Leader Toolkit
Resistance to change

We are **INSPIRATIONAL** leaders, **DEDICATED TO QUALITY**.

We inspire each other to be brave and bold and stretch ourselves to improve our performance. We lead through creativity and innovation.

Why use this tool

We can only deal with resistance if we know how to identify it and understand the reasons for it. We can then develop a plan to use to influence groups (stakeholders) impacted by the change initiative and win their support.

When to use this tool

Use this tool early on in the change initiative and whenever a new source of resistance is identified.

As you approach implementation, resistance is likely to increase.

How to use this tool

1. List the stakeholders

2. Select one of the groups (stakeholders) impacted by the change and **list all the reasons** the members of the group might be resisting the change.

3. **Determine the level of resistance** (high, medium, low) that each 'reason' represents.

   - A rating of 'high' means there is a high level of resistance due to that 'reason' and the team must do something to deal with it or the success of the change will be severely affected and could fail.
   - A rating of 'low' means there is a low level of resistance due to that 'reason' – the success of the change will be only slightly impacted if this resistance is not dealt with.

4. For each reason with a 'high' rating, **develop a way for dealing with this resistance** that includes a specific who/what/when action plan.

   Refer to *Ways of dealing with different reasons for resistance*

Tips

- We often assume that *once we know* the 'attitude' of a group to change, we are ready to build the right plan for winning their support. Knowing is not always enough, we need enough of an understanding of **WHY** people are resistant to change to **make sure what we choose to do about it will be effective**
- Remember all resistance is valuable because it gives you important **information about why people are saying 'no' to a change**. When you can identify the major reasons people say 'no', you can address resistance in a constructive, problem solving way.
- Expect resistance levels to rise and fall throughout the change and adapt plans accordingly.

Resistance to change

Think through the nature of the resistance you will run into and build a plan to remove or lessen the resistance

1. List members of the group (stakeholders)	2. List their individual and group reasons for resisting the change initiative	3. Note level of resistance (H, M, L)[1]	4. Write down your way of dealing with the resistance Plan and note WHO will implement the strategy and HOW. Refer to *Ways of dealing with different reasons for resistance*

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[1]   **High** means that the team must do something to address the resistance or the success of the change will be severely impacted.

Low means that the success of the change will be only slightly affected if this resistance is not addressed.

Resistance to change

Ways of dealing with different reasons for resistance.

Reason	Description	Tactic
Loss of control	Feeling out of control can cause people to feel anxious. They may resist in an attempt to get back control.	Encourage participation in the process in order to give people ownership. As they seek to own ideas and new initiatives, they are more likely to commit to actions regarding the change.
Excess uncertainty	Change seems dangerous, the next step is unfamiliar, comfort is impossible.	Make it clear what we *do* know or what is *not* changing. Focus on one step at a time. Dividing change into a number of small steps makes it seem less threatening.
Surprise	Shocked by decision, without preparation. Have not had time to mentally prepare for the impact of the change.	Provide information to build commitment to the change. Provide information of when they can expect further information.
Difference effect	The future state may be so unfamiliar that they cannot grasp it.	Aim to minimise the number of differences introduced - keep as many routines in place as possible. Use analogies and stories to paint the picture of the future and illustrate the steps to get there.
Loss of face	Leaving their comfort zone and taking risks comes with the potential to be humiliated or come to be less highly respected.	Reward people for letting go and moving on – acknowledging the bravery in this action. Explain why the old way is no longer appropriate.
Concerns about future competence	People may have spent years becoming expert in the old way of working. Their performance is likely to be affected, at least for a while, if the new way of working does not require the old skills and knowledge.	May need education and training (and especially on the job coaching) in order to master new skills. Provide positive reinforcement, explain that everyone will take a while to get used to the new way of working and where they can go for help.
Ripple effects	Change disrupts other projects or personal activities.	Help people to manage undesirable ripple effects.
More work	Change often creates more work and people don't want to put in the extra effort.	Provide additional support, recognition or compensation for extra work.
Past resentments	Change causes past resentments and underlying problems to resurface.	Provide an opportunity to raise complaints and criticisms before helping them to move on to accept the current change.
Sometimes the threat is real	Most changes mean that people will lose something they value. For example status, influence or comfort.	Acknowledge the losses and avoid false promises. If people are going to lose something they value, inform them early. Act quickly and with integrity.