

Resistance Management Framework

Resistance is a natural part of any change process. Managed well, it provides valuable insight into concerns and opportunities for improvement. This framework helps leaders identify, understand, and address resistance constructively, turning obstacles into engagement.

1. Purpose of This Tool

- ☐ Identify the causes and types of resistance to change.
- ☐ Provide a structured approach to manage resistance proactively.
- ☐ Build understanding and trust between leaders and employees.
- ☐ Minimise disruption and ensure sustained adoption.
- ☐ Create a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

Tip: Resistance is rarely about the change itself - it's often about how the change is managed.

2. Change Overview

Field	Details
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Change Initiative	
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Sponsor	
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Change Manager	
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Affected Teams	
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Date Prepared	
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- ☐ Record project details for clarity and alignment.

Tip: Different teams may show different forms of resistance - tailor your approach accordingly.

3. Types of Resistance

Type	Description	Typical Indicators
Emotional	Based on fear, anxiety, or uncertainty.	Complaints, frustration, lack of trust.
Rational	Driven by logic or practicality.	Concerns about workload, timing, or resources.
Behavioural	Expressed through actions or avoidance.	Missed deadlines, low participation, non-compliance.
Passive	Quiet resistance, often unspoken.	Silence in meetings, disengagement.
Active	Open opposition or challenge.	Arguing, lobbying others, refusal to comply.

☐ Identify which types of resistance are emerging within your teams.

Tip: The earlier resistance is recognised, the easier it is to resolve.

4. Root Cause Analysis

Source of Resistance	Description	Underlying Cause	Impact (H/M/L)	Example
Communication	Lack of clear or timely updates.	Misunderstanding of objectives.		
Leadership	Inconsistent support or visibility.	Perceived lack of commitment.		
Process	Change seen as adding unnecessary work.	Poor design or unclear benefits.		
Culture	Fear of failure or risk aversion.	Previous negative change experiences.		
Skills	Lack of training or capability.	Fear of being unable to adapt.		

☐ Assess each resistance source to identify trends and high-impact issues.

Tip: Ask “why” repeatedly until the true cause becomes clear.

5. Resistance Monitoring Log

Team / Individual	Type of Resistance	Severity (H/M/L)	Identified Cause	Current Status	Action Required	Owner
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☐ Use this log to track resistance patterns over time.

Tip: Focus on the most influential individuals or groups first.

6. Response Strategies

Situation	Recommended Action	Example
Lack of information or understanding	Provide clear, concise communication and FAQs.	Share a change summary via intranet or team meeting.
Emotional resistance or fear	Listen empathetically and acknowledge concerns.	Conduct open Q&A sessions with leaders.
Rational objections	Offer data and evidence supporting the change.	Share pilot results or case studies.
Active opposition	Engage through one-to-one discussions.	Assign senior leader sponsorship for dialogue.
Persistent blockers	Address privately and escalate if necessary.	Formal discussion with HR or management.

☐ Match response actions to the type of resistance shown.

Tip: Most resistance softens when people feel heard and informed.

Notes

7. Leadership and Manager Actions

- ☐ Model calm and confident behaviour under pressure.
- ☐ Provide reassurance without minimising challenges.
- ☐ Share personal experiences of adapting to change.
- ☐ Recognise and reward openness and constructive feedback.
- ☐ Avoid defensiveness - treat resistance as useful data.

Tip: Managers are the first line of defence against uncertainty. Equip them to lead with empathy and clarity.

8. Communication and Engagement Tactics

Tactic	Purpose	Frequency	Owner
Listening Sessions	Create safe spaces for open discussion.	Weekly	
FAQ Updates	Address recurring questions transparently.	Ongoing	
Feedback Loops	Gather input from employees and teams.	Continuous	
Visible Leadership	Increase trust through active presence.	Monthly	
Recognition Stories	Share examples of adaptation and success.	Bi-weekly	
☐ Use multiple channels to reinforce dialogue and responsiveness.			

Tip: Transparency transforms scepticism into trust.

Notes

9. Measurement and Tracking

Metric	Description	Data Source	Frequency
Resistance Incidents	Number of recorded issues or complaints.	Resistance Log	Weekly
Sentiment Score	Employee mood based on surveys or feedback.	Pulse Survey	Monthly
Engagement Rate	Participation in change-related sessions.	Attendance Logs	Monthly
Adoption Rate	Percentage of users adopting new systems or behaviours.	Performance Reports	Quarterly

☐ Track and report these indicators to monitor improvement.

Tip: Use both quantitative and qualitative insights to get a full picture.

10. Resistance Resolution Summary

Date Key Issue Resolution Action Outcome Lessons Learned

☐ Document resolved cases to support future change initiatives.

Tip: Each resolved resistance builds capability for the next change.

11. Post-Change Reflection

Question

Reflection

What resistance was anticipated and successfully managed?

What emerged unexpectedly?

How effective were our communication and engagement tactics?

What could we improve for future change projects?

☐ Use reflection to improve the organisation's overall change maturity.

Tip: Continuous learning from resistance improves future agility.

How to Use This Framework

Use this framework throughout the change lifecycle to track, analyse, and respond to resistance. Share findings with sponsors and managers regularly to ensure alignment. Combine it with the Change Readiness Checklist and Quick Wins Tracker for a balanced change management approach.

Notes