



Strongpoint

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Whitepaper

CHANGE ENABLEMENT

A New Strategy for Simplifying Change Management and Compliance

Let's get right to the point. Your company is not in the business of doing change control or filling out compliance reports. Whether you call it a necessary evil, a professional responsibility or a best practice, you want to get through change control as quickly as possible to get on with your real job: helping your company to grow, thrive and adapt at the speed of business today.

But there's a problem: what makes you safe makes you slower, while compliance steals critical resources better spent focused on new initiatives (i.e. much slower). It doesn't have to be that way. What if what made you faster also made you safer ***as well as compliant?***

Strongpoint was created with the goal of letting you eat your cake and have it too; providing companies with the tools and processes to make changes their business needs and achieve compliance with as much speed and as little stress as possible.

Stress comes from being required to do something without the time, resources or skills to reliably meet the goal. Strongpoint is dedicated to relieving that stress while helping sales operations, IT and finance teams respond to the needs of business at unprecedented speed.

After all nobody ever said:

“We missed our numbers but we nailed the change control!”

Our organization is inspired by the Toyota commitment to great tools and processes over dependency on extraordinary ability: “We get excellent results out of average people running excellent processes, whereas others get poor results from excellent people running broken processes”. Strongpoint is a set of tools that let anyone run world-class IT and financial control processes on the NetSuite or Salesforce platforms at a fraction of the effort and at the velocity of modern business.

The drive to focus on tools and processes over tribal knowledge and 'commitment' is increasingly essential in today's fast-paced cloud computing environments. NetSuite and Salesforce.com continue to grow at 30+% per year, while credentialed resources are becoming ever more scarce. In this tight market, companies are having difficulty meeting staffing needs, they cannot always hire the best talent and must often work with hybrid teams of consultants, outsourcers and employees. Reliance on tribal knowledge was never a strong or sustainable strategy but it now has no hope of working for most organizations.

On top of this pace of change is the responsibility to meet ever-increasing compliance standards (SOX, GDPR, CRFA, FDA, ASC 606, ISO). Most public and regulated companies and soon any company performing revenue recognition or trading in Europe will need to demonstrate:

- 1. Tight but Efficient IT Control Policies:** Any and all changes to relevant financial systems and related platforms have been made with an appropriate level of change control
- 2. Strong Master Data and Financial Controls:** All master data and transactions are subject to appropriate, provable approvals and controls to mitigate risk
- 3. Active Access and Permission Controls:** Access to the system and appropriate rights and permissions are tightly controlled in order to block unauthorized access to systems or private data
- 4. Separation of Duties:** The system is configured to provide an appropriate separation of duties (SOD) or oversight to mitigate risk of fraud
- 5. Privacy and Data Protection:** The appropriate security steps are being taken to protect personal and corporate information stored in critical systems



Strongpoint has an integrated set of tools that address each of these concerns individually, as well as in aggregate. This white paper will focus on what is necessary to achieve excellence in IT General Controls and how automated tools from Strongpoint can help organizations save up to 90% of the costs associated with meeting these standards, while improving the productivity of the sales operations, administrative and development teams.

Change management standards are a critical part of IT General Controls. The emerging standards are simple to state but complex and time-consuming to apply. Every change to a financial or financially/operationally relevant system must be assessed for risk. Where risk is identified, appropriate approval and procedural steps must be taken to mitigate or eliminate it. These risks, however, are not easy to understand without powerful tools and, more importantly, complete and up to date documentation. Simply said, it is a task humans find challenging but software addresses easily.

Consider three identical searches or reports with dramatically different risk levels:

1. A personal copy of a search or report made, developed and used by a single person,
2. The official version of the search or report, which is a critical part of the period closing or financial reporting process,
3. A search or report that provides a list of objects (or components) to be processed by a script or workflow.

These reports are technically the same thing but present different risks that need to be considered individually.

