

One Point Lesson | *Proactively Managing Resistance*

Purpose: The goal with managing resistance is to minimize the disruption that resistance can cause during a change process.

Resistance comes from individuals who are not yet willing to fully support the change. Resistance isn't "bad." In fact, it is a natural response to change and leaders and change champions play a key role in helping individuals move to a more constructive space.

Be Ready

It's best to have a plan for how to handle resistance before you experience it. Be proactive by considering from whom, and in what form resistance is expected. That will better prepare you as a leader for addressing it before it impacts outcomes.

- Who do you think may resist the change?
- What reaction do you anticipate from the individual(s)? (see below)
- What questions do you expect to get about this situation? How will you respond?
- If you don't know how to respond, what will you do to be ready?
- How can you best connect with team members, from whom you anticipate resistance? (Resistance is a symptom of something deeper so 1:1 conversations will likely be required.)

Resistance Behaviors

- *Vocalized disappointment about the change; how it impacts them, or conflicts with their values.*
- *Low productivity*
- *Victim language*
- *"Complaints"*
- *Uncertainty and confusion about the future.*
- *Mistrust in the roadmap for change.*

How to Handle Them

- *Speak to the new future direction of the organization with enthusiasm*
- *Be clear and concise about your expectations for them and the team during this transition*
- *Keep them focused on what is in their control*
- *Recognize behaviors that contribute to the actualization of the change as soon as you see them*
- *Be transparent about progress and close the loop on questions.*
- *Conduct 1:1's as needed*

Questions for talking with team members who are resisting:

- *What about this change do you not understand?*
- *What do you anticipate being the most challenging part of this change for you? Why?*
- *What will you need to see or hear to know we're making progress together?*
- *What support do you need from me?*

Payoff: When you are better prepared to manage resistance, you can spend more time on the things that you're your team focused on outcomes and moving forward. This has a real return on your time, resources and investment.