

5 Ways to Overcome Resistance to Change

I'm a change addict.

Maybe that's why I consume self-reflective information through books, blogs and videos. I love the prospect of improving. When something doesn't pan out, I'm quickly ready to move on so we can try this again... and hopefully get it right this time!

My love for change means I have the ability to move and adapt quickly. This can be a good thing.

But it has it's downside.

As a leader, my love for change doesn't translate to everyone on my team. I could stack the deck in my favor by hiring people like me that love change. But then we'd never get anything done. We'd develop a reputation of starting things with great excitement only do abandon the project half-way through because something more fascinating came along.

No. The answer isn't to hire a bunch of change-mongers. I'm a better person because of the people that I get to work alongside. They make me better.

Some are highly structured and methodical. They help me process details and identify pitfalls before I step in them.

Some are filled with fiery passion and bolster my spirit in such a way that I'm willing to chase after the craziest goals.

Some are incredibly gifted at navigating relationships and reminding me that compassion is a critical leadership gift.

I'm better with them than without them.

But change is inevitable in our world. And I have to remind myself that my love for change doesn't always translate to those around me. *(I mean, let's be honest... even I don't like change when it's not my idea. But that's another confession.)*

So, how do I successfully lay the groundwork for change?

Here are 5 steps I take to help lead those around me to prepare for change. And it all comes down to intentional communication.

Answer the Why

Sometimes it's incredibly obvious as to why the change is needed. Sometimes it's not so obvious. What's obvious to you may not be obvious to them. Don't assume they see what you see. Tell them why. The bigger the change... the more you should share the why.

Shape Expectations

Give them insight into the steps you are taking to implement change. Even if they are steps only you are accountable to accomplish. Let them see what you are doing. Feeling informed goes a long way toward building trust.

Make sure they know what is expected of them. The people I get to work with have a high desire to accomplish. They don't want to meet expectations... they want to exceed them. And they are better equipped to exceed expectations when they know what they are in the first place.

Define Desired Outcomes

Tell them what you want to see when it's all said and done. Make sure everyone knows. When those around you know what you hope the end product looks like, they can help you get it there... whether you ask them to or not.

Define Timelines

I'm an open-ended kinda' chic. I'm not a fan of boundaries. To me, boundaries are like 'Yield' signs... not 'Stop' signs.

So, I don't tend towards defining things such as deadlines. This wars against my high sense of urgency and need to get things done yesterday. I'm weirdly schizophrenic that way.



Despite all this, we live in a world of deadlines and timelines. I do better when I define an expected timeline for those around me. When I communicate when this change should be complete my team processes the change better.

Communicate Often

Everything from update emails, to the "Hey, by the way..." hallway conversations. I've learned that keeping my team in the loop goes a long way toward communicating value and helping them work through the change.

I wish I could say that I've always known these things and have always prepared others for change effectively. But the truth is... I've learned these things from bumping my head plenty of times.

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