



SURVIVING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Most leaders encounter resistance to organization change. The resistance can take various forms. People can protest the implementation plan, the approach, your leadership, the font size used in change communications, and the decision to change in the first place. Try these tried and true approaches to managing resistance during change.

THREE TYPES OF RESISTANCE

ADAPTED FROM RICK MAURER



INFORMATIONAL

"I don't get it"

- Lack of information
- Lack of exposure
- Disagreement with the idea itself

In their heads: Thoughts, facts, figures, ideas

Explain the idea using language and examples that the person or group will understand

- Share facts and background information
- Present the business case



EMOTIONAL

"I don't like it"

- Perceived loss of control, status, or respect
- Feeling incompetent, isolated, or overwhelmed with change

In their fears: Concerns about loss of status, connections, security, control

Engage in conversation to identify the true causes of resistance

- Listen to emotions
- Ask questions
- Address assumptions
- Give time to process



RESONANCE

"I don't like you"

- Similarity to previous difficult situations
- History of mistrust
- Cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, or other differences
- Disagreement in values

In their past: Overtaken by previous experiences, entrenched ideas, assumptions, values

Repair burned bridges and build relationships

- Bring in a neutral mediator or facilitator
- Provide coaching with a trusted advisor
- Refer to the Employee Assistance Program



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ADAPTED FROM RICK MAURER AND HERB SHEPARD



1. Build strong working relationships before you start.



2. Don't do it alone. Build your posse of informal leaders willing to champion the change.



3. Stay focused and committed to the vision and goal.



4. Stay flexible and adaptable to tactics and techniques used to achieve the vision.



5. Stay calm and engaged. Listen. Ask questions. Don't take it personally.

MANAGING RESISTANCE IN THE MOMENT

ADAPTED FROM INGRID BENS

Someone says: "This meeting is a waste of time. We're all overloaded. We need to call this off right now!"

The Wrong Way to Handle It

Be defensive. Argue. Sell them on your point of view. Ignore their feelings. Barrel on despite objections.

Examples:

- "You agreed to come to the meeting so stop complaining and let's get to work."
- "I booked the room, worked really hard to prep, and it will take me months to find another time on the calendar, so we're not cancelling."

A Better Way

(1) Ask for feedback. Draw out the person's objections, assumptions, and rationales. Listen and paraphrase their concerns.

(2) Ask the person to identify possible solutions. Partner to find a satisfactory response.

Example: "I'm curious about why you think this meeting could be a waste of time. What makes you think that?"

[Pause, listen, paraphrase, and then continue.]

"What can we do to make sure this meeting isn't a waste of time?"