

**voice
project**

improving organisations
by giving people a voice

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obstacles to change

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why change fails: common beliefs

Dumb ideas ...

... with limited support ...

... poorly implemented?



type of resistance → how to drive change

The following obstacles, while not exhaustive, are commonly believed to derail change initiatives

- Lack of funding, resources & time
- Lack of skills among staff, managers and/or suppliers
- Disinterest or obstruction from one or more senior managers
- Disinterest or obstruction from lower level staff
- Excessive fear and unwillingness to take risks
- Excessive optimism about what can be achieved
- Lack of alignment with overall strategy and objectives
- Lack of alignment with culture and reward systems
- Lack of understanding of the purpose and benefits of the change
- Lack of understanding about what staff need to do to achieve the change



obstacles to change

Purpose

- Frequent and extensive change is an organisational reality ... BUT ... around **2 in every 3 change initiatives fail** to achieve a step change in performance*
- This poll was aimed at **gaining a better understanding of the major obstacles to successful change initiative** within organisations

Methodology

- 105 attendees at Voice Project's 'Politics of Change' November 2012 breakfast events (20 in Melbourne & 85 in Sydney) completed a short 10 question poll
- Participants were largely HR consultants, OD consultants and senior managers from NFP, Government and Private sector organisations
- Participants were asked to think of a specific recent attempt to achieve positive change in their organisation that was not as successful as desired and to what extent did 10 different obstacles contribute to the lack of success?
- Ratings were provided on a 4 point likert scale:

1	2	3	4
Was not an obstacle at all	Was a minor obstacle	Was a moderate obstacle	Was a major obstacle

poll results: major obstacles

Communication is critical

staff not understanding **what is needed of them** and **how change will benefit them** are 2 of the 3 greatest obstacles to successful change

1 in 3 report **senior management disinterest or obstruction** as a major obstacle to successful change



The proposed solution is not the problem, it's in the execution!

implications

- Contrary to popular beliefs employee resistance is not the greatest obstacle to successful change. Rather than just managing resistance, organisations need to **proactively prepare their people for change**
- Each of our top 5 rated major obstacles aligns with the assertion that creating **change readiness** comes from convincing staff of 5 key elements[^]:

1. There is a need for change...

2. ... and the solution meets the need

“Lack of understanding of the purpose and benefits of the change”

3. The staff and organisation have the ability to implement the changes

“Lack of understanding about what staff needed to do to achieve the change” & “Lack of skills among staff, managers and/or suppliers”

4. There is top level commitment to the objectives

“Disinterest or obstruction from one or more senior managers”

5. There’s a personal benefit

“Lack of alignment with culture and reward systems”

* Meaney, M., & Pung, C. (2008). McKinsey global results: Creating organizational transformations. *McKinsey Quarterly*, August: 1-7

[^] Rafferty, A.E., Jimmieson, N.L., & Armenakis, A.A. (2013). Change Readiness: A Multilevel Review. *Journal of Management*, 39 (1)

**If you have any questions
or looking for support
with your change process,
please contact us**

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