

Resistance to Change: Reasons and Strategies

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- 1. People don't know what to do. (lack of knowledge)**
 - Share information with everyone involved.
 - Provide reading and set up study groups.
 - Conduct knowledge-building seminars.
 - Hold question and answer sessions.
 - Share inside knowledge and reach outward for expertise.
- 2. People don't know how to do it. (lack of skills/abilities)**
 - Provide high quality, up-front training.
 - Provide ongoing skill-building training sessions.
 - Provide opportunities for feedback and coaching.
 - Sponsor problem-solving groups.
 - Encourage visitations to other classrooms and schools so people can see the innovation in action.
- 3. People don't know why. (the purpose)**
 - Explain the rationale.
 - Talk about where it has made a difference—cite examples from practice and research.
 - Explain where it fits in the bigger picture.
 - Articulate anticipated outcomes.
- 4. People are not involved in decision making.**
 - Provide opportunities for involvement in decisions, learn a variety of decision-making strategies (consultation, majority rules, consensus).
 - Share the leadership among faculty members.
 - Involve staff in the generation of ideas before making decisions.
 - Establish a collaborative decision making model that spells out who makes what decisions and how decisions will be made.
- 5. People are satisfied with the way things are.**
 - Create an alternative future picture. (build creative tension)
 - Clarify and raise your expectations. (walk your talk)
 - Take a hard, honest look at the data. (results)
 - Reward change and risk taking.
- 6. Workload and work pressure**
 - Get focused on common goals.
 - Periodically conduct a school review- make decisions around what you should “continue”, “stop”, and “start” doing.
 - Reorganize human resources. (Align work with people in an equitable way.)
 - Promote more teamwork and a collaborative work culture.
 - Support individuals under pressure.

7. People can't see the benefits of change.

- Do a cost benefit analysis of the change.
- Conduct a S.W.O.T. (identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).
- Be up-front about the disadvantages.
- Provide real life stories and examples where benefits have been achieved.
- Identify strategies to counteract costs.
- Collect data and monitor implementations

8. People don't see the changing agent or advocate as credible.

- Match the innovation with knowledge and motivated change agents.
- Involve people who are respected by their colleagues.
- Choose people who have a track record to manage and facilitate change projects.
- Give change agents hard feedback.
- Ensure change agents receive high quality training on the innovation and the change process.

9. People don't experience support.

- Conduct a human resources needs assessment.
- Develop an implementation plan that builds in human and material resources.
- Provide recognition and rewards.
- Address the time issues and make changes.
- Provide incentives for change.
- Monitor implementations.

10. The innovation conflicts with the school culture.

- Talk about the innovation or change-establish how to gradually introduce changes.
- Talk about the school culture-how it can support the change. Ask "How will current beliefs, expectations, or behavior problems block the change?"
- Identify forces for and against change in the school.
- Conduct a problem-solving group on implementation of the change.
- Involve key cultural players in the initiation and implementation process.

11. People are worried about failure.

- Promote a risk-taking mind set-use it as a guiding principle.
- Help people accept and understand that with change comes increased anxiety-it's okay and it's natural.
- Conduct "anticipation meetings." Talk about the implications or consequences of failing; identify assumptions and unfounded fears.
- Allow people an opportunity to express fears-let them talk it out. Ask "What is the worst case scenario? What is the best-case scenario?"

12. People have a negative experience with change.

- Encourage people to talk about what happened in the past.
- Ask people to identify how this change is similar and how the change is different from others in the past.
- Find out what will build their trust—act on their wants and needs.
- Build their confidence that this will turn out differently.
- Build in monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure feedback.
- Discuss, "What will happen if we don't implement the change?"