



2026 DYNAMICS CON

Vegas



Managing Resistance

on a Project or Change Initiative





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When you mention 'change' and everyone suddenly becomes an expert on why it won't work:



Resistance is a natural reaction to change





Resistance to change is proportional to how much the future might be altered by any given act."

Stephen King



Learning Objectives



Define Resistance and determine common causes



Learn what 10 aspects of change impact a person the most



Discover the top 10 tactics for managing resistance



Understand how to integrate resistance management throughout the project lifecycle



Define Resistance

and Determine Common Causes



re·sist·ance

/rə'zist(ə)ns/

noun



the refusal to accept or comply with something; the attempt to prevent something by action or argument.

What does resistance look like?

- Emotion – Fear, loss, sadness, anger, anxiety, frustration, depression, focus on self
- Disengagement – Silence, ignoring communications, indifference, apathy, low morale
- Work impact – Reduced productivity/efficiency, non-compliance, absenteeism, mistakes
- Acting out – Conflict, arguments, sabotage; overbearing, aggressive or passive-aggressive behavior

What does resistance look like?

- **Negativity** – Rumors/gossip, miscommunication, complaining, focus on problems, celebrating failure
- **Avoidance** – Ignoring the change, reverting to old behaviors, workarounds, abdicating responsibilities
- **Building barriers** – Excuses, counterapproaches, recruiting dissenters, secrecy, breakdown in trust
- **Controlling** – Asking lots of questions, influencing outcomes, defending current state, using status

Why does resistance occur?

Drivers that influence an employee's resistance to change:

- The impact on their work
- The credibility of people communicating the change
- Personal factors, including finances, age, health, mobility, and family
- The change's alignment with their value system
- The organization's history of handling change



Why does resistance occur?

Sources of resistance can include:

- Employees who are highly invested in the current way of doing work
- People who created the current way of doing work that will be changed
- Employees who expect more work as a result of the change
- People who have been very successful and rewarded in the current way of doing work
- Those who advocated a particular alternative, (e.g., they wanted Option B, but Option A was selected)



**Have you ever encountered
resistance on a project or change?**





What are the 10 Aspects?

Aspect	Definition
Processes	The actions or steps taken to achieve a defined end or outcome
Systems	A combination of people and automated applications organized to meet a set of objectives
Tools	An item or implement used for a specific purpose; can be a physical object such as mechanical tools or a technical object such as a web authoring tool or software program
Job Roles	A description of what a person does including competencies essential to performing well in that job capacity
Critical Behaviors	Vital or essential response of an individual or group to an action, environment, person or stimulus
Mindsets/Attitudes/Beliefs	Mental inclination, disposition or frame of mind reflected in behaviors
Reporting Structure	The authority relationships in a company or organization; who reports to whom
Performance Reviews	The process and indicators of how performance is measured and assessed relative to objectives
Compensation	Amount of the monetary and non-monetary pay provided in return for work performed
Location	A physical geographical place that provides facilities for a stated purpose



Benefits of defining Change Aspects



Build Empathy



Define Ability



Create Adoption Metrics



Engage Employees



Identify Blind Spots



Personalize Engagement



Build Empathy



Build Empathy

By defining how stakeholders are impacted by a change, you're able to put yourself into the shoes of the impacted employees.

Define Ability



Define Ability

Ability is defined as the demonstrated capability to implement “the change” and the achievement of “the desired change” in performance or behavior.

Create Adoption Metrics



Create Adoption Metrics

To know what you would measure to determine adoption and usage, you need to know and define what “to sufficiently adopt and proficiently use” means for impacted employees.

Engage Employees



Engage Employees

Defining the Aspects of Change Impact is an effective way to directly engage employees in co-creating a shared definition and understanding of the upcoming change and its impact.

Identify Blind Spots



It can be difficult to filter down to the impacts a project will have on individuals and groups within the organization.

Often, a project team or sponsor misses a particular area of impact - and sometimes it's an area of special concern for impacted employees.

Personalize Engagement



Personalize Engagement

You can more effectively personalize your support and interventions when armed with detailed descriptions of how the change is impacting each individual.

