

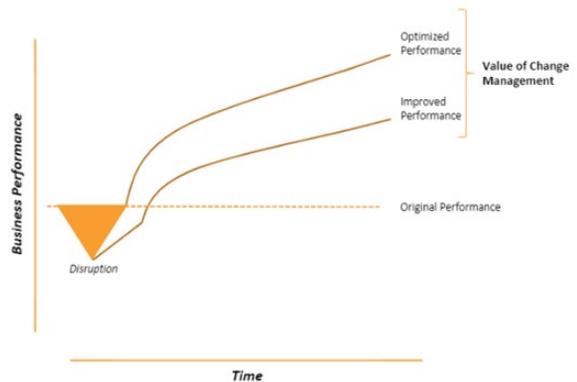
PREVENTING RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

The Pinnacle Perspective

In today's world of continuous change, agility and innovation are vital to survival. Resistance to change can delay progress, stifle innovation, and diminish agility. The costs and consequences of unsuccessful change can include loss of investment, reduction in employee morale, loss of trust in leadership, increased turnover, and increased resistance to the next change. Understanding the root cause of the resistance, and how to prevent it, begins by infusing employee feedback, establishing trust, communicating with transparency, and building change readiness.

What is resistance to change?

It's efficient to have routines. Our brains are overloaded with decisions every moment of every day. As a result, we divide our day into routines that don't require us to think through every step or decision. Actions take place automatically, behaviors become second nature, (e.g. making a pot of coffee, your daily commute to work), and our mental capacity shifts to focus on more important decisions.



How to prevent resistance to change

There are many steps that organizations can take to prevent resistance and increase the speed and effectiveness of change adoption.

Get employees involved early to help build and shape the change

- Listen and learn from employee involvement. Present them with options and let them help make decisions. Run experiments or mini-pilots, and integrate learnings into the final plan.
- Make it real. Often employees are brought in early, but they don't truly understand the impact. PowerPoint decks don't tell the full story. Enable employees to give meaningful feedback in many ways, including process refinement reviews, change impact sessions, and change leadership training.
- Make sure you let participating employees know what changes were made as a result of their feedback. This encourages continued participation by showing people the real impact they can have on the organization, and keeps momentum and ideas flowing.

Build trust

- Building and maintaining trust with transparency, authenticity and responsiveness is critical. Conducting a baseline assessment of trust within the culture can indicate if culture and engagement groundwork needs to be laid before beginning.
- Surveys are not the only answer; use innovative ways to assess and build trust. Monitoring shifts in behaviors and attitudes will yield meaningful information to supplement surveys. Proven strategies include listening sessions, stakeholder empathy mapping workshops, and change leadership behavior training that focuses on building listening and empathy skills.

Communicate the vision clearly, honestly, and often

- Be clear on *why*. Don't be afraid to tell employees what's wrong with the current state – they probably already know and experience it first-hand on a daily basis. Explicitly tie the solution to the pain points they are experiencing.
- Recruit influencers and early adopters as change champions to help communicate the vision from an impacted employee perspective. Listen to the concerns of people who are resisting the change and address their concerns.

Ensure change readiness

- At the organizational level, change readiness means embracing continuous change, always looking for opportunities to push innovation, and pivot to market or internal forces. Before embarking on a change, there are vital cultural factors that should be assessed to determine if

there are broader changes to the culture that need to occur. Once cultural considerations are identified and addressed, employees will be more likely to embrace change.

- At the individual project level, developing a structured approach, including focus on behavioral changes, change measurement and sustainability plans, helps mitigate barriers and ensure adoption after launch.
- When it comes to training, the old axiom “telling ain't training” is still true. Training should be targeted and interactive. Without a science-based training approach, employee trust in training is eroded, leading to diminished opportunities to change behavior in meaningful ways.

How Pinnacle Can Help

Change management research indicates that effective change management can result in a six-fold increase in success of overall initiatives.¹ Pinnacle offers a broad range of services that reduce resistance and increase acceptance and adoption of transformational change. Preventing or minimizing resistance can be achieved with a structured approach and a commitment to employee engagement every step of the way. Giving representative employees a seat at the table, establishing trust, effectively communicating the vision, and investing in change readiness are key elements of success. Starting with an inventory or change readiness assessment, Pinnacle can develop the strategy and execution plan with you to ensure your organization is in a position to succeed.

¹ <https://www.prosci.com/resources/articles/why-change-management>