

Estate Valuations & Pricing Systems, Inc.

Infrastructure Change Process

Overview

EVP Systems maintains a technical infrastructure at the offices (in Santa Barbara and Woodland Hills, California) and at its data centers (in the A and B Availability Zones of the Amazon Web Services Virginia Region `us-east-1`). Changes to the physical or logical configuration of any of these infrastructures must be performed according to one of the following processes, based on the urgency of the change.

Changes to the company's software follows the process defined in the "Software Development Process" document.

Scheduled Changes

Record / Classify

All changes to the infrastructure are collected from employees' suggestions, technical need, or vendor-mandated updates by the EVP Systems IT Department. On a regular basis, these infrastructure changes are prioritized by urgency and feasibility by the IT Department, and presented to company senior management for initial sign-off. Those changes that pass muster with both the technical and managerial staff are slated for execution.

Assess

For each change, a technical assessment of the work required is done, including any impact on associated systems. If associated systems will be affected by the change, the modification request must be returned to the Classification step of the process, to re-assess the impact.

Plan

For each change, an execution plan is developed, including:

- Personnel required to best implement the change, and what role each will have
- Step-by-step guide to implementing the change
- Methods of testing the change outside of the company's production environment
- Impact on internal-facing services
- Impact on client-facing services
- Impact of the change on the company's information security infrastructure

- Duration of the impact on services, and the best time to begin implementation
- Step-by-step guide to rolling back the change should the execution be aborted or fail
- Method of validating that the change had the intended effect
- Company personnel and interested clients who should be notified after the change is complete
- Authorization of IT Department
- Authorization of senior company management

Test

The change is tested in a non-production environment, following the steps defined in the plan.

In the case of workstations configuration changes, a new installation is built and the change is executed on it before being rolled-out company-wide. In the case of data center changes, the modification is made to the testing environment before it is made to production. In all cases, the post-change non-production environment is thoroughly tested after the modification.

If, during testing, it is discovered that changes are required to the plan, the testing phase begins again after modifications are made.

Execute

The change is made to the company's production environment, following the steps defined in the plan and verified as correct during the test.

Validate

After the change has been implemented, validation must be performed to ensure that it had the intended effect.

Rollback (If Required)

If the infrastructure change does not follow the plan or validation of the change fails – either because of unanticipated complications, a technical failure, short-term client need, or any other reason—the change must be rolled back according to the steps in the plan, and the production environment returned to the state it was in before the implementation began.

In the case of a rollback, the implementation team should identify why the rollback was required, and what can be done to correct the issue in the future. The change is then returned to the assessment phase, to begin the process again, with new sign-off required.

Notification

After the completion of an infrastructure change, stakeholders internal to EVP Systems and any clients affected by the modification are notified by e-mail.

Emergency Changes

In the event a change to the company's technical infrastructure is required as soon as possible—because there is a problem that affects the availability or accuracy of the company's products or services—the same procedures should be followed as for a Scheduled Change, but at a vastly increased pace.

If the emergency change is prompted by client-facing services being down or degraded, clients are notified using one or more of the following method:

- Via Message Center. The EVP Office Message Center allows messages to be sent to EVP Office installations and presented to the user, either all at once or on a per-account or per-user basis.
- Via e-mail, specifically to the contact details EVP has in its client database. The URL of a page detailing the issue will be included in the message.
- Via website. A post will be made on the front page—and later stored in the archives—detailing the issue and how long the outage is expected to last.

To perform an emergency change, the issue should be identified, classified, and the potentially affected adjacent systems listed and understood. The assessment of the impact of the change on both the primary and ancillary systems should be discussed by technical staff and senior management. Once an approach has been agreed upon, the IT Department and senior management sign-off on an emergency change, and an implementation plan is formulated, complete with rollback process should it be needed. The plan is then executed, validated, and any notifications of changes are made, as appropriate.

Last Update: April 30, 2021