

Minimize Resistance and Speed Up

The Irony of Resistance

During a merger, employees expect change and even want it in certain respects.

What they hate is the suspense. Waiting and wondering is even more painful than knowing the truth . . . even when the truth is bad news.

Still, when changes are announced, and even more so when they are implemented, people naturally resist.

Q

Question:

What's the most common complaint from employees during merger integration?

A

Answer:

Nothing's happening. Let's get on with it and get it resolved.

Active vs. Passive Resistance

Active Resistance

Active resistance is overt. It's visible. It is usually purposeful rather than accidental. Employees who are active resisters are deliberate in letting their opposition show.

Passive Resistance

Passive resistance is covert. It is an invisible threat. Employees who are passive resisters mask their resistance.



Resistance Coaching Points

- 1. Expect resistance.** Whenever there is significant change, there is likely to be the perception of significant loss. And where there is the perception of loss, there is likely to be resistance.

- 2. Invite resistance.** The secret is to get it out in the open. Then, at least, you're in a position to analyze it and work toward overcoming it.

- 3. Reward/reinforce the right attitudes and behavior.** “Shape” people toward embracing the changes.

- 4. Respect the fact that resistance is diagnostic.** When resistance becomes extreme, it could be that something is not being done right. The phenomenon of resistance is sort of like body temperature in that it can go too high, or too low. When resistance is too high, there will be casualties—for example, people quit, productivity is crippled, or there may be a union drive. If resistance is virtually nonexistent, you have to wonder if you've really changed things much. Too little resistance may reflect an organization that is over-stabilized and too complacent.