WHAT WE FOUND

- A 56-page change control (CC) SOP that no one could understand. Even the process flows (there to simplify) caused brain freeze.
- On average, change requests took 12–16 weeks to approve.
- Because the system was so slow, there were various (some dangerous) workarounds and unofficial shortcuts.
- The CC system approved everything.
- Most approvals were based on gut feel.
- The CC committee was made up of eight people who reviewed change requests remotely.
- There was no follow-up of approved changes to measure success.
- There was no control over routine changes.

WHAT WE LEFT AFTER NSF SIMPLIFICATION

- The SOP was reduced to seven pages.
- Approval time was reduced from months to 60 minutes.
- Workarounds and shortcuts became obsolete.
- The CC system rejected between 38–40 percent of change requests (a good indicator of an effective CC system).
- Customized impact assessment forms were introduced to make decisions objective and business focused.

STEPS TAKEN

- Gap analysis of the CC system vs. best industry practice.
- A two-day, distraction-free workshop with all key stakeholders delivered to 25 participants to simplify the SOP.
- Core purpose of the CC system agreed upon with a focus on speed and importance of objective decision-making.
- CC system and unofficial systems process mapped.
- Non-value-adding steps removed.
- Customized impact assessment forms generated.
> Role of the CC changed from discussion to decision-making; CC members reduced to just three who met weekly (minimum).

> Agenda of the CC clinic simplified.

> All approved changes followed up to assess ROI.

**TOOLS USED**

> Gap analysis.

> Process mapping.

> Brutal thinking.

> Risk assessment.

> Customized impact assessment.

**RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

> Everyone slept easier at night knowing they had, for the first time, control over routine changes.

> Only changes delivering value were approved. This dramatically reduced initiative overload and freed up resources.

**BEHAVIOR CHANGED**

People recognized that the CC system was vital to the health of their business and was not just about compliance.

**KEY MESSAGE**

Simplification motivates and inspires. People went from loathing (and ignoring) the CC system to loving and using it.