

Overcoming Obstacles & Achieving Goals

RESISTANCE MANAGEMENT: One of the biggest challenges in the management of projects and people is to overcome the inertia of the status quo. In some cases the present state of affairs may be just fine, but in many cases the status quo may interfere with progressive management. A quick reference formula that summarizes the resistance process can be expressed as:

$$\text{Change} = [A \ B \ D] > \text{Cost of changing}$$

Where "A" is the level of dissatisfaction with the status quo, "B" is the desirability of the proposed change or end state; "D" is the practicality of the change. In other words, if a person or group is satisfied with the present state of affairs, or is not committed to the proposed changes, or is simply not convinced of the feasibility of the change, that person or group will resist the change. Many corporate Boards, CEO's or management teams do not take time to plan for and address resistance management issues until a strategic project is at a standstill during the implementation process. While many projects or new initiatives require change, we should keep in mind that some resistance to change is necessary to maintain an organizational goal or standard.

ACTIVITY PLANNING: An activity or change plan specifies the critical activities and events of the transition or development period: when the first moves will take place, when meetings will be held to clarify new roles, what information will be communicated to whom, and when new structures for implementation will begin to operate.

The development plan is a type of road map and it must be realistic, effective and clear to all those involved in the project. Here are five characteristics of an effective activity or development plan:

1. **Relevance:** activities are clearly linked to the development goals and priorities of the project.
2. **Specificity:** activities are clearly identified rather than generalized.
3. **Integration:** each aspect of the development project is connected.
4. **Chronology:** there is a logical sequence of events and activities.
5. **Adaptability:** there are contingency plans for adjusting to unexpected forces, problems or challenges.

Resource: Organizational Transitions, Beckhard & Harris, 1987, 2nd edition