Prosci’s Resistance Checklist draws from benchmarking research with over 4,500 participants and the feedback and input of thousands of training participants. The checklist can be used as an audit tool to determine if you are utilizing best practices when managing resistance. The Practitioner eToolkit includes guidelines and templates for managing resistance.

Prosci’s Resistance Checklist

Are you expecting and planning for resistance?

Resistance is a natural and common reaction in the face of change. This holds true for changes at home and at work. Even if the change or solution is expected to improve the employees’ situation, do not be surprised if you encounter resistance. Organizations should expect and plan for resistance; identifying actions needed to build buy-in and commitment.

Have you identified where in the organization resistance to the change might come from?

Think about where resistance might live within the organization and how you intend to address it prior to implementing a solution. For instance, you can anticipate resistance coming from groups that are invested heavily in how things are done today. You can also expect resistance from the parts of the organization where a particular change has a high impact or where there is a history of failed changes. Proactively identifying where resistance might come from will help you develop tactics for mitigation.

Have you identified what resistance to the change might look like?

Early in the project lifecycle, brainstorm what resistance to change might look like so you can be better prepared to identify it and react to it when it occurs. For each group targeted by the change, ask the question “How will resistance manifest itself in this group?” This is a key component of proactively managing resistance and building commitment to change.
Have you identified potential risks to the project related to resistance?

Resistance to change is a significant source of risk for the project and the organization as a whole. Resistance to change can result in project delays, projects missing their objectives, return on investment being lower than expected, or a change being thrown out altogether. Sit down at the launch of a new project and document the risks associated with resistance and how you can begin to mitigate these risks.

Do you know the top reasons employees resist change?

In Prosci’s 2016 Best Practices in Change Management benchmarking report, the top reason cited by participants for resistance by employees was that employees were not aware of the business need for change. If you are responsible for managing change, then be sure to address this awareness gap and the other common reasons for resistance presented in the report.

Are you using an individual change management model to understand resistance?

Resistance happens at an individual level for specific and unique reasons. One employee’s perspective on the change may be very different than another’s, even if they are in the same work group. An individual change management model, like ADKAR, provides a foundation for understanding how one person goes through change as well as understanding why a particular individual is resisting a change.

Do you have a system in place to identify and react to resistance when it happens?

While there are many measures that can be taken to prevent and mitigate resistance before it impacts the organization, you must also be prepared to address resistance during implementation when it does occur. Prosci’s Practitioner eToolkit outlines 10 steps to manage resistance. These steps will give your managers concrete actions to take with their employees.
Have you prepared the people you need to respond to resistance?

The most effective ‘managers of resistance’ are those who have credibility and respect with the individual who is resisting a change - likely their supervisor or manager. As a project team member or change management resource, your job is to prepare and support managers throughout the organization in their task to manage resistance and help employees through the change process.

The contents of the checklist are based on the Prosci change management methodology and Prosci’s 2016 Best Practices in Change Management benchmarking report, which is available for purchase in print through our online bookstore and as an electronic tool on the Prosci Portal.