

# Resistance to Change: Reasons and Strategies

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- 1. People don't know what to do. (lack of knowledge)**
  - Share information with everyone involved.
  - Provide reading and set up study groups.
  - Conduct knowledge-building seminars.
  - Hold question and answer sessions.
  - Share inside knowledge and reach outward for expertise.
- 2. People don't know how to do it. (lack of skills/abilities)**
  - Provide high quality, up-front training.
  - Provide ongoing skill-building training sessions.
  - Provide opportunities for feedback and coaching.
  - Sponsor problem-solving groups.
  - Encourage visitations to other classrooms and schools so people can see the innovation in action.
- 3. People don't know why. ( the purpose)**
  - Explain the rationale.
  - Talk about where it has made a difference—cite examples from practice and research.
  - Explain where it fits in the bigger picture.
  - Articulate anticipated outcomes.
- 4. People are not involved in decision making.**
  - Provide opportunities for involvement in decisions, learn a variety of decision-making strategies (consultation, majority rules, consensus).
  - Share the leadership among faculty members.
  - Involve staff in the generation of ideas before making decisions.
  - Establish a collaborative decision making model that spells out who makes what decisions and how decisions will be made.
- 5. People are satisfied with the way things are.**
  - Create an alternative future picture. (build creative tension)
  - Clarify and raise your expectations. (walk your talk)
  - Take a hard, honest look at the data. (results)
  - Reward change and risk taking.
- 6. Workload and work pressure**
  - Get focused on common goals.
  - Periodically conduct a school review- make decisions around what you should “continue”, “stop”, and “start” doing.
  - Reorganize human resources. (Align work with people in an equitable way.)
  - Promote more teamwork and a collaborative work culture.
  - Support individuals under pressure.

**7. People can't see the benefits of change.**

- Do a cost benefit analysis of the change.
- Conduct a S.W.O.T. (identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).
- Be up-front about the disadvantages.
- Provide real life stories and examples where benefits have been achieved.
- Identify strategies to counteract costs.
- Collect data and monitor implementations

**8. People don't see the changing agent or advocate as credible.**

- Match the innovation with knowledge and motivated change agents.
- Involve people who are respected by their colleagues.
- Choose people who have a track record to manage and facilitate change projects.
- Give change agents hard feedback.
- Ensure change agents receive high quality training on the innovation and the change process.

**9. People don't experience support.**

- Conduct a human resources needs assessment.
- Develop an implementation plan that builds in human and material resources.
- Provide recognition and rewards.
- Address the time issues and make changes.
- Provide incentives for change.
- Monitor implementations.

**10. The innovation conflicts with the school culture.**

- Talk about the innovation or change-establish how to gradually introduce changes.
- Talk about the school culture-how it can support the change. Ask "How will current beliefs, expectations, or behavior problems block the change?"
- Identify forces for and against change in the school.
- Conduct a problem-solving group on implementation of the change.
- Involve key cultural players in the initiation and implementation process.

**11. People are worried about failure.**

- Promote a risk-taking mind set-use it as a guiding principle.
- Help people accept and understand that with change comes increased anxiety-it's okay and it's natural.
- Conduct "anticipation meetings." Talk about the implications or consequences of failing; identify assumptions and unfounded fears.
- Allow people an opportunity to express fears-let them talk it out. Ask "What is the worst case scenario? What is the best-case scenario?"

**12. People have a negative experience with change.**

- Encourage people to talk about what happened in the past.
- Ask people to identify how this change is similar and how the change is different from others in the past.
- Find out what will build their trust—act on their wants and needs.
- Build their confidence that this will turn out differently.
- Build in monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure feedback.
- Discuss, "What will happen if we don't implement the change?"