

From Resistance to Resilience

Leading Change in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Nicole Dillon Goldberg, PhD

The Opportunity and the Challenge

- AI is a strategic imperative, not just a technical tool.
- Despite potential, many organizations struggle with adoption.
- Key Question: Why do some organizations resist?

Understanding Threat Rigidity Theory

- Under perceived threat, organizations become rigid.
- Risk-averse behavior increases; innovation declines.
- AI adoption often triggers these defense mechanisms

Key Considerations

- Transparent communication reduces ambiguity.
- Skill-building and empowerment decrease fear.
- Leadership style directly influences adaptability.

Implications for Leaders

- Communicate a compelling vision.
- Lead with empathy and credibility.
- Model learning behaviors and embrace experimentation.

Case Study Example

- Tech firm faced resistance to an AI tool.
- Leadership reframed AI as support, not replacement.
- Employee involvement led to a successful rollout.

Relevance to Business Education

- Business leaders must lead through complexity.
- Future curricula must include change management and AI ethics.
- Students must practice applying theory in dynamic contexts.

Enhancing the Student Experience

- Real-world case simulations applying leadership strategies.
- Hands-on use of AI tools like ChatGPT and Tableau AI.
- Reflective journals exploring values and change responses.
- Team projects assessing AI readiness and change plans.
- Interactive discussions to apply leadership frameworks.

Student Engagement Example

- Scenario: You're leading a team skeptical of an AI tool.
- Prompt: How would you build buy-in?
- Discuss in small groups or online forums.

Closing Reflections

- AI is about people, not just algorithms.
- Leadership is the bridge between fear and innovation.
- With the right approach, resistance becomes resilience.

Q&A

Thank You



**SAN FRANCISCO BAY
UNIVERSITY**

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS