

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1668 Manager Misconceptions 2: Resistance to Change

It was early in my career when I first heard the phrase, "The only constant is change." I'm sure I giggled at the joke. You know, the only thing that doesn't change is that we always have change." When I got into the training field I quickly recognized that change is a big deal, and brings out strong emotions in many people. There are also misconceptions that can get in our way. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll dig into all this, next on the Extra Point.

Management Misconception #2. Resistance to change. The common misconception that many managers hold about their employees is that they hate change, resist change, and sometimes will do what they can to block change.

Managers often view resistance as a sign of stubbornness or complacency, assuming that employees are simply comfortable with the way things are — and maybe with the way things have always been.

However, this perspective fails to consider the complexities of human behavior, as well as the legitimate concerns employees may have regarding changes in their specific job, or even the terms of their employment.

Many employees may feel anxious about change due to uncertainties involved, fear of the unknown, or a general lack of information.

For instance, when new systems or processes are introduced, employees might worry about their ability to adapt or how the changes will affect their roles.

I've had people tell me things like, "It took me three years to get on top of the last round of changes. Now, things are good, and here we go again. It's unnecessary."

This anxiety can result as resistance, or at least it can be seen that way. In any event, it's crucial for managers to understand that this reaction often stems from a desire for clarity

and stability, rather than the employee rejecting progress.

Leadership expert John Kotter says, "Change is not a process for the timid." He's right. Change can grab you, shake you, and spin you around. Change requires courage and support.

Employees need guidance and reassurance from their managers during transitions. Whether the worker hates change, doesn't see the reason for it, or is just spooked by it, having an open dialogue and actively involving employees in the process, managers can ease fears and reduce resistance.

Let me bring leadership into this. Leaders can make the job of selling change easier for their managers, by communicating the clear reasons behind changes.

If you don't do this, by the time it gets out to the workers, it morphs into: "The big boss says we're going to be doing X, Y, and Z differently from now on." Somebody complains, "Hey, that makes no sense." The manager replies, "They're not asking for your opinion. Just do it!"

The workers don't have clarity on why the change is needed, think it's a waste of time, or dumb, and resent the fact that they weren't consulted before the decision was made. They see it as just one more thing that's being shoved down their throats.

When employees feel heard and see that their input is valued, they are more likely to embrace change rather than resist it.

It just makes sense. Before committing to a big change, talk with the people who will most feel the impact of it. Maybe they'll give you feedback that can be valuable.

(Con't.)

Some people hate change and always will.

Some will resent how change is presented.

Some will go along without complaining, but they'll quietly resist.

Many will gladly help smooth things out and make change easier to deal with, if you give them the chance.

The misconception that most employees resist change no matter what you do can create barriers to progress.

Don't allow this issue to split people apart. It's not management and change vs. workers. It ought to be everybody on the same side, getting change to work for all.

Tomorrow, is it a misconception that workers generally avoid responsibility?

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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