

Eight Common Reasons Why People Resist Change: Are You Resisting for Any of These Reasons?

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1. **Habit:** Most people enjoy routines in their lives. When something or someone upsets their routine, a typical response is to resist.
2. **Uncertainty:** Many people fear the unknown. When they don't have enough information, they play out worst-case scenarios in their minds.
3. **Personal Loss:** Often a person feels s/he will lose something of value. Economic considerations, change in job status, a physical relocation, new responsibilities, new reporting structures, realignments, and reorganizations are common causes of
4. anxiety. When people are asked to produce more work with less support, they often resist.
5. **Misunderstanding:** Sometimes the method of communication leads to a poor understanding of the reason for the change.
6. **Lack of trust:** When people mistrust management or the official explanation given for a change, acceptance comes with caution, if at all.
7. **Peer Pressure:** Powerful social pressures are brought into play when change threatens to disrupt the current group structure and comfortable working relationships.
8. **Too little time to adapt:** When the pace seems too fast or too excessive, most people object.
9. **Short-timers syndrome:** When people are thinking of leaving or are close to retirement, they often prefer the status quo.

Coming to Terms with Change: Moving From Resistance to Acceptance

Generally we have four predictable responses to change that we do not initiate. These responses are:

1. **Denial:** To deny it means we don't buy it. During this response it is common to observe people focusing on the "old way" of doing things. Some people withdraw, while others talk about "another program of the month" that will soon be changed in favor of something new.
2. **Active Resistance:** During this response we may see anger, blame, and attempts to impede the progress. Open disagreement and even lobbying against change.
3. **Passive Resistance:** Using subtle efforts to slow the pace of change. They may appear supportive on the surface, but sabotage efforts behind the scene.

4. **Acceptance or Cautious Acceptance:** occurs when people start focusing on the future. People begin talking again about positive things- new responsibilities, new working relationships, and new ideas. They will say things like: **"I'm not so sure about this,"** but I can live with that.

Adapting Successfully to Organizational Change

1. Admit concerns, but don't act out of anger.
2. Communicate, communicate, communicate
3. Acknowledge the challenges-look for what's positive.
4. Ask questions of appropriate people. Listen to explanations.
5. Keep working. Do something productive instead of nothing. Get work done accurately and on time.
6. Give new ideas and new people a chance.
7. Practice effective stress management strategies. Exercise, do something you enjoy, use moderation in all that you do.
8. Upgrade knowledge and skills as necessary to remain a valuable asset.
9. Utilize appropriate professional resources if necessary (EAP, Physician, Counselor).
10. Stand out by fitting in, in a positive manner.