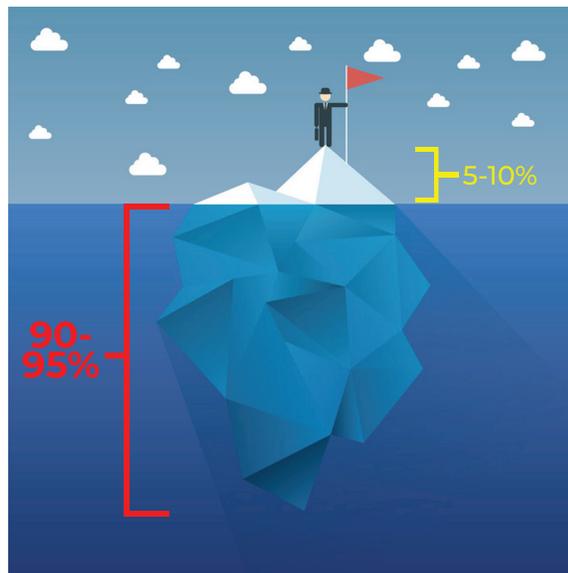
The first is a personal copy of a search or report made, developed and used by a single person. Changes to it carry no risk unless the person involved has a critical control function such as the Controller or if the report or search inappropriately access personal information. No one wants all changes to all searches or views bottle-necking change control. What is needed is that these changes be automatically cleared so the team can focus on reports 2 and 3.

The second copy, the official version of the search or report, is a critical part of the period closing process. Any changes to this search or report require appropriate financial approval to ensure the data is valid and the business process remains intact. Essential development or IT resources should not get involved unless there is complex SQL/SoQL that needs to be revalidated. Instead, such resources should maintain their focus on category 3.

The third copy is a list of objects (or components) to be processed by a script or workflow; changing this could dramatically change or even break an automated process. These changes need to go through careful development, testing and release cycles sometimes referred to as the Full Software Development Lifecycle. The IT and management teams need great information and tools to plan this change, understand the implications, and manage the change process. Now imagine one of these searches or reports was changed by accident.

The same is true about other attribute types as well; including fields, lists, forms, layouts, views, settings, preferences, roles and profiles. Of the changes in a typical CRM or ERP system, only 5% are actually code or workflow automation changes. 68% of changes are in our first group with very low risk, 10% are in our second group with organizational risk, and 18% are in our third group; changing them could change access rights or how code operates. The problem is nobody knows for certain which changes are in which group and so the change process is either over-managed (too much is checked), under-managed (too little is checked) or most commonly both (spending too much time looking at the wrong things).

The risks organizations face are like an iceberg: 5-10% are the script, workflow and access changes that are obvious threats, and 90-95% of changes are below the waterline. Remember, the Titanic did not hit the top of the iceberg.



To know what change falls into what level of risk, change analysts have to know everything about every component in the system:

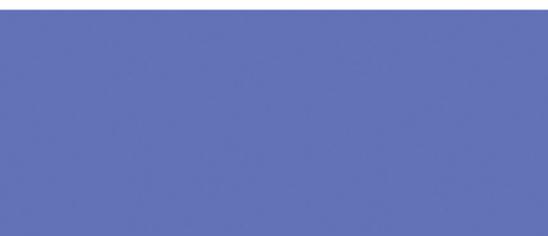
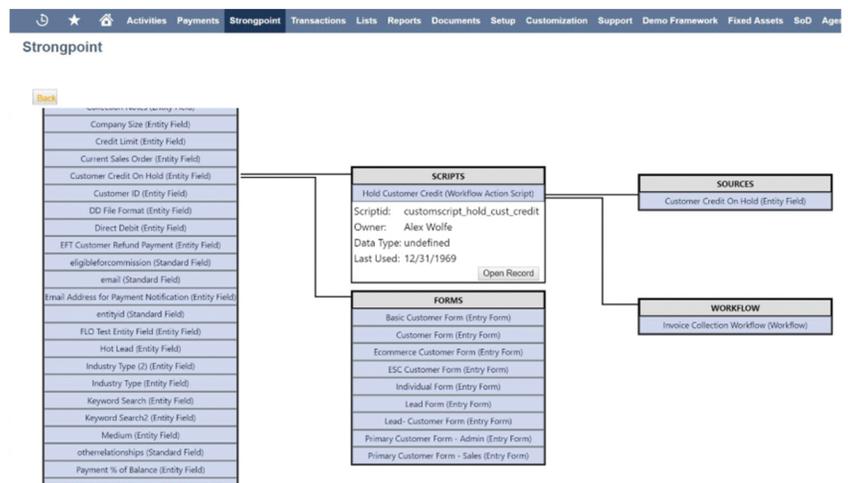
- What it is
- How it's configured
- How it used to be configured
- When it was created, changed or last used
- Who created it
- Who changed it
- What it depends upon
- What dependencies rely upon it
- Who and what part of the organization is using it
- Who owns it
- What business process it serves



