

Change Management Strategies: Manage Resistance to Change

Resistance to change is natural and inevitable and must be managed through the use of education, communication, participation and negotiation, top management support and timing.

Decrease the Risk of Resistance Through.....

Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about the need for change since it is necessary to avoid resistance based on insufficient, incorrect or misleading information.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the reasons for the change and the benefits, "What's in it for them", while being empathic to the difficulties that the change will create for all levels. The specific details of the change should be communicated clearly, extensively, and done verbally and in writing. • Ensure that those who are affected by the change participate in the planning and implementation phases of the change process. Employees' concerns can be addressed as they occur. Employees are less likely to resist change when they are allowed to discuss and agree on who will do what during and after the change process.
Right Mix of Followers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze your stakeholder group to determine the type of followers.
Diversity of the Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the right team mix to increase innovation potential. • Ensure the team has diverse but overlapping knowledge and skills to reduce the tendency towards conformity (low diversity) or difficulty developing shared goals (high diversity).
Administrative Support and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training, resources, including counseling services to deal with the stress of change and autonomy to make the change. If possible, maintain job security to minimize fear.
Timing of Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement at an opportunistic time. • Pace change so that it is manageable and not rushed.
Align Actions with New Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give consistent messages.



Manage Emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what you are trying to achieve so that you can ask the right questions. • Respond to emotions through open discussion on feelings of loss and what contributes to those feelings (e.g. shared power, collective decision-making, discipline specific versus interdependency as a team member). • Listen to what they are saying about the situation and the feelings that they are having. • Manage emotions in groups by group norms that encourage reasons for feelings rather than emotional outbursts.
Celebrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and celebrate short term wins throughout the change process. Let others know where the change is working.

(Bridges, 2003; Kotter, 1995; MacPhee, 2007; Williams, Kondra, & Vibert, 2004)

Human Side of Change

What types of followers contribute to successful change and innovation?

- 1). Innovators look forward to change. These individuals are well connected to knowledge and innovation opportunities. They are not always well connected within the organization so their ideas need to be championed by early adopters.
- 2). Early adopters help make change possible. They are respected by their peers and are sought out for advice and information about the change/innovations. They inspire others to follow the idea and have the power to make things happen. Although they have gained the trust of others, not everyone will follow them in the beginning.
- 3). Early majority prefer the status quo but do not want to be left behind; therefore, they support the change. These individuals take ideas and adopt it to their situations. Their efforts will lead the way for more innovation diffusion.
- 4). Late majority are the last to adopt the change. They strive to maintain the status quo and are often suspicious of the change. They take a “watch and see” stance. They tend to change when successful outcomes are more certain.
- 5). Traditionalists are rooted in the current routines and do not convert until innovation becomes the status quo.

“There needs to be a 15% to 20% critical mass of innovators, adopters, and early majority personalities to tip the scale towards innovative change” (MacPhee, 2007, p.407).