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**Any questions or comments about
what we've covered so far?**



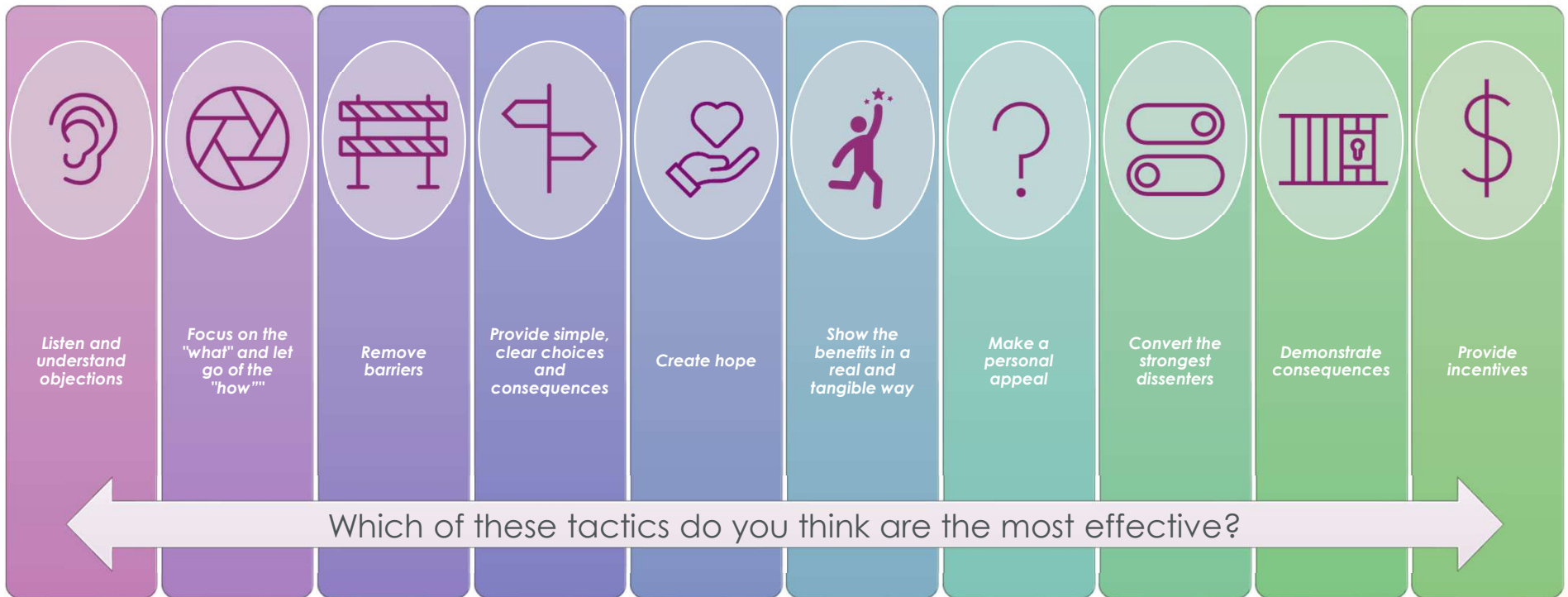


Top 10 Tactics

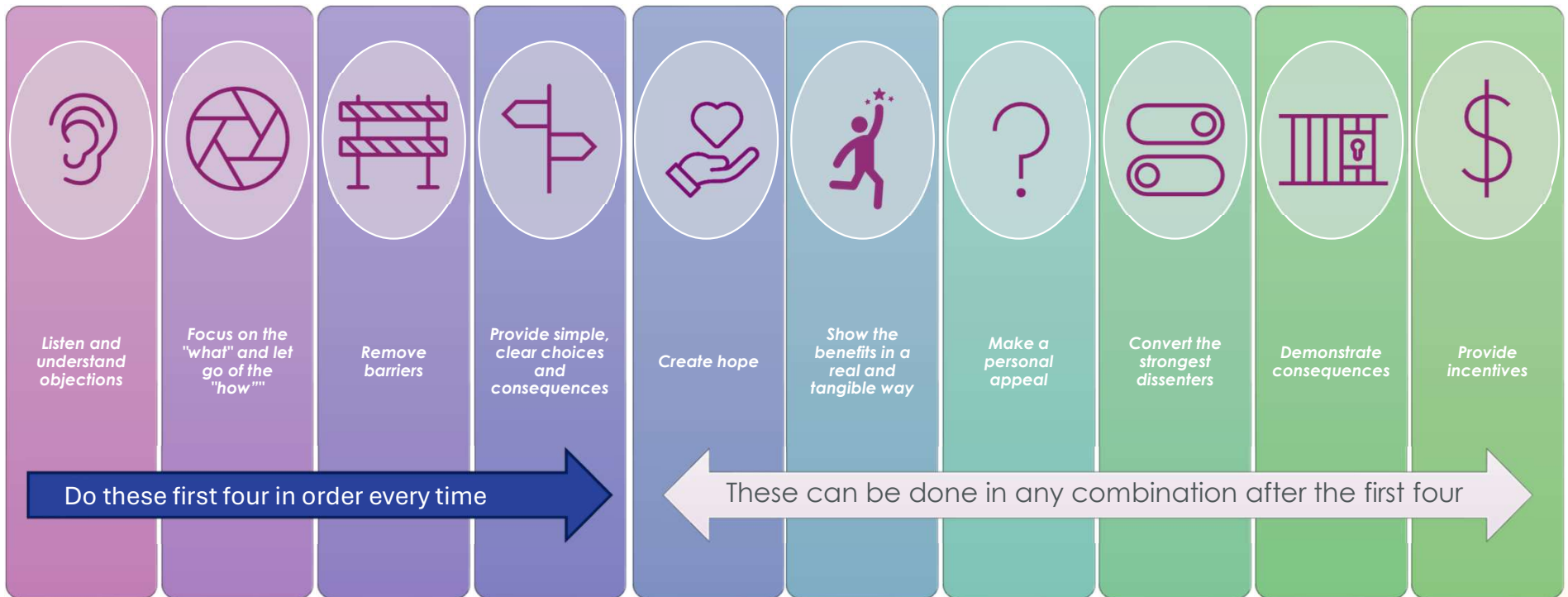
For Managing Resistance



Top 10 Tactics for Managing Resistance



Top 10 Tactics for Managing Resistance



Listen and Understand Objections



When experiencing resistant behaviors, the first and most important thing to do is to listen to understand the reasons for the objections.

Focus on the "what" and let go of the "how"



Focus on what needs to be accomplished and offer the team the opportunity to provide input on how to accomplish the change.



Remove Barriers



You understand where your team members' resistance points reside. Perhaps they are related to job motivation, job security, career progression, or personal commitments.



Provide simple, clear choices and consequences



In some cases, you must be direct:

“I understand that you may not be interested in participating in this change, but the team will follow this new process as explained. If you don't choose to adopt the new changes, X will be the result.”



Create Hope



Creating hope focuses on the future state.
What's on the other side of adopting and using the change?
What is the opportunity associated with it?



Show the benefits in a real and tangible way



People can have a hard time envisioning the future state of a change.

We like to say that the current state is rooted in emotion, but the future state is rooted in analytics.



Make a personal appeal



Try making a personal appeal to your teams with whom you hold a high degree of trust and an open relationship.



Demonstrate consequences



Demonstrating consequences is a viable form of resistance management.



Provide Incentives



In this tactic, people managers can offer bonuses, extra time off, or the ability to work from home in exchange for adopting the change—a little quid pro quo.





