

Resistance to change in organizations essay sample

[Business](#), [Organization](#)



It's not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change. ~ Charles Darwin

Organizational changes are changes that are made in the overall framework of a company, such as restructuring in departments, changes in policies, or changes in culture. It directly affects all departments, from the entry level employee to management. Any business in today's fast-moving environment that is looking for the pace of change to slow is likely to be sorely disappointed. In fact, businesses should embrace change. Change is important for any organization because, without change, businesses would likely lose their competitive edge and fail to meet the needs of loyal customers. However, employees and even organizations as a whole, tend to resist change some time or the other. Since change is an essential part of the development of the organization, managers must be aware of the causes of this resistance and therefore implement the appropriate techniques to overcome this, whether it be on an organizational level or an individual level. Self interest; losing something of value is perhaps something anyone will resist.

Employees typically resist any kind of change they believe will cause them, to wind up losing personally even if it is for the greater good. They either stand to lose pay, power or prestige. Everyone wants to know how the change will affect them personally. They also resist change to put themselves at ease and avoid taking a risk. They fool themselves into believing everything will all work out someday by itself just so they would not have to go through the process of change. Additionally, other employees resist change for reasons such as inflexibility and uncertainty. They will not tolerate change, because they have a vested interest in maintaining the

status quo. It does not matter how pellucid the benefits of change will be to the organization. Also, if employees lack proper information about the future of the organization and about future events that will lead to significant change, they will become fearful of the unknown and naturally resist change. Uncertainty threatens those employees who have a low tolerance for change and those who fear anything that is not routine. They do not know how they will be affected by the change.

They are concerned about whether they will measure up to the new process, or if they are equipped to handle the new technology in the manner required of them. Not knowing what might happen, often leads to heightened anxiety and resisting change is one of the anxiety-reducing actions they employ. Moreover, employees become distrustful of management's intentions in implementing programmes that will lead to change. They may have had previous experience with managers who attempted and failed in carrying out exercises in implementing change in a particular department. The employees view these weak attempts as failure and as a result, have a negative outlook on patterns they cannot trust. They therefore resist change that resembles past experiences that involves managers whom they could not trust. Also, other employees resist change because they are afraid to leave their comfort zones and go after what they really want. It would force them to stretch their comfort to accommodate the new methods involved.

In fact people find it natural to put things off that scare them, and sidestep the goals, that require them to step out of their comfort zones and take a risk. They resist leaving their comfort zones, even though departure would

mean certain upward mobility for them. For example, an employee is offered a promotion in another department but with this promotion, he now has to change his uniform, his working hours, his location as well as his co workers. Instead of embracing change and accepting his new responsibilities, he preferred to stay at his current location, with his " friends" and all that he presently has, just so he would not have to make the sacrifice to go out of his way to change so many customary practices in his life. Aside from individual resistance, organizations as a whole also resist changes. Some organizations are so designed that they resist new ideas. The major reasons for this type of resistance are : threat to power; upper management considers change a threat to their power, authority and position.

They fear that new policies imposed for instance by the government, may result in them losing their status. Also implementations such as participative decision making and self managed work teams affect their purpose. Additionally, companies resist change in their organizational structure. Especially bureaucratic structures where jobs are narrowly defined and flow of information is stressed to from top to bottom. This is usually because change in one part of these structures cant happen without causing disruption in all levels. Other popular reasons to resist change are resource constraints and sunk costs. If employees do accept change, organizations must have the resources to accommodate the new changes. For example if training agents are hired, the company needs to have sufficient financial resources to pay them and also pay their employees. If they are not equipped with enough resources, they will resist change. Also, it creates a

problem for top management because a lot of capital would have already been invested in fixed assets and training for employees for their current jobs.

Therefore, It would all go to waste if change is implemented, so again the organization resists change. Change in the organization is very important because change can and does affect the organization at different levels and in different ways. However, overcoming resistance to change is not a simple and straight forward process. Overcoming resistance, tests managers' interpersonal skills, since it requires them to employ a variety of techniques to soothe the fears and bolster the confidence of employees. There are several ways in which this can be achieved. Participation and involvement; employees need to be involved in the decision making process. It is not likely they will resist a change which they were part of deciding. It is important to get all opinions and objections out in the open so that management can clear up any misunderstandings and remove doubt from their mind.

Management's goal should be gaining cooperation at this point so as to increase organizational commitment and therefore overcoming resistance to change.

Many times, the problem stems from poor communication. Inaccurate information is passed through the organization causing employees to misunderstand. The reasons for change must be communicated clearly and without ambiguity. Effective communication can help clear up fear of unknown elements. An established pattern of communication should also be established so that managers can send out information directly to their

workers and they can get feedback in a timely manner. This would help persuade employees to accept and understand changes. However, if employees are adamant with resisting, management can engage in negotiation and agreement where the cost and benefit must be balanced for the benefit of all parties. If this method fails, managers can resort to manipulation of information where management twists and distorts the facts to make them appear more attractive, withholding negative information and manufacturing false rumours to get employees to accept change.

This however, may not be considered ethical. As a last resort, managers may resort to coercion, which may be in the form of threats involving loss of jobs and withholding of promotions. Employment of this tactic is never a pleasant process and usually produces results which are desirable neither by management nor employees. In conclusion, change in its many manifestations is inevitable, but can be resolved in many ways, if managers make use of proper execution of their functions of planning, leading, organizing and controlling to effectively manage resistance to change in the organizational structure. All organizations suffer from inertia to some degree at some time or another when they try to maintain the status quo. Change however, requires effort and sometimes it requires considerable effort. Employees and organizations, who are most resistant to change, tend to be those who are long-serving employees and well established organizations who have a lot of experience and customary practices. It is therefore in management's interest to assist these employees and all others in overcoming their fear of change.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

* <http://www.entrepreneurshipinbox.com/223/factors-that-causes-resistance-to-organizational-change/> * <http://ezinearticles.com/?Strategies-For-Overcoming-Resistance-To-Organizational-Change&id=866833> * <http://www.mbaknol.com/management-concepts/causes-of-resistance-to-organizational-change/> * <http://www.mbaknol.com/management-concepts/ways-to-overcome-resistance-to-organizational-change/>