

Transforming Enterprise Change Governance with Intelligent CI/CD Automation

Q1. Project Description / Achievement (Winner Page)

At Blackhawk Network—a global leader in prepaid and payment technologies—the organization pioneered the Intelligent Change Automation Framework through collaboration across engineering, compliance, security, and governance disciplines. This initiative eliminated manual delays in change approvals during application deployments and established a new model for governance-driven DevOps operations.

Previously, deployments required manual forms, lengthy approval cycles, and fragmented tracking, creating inefficiency and risk of compliance failures. The new framework integrates Jenkins (CI/CD) with ServiceNow® (change management) to embed governance directly into the delivery process. Automated ticket creation, intelligent routing, and compliance validation ensure every change is handled with consistency, audit readiness, and regulatory rigor.

Organizational impact includes:

- Embedding compliance rules into the release cycle, reducing governance risk
- Creating transparent approval workflows across multiple disciplines
- Providing complete audit trails to strengthen internal and external oversight

Already deployed across 10 platforms (with expansion to 15+ this year), the system has automated over 1,005 approvals, saving 1,000+ manual hours and \$80,000 in direct efficiency gains—on track for \$120,000 this year. By bypassing CAB dependencies, it recovers hundreds of business days annually, generating an additional \$360,000 to \$720,000 in business value while enabling faster, smaller, and safer releases that reinforce compliance and support millions of customer transactions.

This initiative demonstrates organizational excellence in governance and compliance, where automation and cross-functional collaboration deliver both operational speed and regulatory assurance.

Q2. Project Description / Achievement for Judges (Judging Only)

Governance Innovation & Architecture

The CI/CD Change Automation Framework was engineered at Blackhawk Network as a policy-aware orchestration system that integrates governance, compliance, and delivery into one workflow. By transforming manual processes into intelligent automation, the framework ensures that every deployment is validated against compliance rules and logged for full traceability.

Cross-Functional Implementation Approach

Developed using custom Groovy scripting and REST APIs, the system integrates Jenkins pipelines with ServiceNow® ITSM workflows. Its rule engine:

- Dynamically generates change approvals aligned to governance policies
- Routes requests to the appropriate stakeholders across functions
- Maintains a complete, auditable compliance record

The framework also enforces moratorium periods, manages emergency exceptions, and ensures adherence to risk policies across production and non-production zones.

Organizational Impact

- 1005+ changes processed with full governance oversight
- 1000+ hours of manual review eliminated
- \$80,000 in cost savings to date; projected \$120,000 this year
- Additional \$360,000–\$720,000 in business value recovered annually by eliminating CAB delays
- Deployed across 10 platforms with plans for 15+ this year
- Strengthened compliance reporting and audit readiness
- Supported millions of customer transactions securely

Differentiation & Excellence

Unlike traditional DevOps automation, this framework was designed with governance at its core:

- Policy-driven rather than purely script-driven
- Audit- and compliance-ready from inception
- Vendor-neutral and extensible for enterprise governance

Advanced features include auto-ticket closure, multi-repo orchestration, and cross-system deployment coordination, making it a leading example of intelligent governance automation in regulated DevOps.

Strategic Excellence

This initiative represents a governance transformation, not just a technical one. By aligning engineering, compliance, security, and audit functions, Blackhawk has created a model where regulatory assurance and operational agility coexist. Future enhancements include adaptive workflows and risk-based approval classification, advancing the company toward next-generation governance practices.

Credits

This initiative was made possible through contributions across multiple disciplines at Blackhawk Network:

- **Executive Leadership:** *Dani Matzlavi, Vice President*
- **Director Oversight:** *Mike Livitski, Director*
- **Framework Author & Architect:** *Ravi Sai Krishna Nunnagoppula, Staff Platform Engineer*
- **Security:** *Pavi Ramamurthy, CISO & CIO; Hardeep Singh, Distinguished Engineer*
- **Change Management:** *Adir Meidan, Director; Keith Pelter, Director; Mike Holden; Daniela Melendez Trujillo*
- **DevCentral Engineering:** *Chris Hall, Director; Venkata Sai Srinivas Madhullapalli; Ravi Maharshi; Said Abedi; Jayanth J*
- **ServiceNow® Integration:** *Venu Nadendla, Principal Software Engineer; Naveen Gadi; Anudeep Kosuri*
- **Compliance:** *Andrea Chiapello, Director; Andy Nold*
- **Internal Audit:** *Norman Gutierrez, Sr. Director*
- **Engineering Directors:** *Thyaga Atthipatla, Sr. Director; Mukesh Jyothi, Sr. Director*

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