It may also be necessary to view specific critical pieces of information about complex objects (or components) such as scripts and workflows that lead to specific risks such as API calls and SQL/SoQL. Finally, all this information needs to be searchable and viewable in different formats for different purposes, across multiple environments and, for some companies, multiple applications and the integration layer in between.

Assembling and maintaining this documentation without the right tools is not only complicated and time-consuming, it is only the first step in addressing the problem. After all, the documentation is only as good as the person who created and its last update so it needs to be validated on an ongoing basis before it can be taken as fact. The only sustainable approach is to use automatically generated and validated documentation such as that which is automatically created and routinely by Strongpoint.

Strongpoint's automated documentation tools make the complexity of any organization's system easy to understand and explore. This enables more people (with less expertise) to make more and better decisions more quickly than ever before. It also protects organizations against the loss of knowledge through departing team members or journeyman consultants.



As important, the objective is to be able to read the documentation and use it to assess and mitigate risk, which again depends upon unscalable expertise. Strongpoint automates risk assessments and impact analyses so everyone can do an excellent job with minimal effort. In fact, tier one risk analysts may not need to bother the dev team at all. In cases where they do, they will have all the necessary data at their fingertips. Moreover, plain language explanations of risk make everything easy to understand for everyone involved.

Related Change Records **Impact Analysis** Deployment Deployment Validation Notes Files Controls Audit Standard Field impact analysis

ARCHIVING STATUS

Can Be Safely Deleted or Modified	Cannot Be Safely Deleted or Modified •	Inactive Customizations (Already Deleted)
CUSTOMIZATION	WARNING	IMPACTED CUSTOMIZATIONS ▲
Change Level (Custom Record Field)	DEPENDENT SCRIPTS NOT ARCHIVED DEPENDENT FORM DEPENDENT MANAGED BUNDLE	Strongpoint Create Change Log from SN (Workflow Action Script) Strongpoint Create Change Record Log (User Event Script) Change Level (Custom Record Field) Material Risk Default Form (Entry Form) Pop-Up Process Issue Form (Entry Form) Process Issue Form (Entry Form) Process Issue (Record)

Edit Back Archive Customizations Respider Now Impact Analysis   Actions ▾

Strongpoint is designed to route each planned change or actual change through the appropriate change control process and, therefore, the appropriate team. The concept starts with the principle that organizations want to use the lowest skilled personnel and the simplest process necessary to manage the risk on each change. In doing so, they want to free up the highest skill team members to focus on complex changes that move the company forward. An extreme example is the first scenario: changes to personal searches or reports. Into this category can be added any search or report not used by large groups of people or critical people. The level of change control needed is nothing, zero, zilch – but if there are compliance obligations (or the desire to sleep at night!) it probably needs to be zero because some searches and reports are critical and additional downstream dependencies. It means that each search or report needs to be checked and cleared. The only practical way to do it is through the use of software.

