

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE



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Leadership is about change! But what if the leader is confronted with broad-based resistance to change? Resistance to change manifests itself in many ways. The best tool for those responsible for change is the ability to identify the source or cause of the resistance in any situation. And then to come up with a strategy or plan for each case. In my experience, live events with a high degree of interaction are indispensable.

Loss of control

Change clashes with autonomy and often causes people feeling they are losing control of their territory. The feeling that we can control our own destiny is often the first thing that is threatened when we are confronted with a possible change. If you are smart, you allow employees the freedom to make their own choices within a certain framework. You involve them in the planning and you give them ownership.

Excessive uncertainty

If change feels like 'walking blindfolded along the edge of the abyss' then no one will get warm. A person naturally likes to stay where he is, especially when a new course has an unknown final destination. We prefer the certainty that the previously known offers - even if that certainty is far from ideal - over the uncertainty of the unknown. To be able to cope with this reluctance, a sense of security and security is needed, as well as an inspiring vision. It is up to managers to chart and plan the process of change in clear, simple steps.

Surprise!!!

Most resistance to change usually arises when people are given certain measures without any preparation, without having a clear picture of the consequences. Moreover, it is much easier to say no than to say yes. It is better for managers to resist the tendency to secretly shape the change process and then show the entire plan in one go. It is much better to plant seeds carefully in the sense of accurately spreading hints and clues to find and collect input.

Does everything change?

Change is meant to make a difference, but what difference actually? People are creatures of habit. A certain routine leads to automaticity. But change forces us to become aware of those routines. Too much change in one go distracts us and confuses us. You must therefore ensure that you keep the number of irrelevant changes that your central program results in to an absolute minimum.

Reputational damage

By definition you say goodbye to the past with change. The employees who are associated with the past - the latest version, say - the version that did not work well are expected to offer the most resistance. Because in their experience they apparently were wrong for years. Managers would do well to honor the blessings of the past and thereby safeguard the dignity of those who feel connected to the past. In the meantime, it is of course obvious that the world is changing. It thus becomes easier to let go of the past and continue.

WE GET DISTRACTED FROM TOO MUCH CHANGE AT ONCE

Concerns about competence

Will I be able to do it? People resist change the moment they feel stupid about it. They will publicly wonder whether, for example, the new software will work or whether the digitalization of the CRM system is such a sensible solution, while in fact they are deeply wondering whether their own knowledge is not outdated. Care in that case for exuberant coaching, training, mentors and support systems. Sometimes it is advisable to let the old and new systems function side by side even during a certain period. This makes the transition easier to accept.

TOO MUCH CHANGE IN ONE GO DISTRACTS AND CONFUSES US

Increasing workload

This is a challenge for everyone. Change is indeed more work! The employees who are closely involved with the change process - in the sense of design and testing - are often overloaded with work. Managers should allow these employees to fully focus - for a short or longer period - on their work in the change process. Or reward these employees extra (often with small things). They deserve extra reward and recognition! Because the sacrifices to do their work as well as possible are often unknown and are rarely noticed.

Bad memories

The spirit of the past is always lurking. You hardly notice its presence, if at all, as long as the organization is 'left alone'. But the moment you seek cooperation for something new or something else, the ghost appears. Old wounds are not as well healed as was assumed. Unprocessed feelings of powerlessness and discontent play out. Managers must pay attention to healing these old wounds before a new course can be sailed.

Real threat

Here it is about the real pain and how you deal with it. Resistance to change is partly fueled by the threat that it brings. Jobs can be lost, investments can be frozen. The best thing managers can do in this case is to communicate quickly, transparently and efficiently. For example, it is better to implement one strong wave of cuts and to support that wave as much as possible than to spread out the cuts over a too long period.

Of course, as a manager, you cannot make everyone happy. But it is a healthy ambition to minimize the inconvenience of change for everyone. A thorough diagnosis of the causes that impede change is a first step in the right direction.