

Proactively Managing Resistance

One Point Lesson



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	How to Handle Them
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.