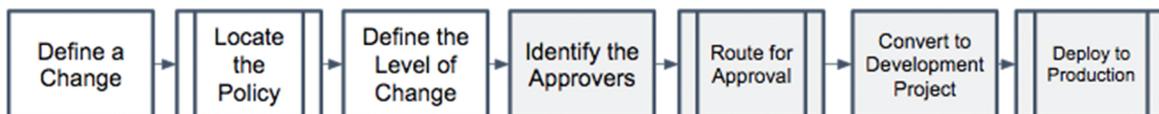
Strongpoint automatically checks every change, evaluates the risk, and clears all the low risk changes without human effort. It then logs that clearance for audit with complete traceability for management or future auditors.

What risk are being discussed?

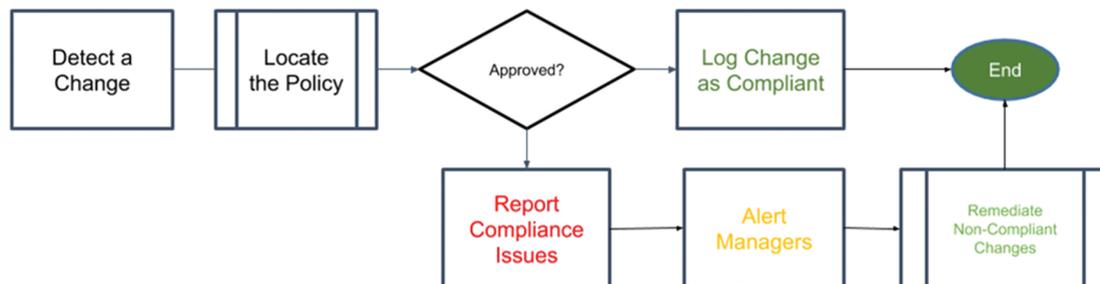
The obvious risks are an automated process will break or that unauthorized users will access the systems. But the more common and sneaky risks are accidentally corrupted data due to unintended changes in how or how consistently processes execute. There are concerns about the risk of waste – wasted developer time and lowered user productivity. For public and regulated companies, it is not sufficient to actually avoid each risk; it must be proven that the risk HAS BEEN AVOIDED in the past and is likely to be avoided it in the future.

So how would this work in practice?

To understand this, one needs to think about two cases: the ‘happy’ path and the ‘backup path’. In the happy path, changes are checked for risk prior to making them, the system advises the user which level of change control they need to follow, they complete the process, and Strongpoint matches the change to the appropriate change records in NetSuite or Salesforce or your ticketing system (e.g. Jira or ServiceNow).



The backup path checks every change and decides the level of change control required. If Strongpoint can find the appropriate ticket, change approval or release approval, the change followed the organization policy (i.e. the happy path). If not, the changes are captured for clearance by the appropriate team. The result is a closed loop system in which the organization stands constantly ready for audit while knowing 90% of changes were cleared automatically.



The results can be dramatic: Strongpoint’s customers dramatically reduce administrative overhead by 4:1. Management effort is simultaneously reduced as only changes that Strongpoint determines should have human oversight will require scrutiny and the majority will not. Approval and release complexity can be adjusted to match the risk from zero for very low risk changes to rigorous release and rollback steps for the most complex changes. Admin and dev teams can check the level required in seconds either directly within Strongpoint or through Jira or ServiceNow integrations, which means that the vast majority of changes are done using the correct procedures and excellent information. The net result is:

1. Compliant change at far greater velocity
2. Higher levels of development productivity conducted by the most appropriate resources
3. Greater satisfaction from the business
4. “Auto-magic” compliance and “stress-free” audits

If your company is struggling with these challenges, you can take comfort you’re not alone. It is a widespread problem. This paper outlines a general approach; the specific approach for your company may be quite simple. Our team is ready to help you meet these challenges. We believe the real test of any solution is with your team and in your system with your data. We would welcome the opportunity to enable change for your business.

ABOUT STRONGPOINT

Strongpoint lets NetSuite and Salesforce users operate faster and safer by leveraging our world-class automatic documentation, intelligent change management, and compliance tools. Strongpoint saves organizations time, reduces risk, and drives productivity.

To learn more about how Strongpoint can power your change enablement needs, email at us demo@strongpoint.io or call us at 1-833-477-6468.