

Important changes in major league baseball

[Sport & Tourism](#), [Baseball](#)



The American organization Major League Baseball (MLB), focuses on the importance of the value of a player to a team. Traditionally, the MLB assessed players using professional talent scouts. The assessment was based on future potential and considered the batting average and earned run average (Palmer, Dunford, & Buchanan, 2017). Traditionally in the MLB the talent scouts were extremely important to assess players and draft future players. In 2003, the Oakland Athletics general manager (GM) Billy Beane proposes a new method to assess players. Beane hired economics graduate Peter Brand to incorporate sabermetrics to the MLB. Unlike the traditional practices, sabermetrics focused on past performance including on-base average and slugging percentage (Palmer, Dunford, & Buchanan, 2017). To incorporate a statistic-based approach to MLB assessments, organizational change needed to happen. Traditionally, the MLB hired professionals to evaluate and assess performance unlike sabermetrics which is statically based. Beane's approach caused major resistance to organizational change however, eventually paid off in the long run with a winning season and revolutionized the assessments of the MLB.

Resistance to Organizational Change

When Beane hired Brand to introduce sabermetrics to the baseball world, there was initially high resistance. The resistance came mostly from Oakland talent scout professionals, and Oakland's manager Art Howe. Talent scouts resisted because of a conflict in interest, Howe did not believe in the change nor understand it.

Behaviors demonstrating resistance

Oakland's talent scout professionals resisted because incorporating sabermetrics would threaten their careers. Talent scouts held responsibility for evaluating team players and their future potential however, incorporating sabermetrics would decline the need of professional assessment. In terms of organizational development, the talent scouts resisted change because it was not in their interests. Per research on organizational resistance, sometimes stakeholders resist change because it directly effects their job position and believe the change will have a domino effect (Dunican and Keaster, 2015). Introducing a new method of assessing players was not in the talent scouts' interests and therefore they were actively against change. If Beane provided a solution for the current talent scout agents, it is possible they would have been more approving of sabermetrics.

The manager Art Howe was also actively against the change. Howe did not believe in the change to use sabermetrics nor think it is worth it. Howe preferred the established traditional assessment and could not see any benefits from using sabermetrics. If Beane communicated more with Howe about sabermetrics, it is possible there would have been less resistance. Per a research study on the relationship between resistance to change and improving communication Simoes and Esposito stated, " While communication was becoming highly dialogic the resistance to change was descending" (p. 327). Improving the communication while undergoing change can help stakeholders understand better. Understanding the change more may have decreased Howe's resistance.

The role of emotions. Emotions play a large role when organizations undergo change. Emotions can cause someone to resist or be in favor of an organizational change. Per a study on the role of emotions with <https://assignbuster.com/important-changes-in-major-league-baseball/>

organizational change Smollan and Sayers states, " It was evident that those leading change tended to view their organizations as having a positive affective culture, but those managing change or simply being recipients of it, had more varied perception" (p. 450). Based on this research, change holders typically associate the change in a positive manner and stakeholders often feel negative emotions. In Moneyball, this is evident. The change leader Beane and stakeholders such as talent scouts are both emotionally invested. Beane cares about the future of his team and strongly believes sabermetrics is the future of baseball. Since Beane does not have prior history that sabermetrics works in baseball, his emotions is what drives the vision. Throughout Moneyball, Beane's emotion is strong and causes aggressive behaviors. Beane's emotion causes him to not think of all stakeholders involved in the change such as talent scouts. Talent scouts are also extremely emotionally invested. Sabermetrics could threaten their job security and therefore cause an emotional burden and fear of job loss. In Moneyball, emotions play a large role on both sides of the story because they are both highly invested.\n

Overcoming resistance

\nIn Moneyball, Beane overcomes manager resistance with aggressive force. Beane decides to trade the players that Howe is favorable of so his players can get in the game. Trading Howe's players was an aggressive move on Beane's end. He felt so strongly that sabermetrics would work that he was not thinking about the effect on players. Although, the decision to trade players was manipulative it did pay off with a winning season. Change managers can overcome resistance directly with manipulation and co-optation

however, it can cause future issues for those who were effected (Palmer, Dunford, & Buchanan, 2017). In Beane's case, the aggressive forced paid off however, he might have problems with Howe in the future.\n

Lessons learned

\nIn Moneyball, a positive lesson learned is that a strong vision can drive an organizational change. Beane was invested into the change and truly believed it would happen. His vision payed off because sabermetrics was a success. A negative lesson learned is that strong emotions may cause aggressive or manipulative actions. In Beane's case, his emotions for the change caused him to react with aggression and force. As a change leader, this can lead to problems in the future to those affected.\n

Conclusion

\nOverall, organizational change can cause resistance. If stakeholders do not understand the change or feel threatened they are likely to resist. Howe and Oakland's talent scouts are examples of resistance to change in an organizational setting. Introducing a new systematic approach sabermetrics would revolutionize the MLB however, it had downsides including job-loss. Organizational change can often be positive however, it is important to remember who will be effected and how. In Moneyball, Beane failed to consider stakeholders involved and in result caused aggressive behavior. Change leaders can improve by increasing communication and considering stakeholders involved in the change.