The resulting documentation can then be used to automatically test application changes. Additionally, process documentation may be used for employee training, process guides and to support process audits. Most importantly, the need for application users to take time away from their work to perform acceptance testing is dramatically reduced.

Automatically Test Application Changes – Newmerix Automate! for Oracle records the behavior of application users to automatically generate test scripts based on actual business activity. From these scripts automated test routines are executed without the aid of the application user. Because the tests are automated they are highly repeatable and can be configured to work with a wide array of data parameters. Sophisticated capabilities enable the quality assurance team to test application changes at a far greater level of granularity than is possible with manual testing methods. With Newmerix Automate! for Oracle, deployment cycles sped up and more predictable because the quality of application changes is rigorously verified.

Substantial Business Impact

Newmerix Automate! for Oracle helps you meet your aggressive timelines for deploying Oracle upgrades and helps you cut operational inefficiencies from your maintenance activities. With Newmerix Automate! for Oracle, you can manage business process change, manage change during upgrades, enable mergers and acquisitions, implement best practice frameworks, automatically document business processes, automatically test application changes and comply with IT governance regulation.

What's the bottom line? You will see a 72% reduction in the number of hours required to configure and deploy changes related to Oracle upgrades and maintenance.

About Newmerix

Newmerix provides a comprehensive suite designed to manage strategic, lifecycle change across enterprise applications. Increasing control and improving adaptability, the Newmerix Automate! suite gives senior management of enterprise IT organizations control and visibility at every stage of the application lifecycle. Newmerix deliver Configuration Management, Change Management and Release Management streamlining IT processes and ensuring business success.

For More Information

+1 888.868.3755 | +1 303.350.3900 | www.newmerix.com | info@newmerix.com