



MANAGING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Working on a change can be challenging. There is so much to plan and evaluate. Yet one of the major challenges of implementing a change, no matter how big or small, is resistance. Within all of the organizational strategies, it is essential to bring things down to the personal level in order to help assure your change succeeds. Here are **four major reasons** why people resist change and some key learning points on how to manage them:

Fear - This core emotion can paralyze people. Fear in the context of change is often around not knowing the what, why, and how of the change. In short it is about having open communication. It is normal to resist something that is perceived as negative. And, when people don't know or understand the change it is natural to feel negative. The key learning point here is to do your best to reduce fear by having an open communication process, and be available to listen to others' concerns.

Lack of trust: This is all about one's leadership style. If the leader/manager acts in a way that evokes mistrust, then any change effort is doomed. So what can a manager do? First, it is essential to be real, have an interest in people, and not be afraid to show one's vulnerability. Trust is built over a period of time and broken in a heartbeat. Every action a manager takes is looked at from his/her followers. When words and actions do not match, it breeds distrust. The key learning points are: know yourself, act with integrity even when it is challenging. This paves the way for more acceptance to change when it does occur.

Feeling Insecure/Vulnerable: When an organization goes through a large change effort, the first thing people think about is the loss of a job. It is unfortunate but this concern developed due to the necessary changes and restructuring that companies had to employ in order to have the proper economic returns. This is also one of the most difficult factors to manage. This lesson is simple but

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challenging: Be as honest as you can. If jobs are going to be lost, assure the transition takes place with caring and support. Enlist your team's support. Most people will give it to you when they know you are being honest. Act as a mentor. Listen. Ask questions. Give encouragement. Where you can, offer guidance.

Changing too much at once: There are competing issues. An organization needs to change in order to sustain itself yet the very change that is necessary could fail when there is too much, too soon. People need time to adjust to all changes. New types of normal need to be created. So the key learning point is to manage the change in chunks. Think of change in these buckets: plan, change, pause, debrief. If you follow this process, you will likely be much more successful at making your changes.

At the end of the day there are always going to be people who resist change no matter what you do. They are the people who enjoy a known routine. Those who are more adventurous and willing to step up will likely embrace your changes when the key learning points and lessons are put into practice every day.