Integrating Resistance Management

Throughout the Project Lifecycle

How will resistance be identified throughout the project lifecycle?

By implementing specific mechanisms (measurement tools and soft measurements) you can identify resistance.

Examples include:

- **Employee feedback** – Include employee feedback loops as a component of the Communications Plan and People Manager Plan
- **People manager input** – Give people managers the opportunity to provide direct feedback to the project team during coaching activities
- **Project team issues** – Issues that are identified by the project team should be logged directly to the project issues log or risk log to be monitored closely
- **Compliance audits** – Compliance audits conducted as part of the post-implementation support activities and focused on proficiency metrics will identify additional areas of resistance where support is needed



Activate roles that manage resistance

As a Project Manager or Change Manager, you can't do it alone!

Activate key roles to work with you:

- **Senior Leaders** – Help manage resistance by communicating the business reasons for the change directly to impacted people and groups
- **People managers** – Help manage resistance by working with the people and teams who report directly to them
 - Identify Resistance
 - Address Root Causes (personal & organizational)





Human interaction is the key force in overcoming resistance and speeding change."

Atul Gawande





“THIS CHANGE WILL NEVER WORK WITH SO MUCH RESISTANCE”



SILENCE!

...EFFECTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT TURNS RESISTANCE INTO ENGAGEMENT.



Any questions?



Shameless Survey Plug...



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Want to Learn More?



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ASSETS



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ASSETS

