



## Top five reasons employees resist change

Prosci and the Change Management Learning Center are proud to present a tutorial series focused on resistance management. This is the second tutorial in the series. The [first tutorial](#) presented compelling reasons to manage resistance with data from the 2005 Best Practices Report as well as created the foundation for how to manage resistance successfully. This tutorial shares the top five reasons employees resist change and provides action steps to proactively manage resistance.

### **Resistance to change**

The natural and normal reaction to change is resistance. Every individual has a threshold for how much change they can absorb; however, the number one reason front line employees resist change often surprises many project teams.

The 2005 Best Practices Report identifies the top five reasons front line employees resist change as:

1. Employees were not aware of the underlying business need for change.
2. Lay-offs were announced or feared as part of the change.
3. Employees were unsure if they had the needed skills for success in the future state.
4. Individuals were comfortable with the current state; they wanted to maintain the personal rewards and sense of accomplishment and fulfillment provided by the status quo.
5. Employees felt they were being required to do more with less, or do more for the same pay.

Providing the needed information to increase employees' awareness of the business need for change is the first and most important proactive step in successful resistance management.

\*\*\* The completed 2005 Best Practice Report in Change Management will be available in two weeks. Call 970-203-9332 to pre-order your copy and be one of the first to receive the new report.

### **Proactive and reactive resistance management**

Managing resistance during any business change should include both proactive planning and reactive interventions. All too often, teams rely exclusively on reactive measures when resistance has already resulted in productivity loss and wasted time and resources.

**Proactive** resistance management involves systematically identifying where resistance might come from and what it might look like. The team identifies critical gaps and possible points of resistance, and addresses them before they even emerge. Proactive resistance management requires planning by the team and intervention from sponsors, managers and supervisors.

**Reactive** resistance management is in response to specific points of resistance. In the reactive situation, the team must listen to employees and identify the source of the resistance. Specific action steps should be developed, communicated and implemented.

### **Resistance management plan**

A resistance management plan is a proactive approach to managing resistance. During the first phase of your change management plan it is important to identify potential resistance points. As your project implementation progresses, additional areas of resistance may surface. Below are the four action steps to creating your resistance management plan:

1. Define what resistance may look like for your change and how it may be identified.
  - a. Brainstorm with the change management team and project team
  - b. Brainstorm with the stakeholders and sponsors
2. For each level with the impacted organization, define a strategy for managing resistance to the change and prepare job aides. Refer to the resistance management process (this will be provided in the next tutorial or can be found in the [Change Management Pilot](#)). In most

cases resistance is best managed by the direct supervisor or highest level manager in the chain of command for that employee.

- a. Managing resistance is not the sole responsibility of the change management team or change management lead
  - b. Be sure to include a strategy for those impacted audiences such as internal and external customers
  - c. Your strategy should include the WIIFM (what's in it for me) for each level
3. Prepare and review the resistance management approach with the primary sponsor.
  4. Communicate this resistance management plan to managers and coaches in their change management training sessions.

### ***Scale your resistance management plan***

Resistance will come in all different shapes and sizes, depending on your specific change. The grid on the next page highlights critical considerations regarding the customization of your resistance management activities based on the size of the change and the attributes of the impacted organization.

## Resistance management customization grid

Organizational attributes	resistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speed in dealing with resistance = slow</li> <li>• severity of consequences = initially minor with growing severity</li> <li>• resistance management strategy = proactive</li> <li>• primary coach = supervisor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speed in dealing with resistance = quick and decisive</li> <li>• severity of consequences = severe</li> <li>• resistance management strategy = anticipate resistance, proactively manage resistance</li> <li>• primary coach = direct supervisor, highest level in chain of command</li> </ul>
	ready	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speed in dealing with resistance = slow</li> <li>• severity of consequences = minor</li> <li>• resistance management strategy = reactive</li> <li>• primary coach = supervisor or project team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speed in dealing with resistance = moderate</li> <li>• severity of consequences = initially moderate, ultimately severe</li> <li>• resistance management strategy = reactive</li> <li>• primary coach = direct supervisor, highest level in chain of command</li> </ul>
		small	large
		Change Characteristics	

### Summary

As a project team or change management team you should expect resistance, but proactively manage and minimize that resistance to the best of your ability - you will not be able to eliminate resistance. This tutorial provides you the knowledge about the top five reasons employees resist change and gives you a starting point to proactively manage resistance on your project and customize your resistance management plan to your change and your organization. Upcoming tutorials in this series will describe the different types of resistant employees and provide key steps in the resistance management process including a resistance assessment worksheet using the ADKAR model.

For a complete set of change management templates, assessments and tools including resistance management, see the [Change Management Pilot](#).

## Resource guide

### **Benchmarking Reports and Toolkits**

#### **Best Practices in Change Management:**

288 companies share experiences in managing change and lessons on how to build great executive sponsorship. Includes success factors, methodology, role of top management, communications, team structure and more. The report makes it easy to learn change management best practices and discover the mistakes to avoid when creating executive sponsorship.

#### **Change Management Toolkit:**

a comprehensive change management process, including templates, worksheets, assessments, checklists and guidelines - a *must have* for change management team members and consultants.

**Change Management Guide for Managers and Supervisors:** a guide specifically designed for managers and supervisors dealing with change - complete with team and individual coaching activities, best practices findings and frequently asked questions.

### **Online tools**

**Change Management Pilot:** a fully electronic version of Prosci's popular change management toolkit with templates, worksheets, assessments, checklists, eLearning modules, ready-to-use presentations and guidelines.

**Change Management Pilot Professional:** a fully electronic version that combines the Change Management Pilot with the Change Management Guide for Managers and Supervisors and Employee's Survival Guide - a combination that allows you to reach **each level** of the organization.

### **Books and Resources to distribute**

**Change Management: the people side of change:** a solid foundation in change management perspectives, theories, activities and practices.

**Employee's Survival Guide to Change:** answers questions most employees are unwilling to ask and uncovers what it takes to survive and thrive in today's changing workplace. Employees will learn the ADKAR model and become effective change agents, instead of difficult change barriers.