

*To Larry Miles*  
How to minimize  
resistance to change

*For your file,  
Bob Calley*

*If you learn why people resist change, you'll know how to make proposals so as to win their approval.*

by Arnold S. Judson

Estimating possible resistant attitudes or feelings can be a useful step in any manager's planning for a change. From his efforts to forecast such feelings, he should be able to spot any potentially serious problems that might arise from the proposed change or from its manner of institution. With such foresight, he can then reconsider his plans, develop alternative means for accomplishing his objectives, or find ways to solve these problems. How, then, might he go about forecasting the attitudes towards change of those who are about to be affected by it?

The following checklist should prove helpful to any manager in his identification of some of the possible anticipated gains and losses from a change. With his intimate knowledge of the situation and of those involved, he should be able to select from these lists the responses likely to occur. Also, he should be able to translate them into more specific terms to suit the circumstances. These typical responses are arranged according to the principal reasons for resisting and accepting changes.

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**POSSIBLE REASONS FOR  
RESISTING CHANGES**

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**POSSIBLE REASONS FOR  
ACCEPTING CHANGES**

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**Feared economic losses**

I am being asked to do more work for the same pay.

This change will result in a speed-up of the work. My pay will be reduced.

Fewer skills will be required of me. My pay will be reduced in the long run.

I shall be losing much of the overtime that I have been getting.

My opportunities for advancement will be reduced.

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**Anticipated economic gains**

I shall be able to earn more money.

My opportunities for advancement will be greater.

I shall be able to develop new or additional skills that will enhance my value and increase my opportunities for earning more.

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**Fears about personal security**

The new situation requires me to learn a new technology or new skills. I doubt that I shall be able to do it.

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**Hopes about personal security**

The security of my job with the company will be increased because I shall be in a higher classification of work.

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Arnold S. Judson is a management consultant in this country and in England. He has just completed a new book, *A Manager's Guide to Making Changes* (John Wiley & Sons, New York, \$4.75) from which this excerpt is taken. The book itself covers such other subjects as "How people are affected by changes," "Factors that influence an individual's attitudes toward a change," and "How people react to changes."

I doubt that I shall be able to meet the new standards of the job that will be required.

I shall be held responsible for quality defects or for the control of quality, which I may not be able to influence.

The new situation will involve an increase in safety hazards for me.

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### **Fears about increased personal inconvenience**

The new conditions of work will be less pleasant.

The work will be more difficult.

I shall have to work harder.

This change will interfere with my personal life (different hours, more travel, etc.).

I shall have to change what I have become accustomed to over the years. What is wrong with the way I am working now?

The security of my job with the company will be greater because the importance of my work has been increased.

The security of my job with the company will be greater because the competitive position of the company will be stronger.

My work will be safer because my exposure to injury will be reduced.

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### **Hopes of increased personal convenience**

My conditions of work will be more pleasant.

My work will be easier.

I shall not have to work as hard.

This change is an improvement in my personal life (more desirable hours, travel, etc.).

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### **Fears about decreased job satisfactions**

This new job will be less interesting.

There is less challenge in the new job.

The pressures on me will be greater (or different).

I shall have less (or more) responsibility.

My authority is being reduced.

I shall be receiving much more (or less) supervision.

This new job is less important than what I am now doing.

This new job really does not require my qualifications and training.

This new situation will be very restrictive. I shall have less opportunity to contribute my ideas and suggestions.

This will not fit at all into my long-range career plans.

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### **Hopes of increased job satisfactions**

This job will be more interesting.

There will be more challenge.

The pressures on me will be less (or different).

I shall have more (or less) responsibility.

My authority is being increased.

I shall be receiving much less (or more) supervision.

This job is more important than what I am now doing.

This new job will make better use of my qualifications and training.

I shall have more opportunity to contribute my ideas and suggestions.

This will fit nicely into my long-range career plans.

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### **Social fears**

I shall lose status.

If I cooperate with this change, the others will think ill of me. My future relationships will be affected.

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### **Social anticipations**

My status will be enhanced or improved.

My opportunities for social contacts with others on the job will be increased.

I shall be less in contact with what is going on in the company (or department).

I don't like working by myself. I enjoy working as part of a team.

I'm worried about having Y as a supervisor. He has a poor reputation.

This change will damage my relationships with my customers (or suppliers or other persons outside the company).

I shall be establishing precedents by cooperating with this change. I shall be committing others to follow me.

The union will take a dim view of my involvement in the change. I shall affect their relations with the firm.

I shall have to leave my old workmates. I like it where I am. I have no desire to have to make new friends.

I don't want to cause others to be made redundant.

I shall have increased access to information about what is going on in the company (or department).

I shall enjoy working as part of a group.

I shall like working for X. He is a good supervisor.

My contracts with suppliers (or customers or other persons outside the company) will be improved.

I shall enjoy having that group as my subordinates.

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#### **Irritation with manner of handling the change**

I am unhappy about being picked on. They have something against me.

No one asked my opinion. I could tell them a thing or two.

If we go through with this, there's no turning back. I don't like the idea of burning our bridges behind us.

This is being done in too much of a hurry. I would like an opportunity to think this over for a time.

This change is really unnecessary.

I don't like having things rammed down my throat.

#### **Satisfaction with manner of handling the change**

I'm quite flattered that I was selected to try out this difficult task.

It is satisfying to know that my ideas and suggestions are being sought and are welcomed.

This change is really pioneering a new method (or field of endeavour). It is exciting to be able to be a part of this effort.

It is gratifying to realize that we are being given the full story on this change and that we shall be able to get answers to our questions.

This change is obviously important, and I'm proud to be a part of it.

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We have already suggested that it might be possible to forecast the nature and intensity of resistant feelings if one could integrate all of the positive and negative values of the potential gains and losses that might be the consequences of a change for those affected. For ease of analysis, one could organize the relevant potential gains and losses in the form of a balance sheet, as shown on page 58.

Such a balance sheet could be constructed either for a group of people or for single individuals, depending on how many are to be affected by the change. For this approach to be useful in forecasting individual attitudes, the manager would need considerable knowledge of each individual as a person, together with information about his reactions towards previous changes. A balance sheet constructed for a large group should prove more useful because of the increased statistical probability that certain kinds of reactions are more likely to occur than others, within a population of considerable size.

In either case, such a balance sheet is useful only as a planning tool. It is no substi-

tute for face-to-face discussions conducted with the people affected to get their reactions firsthand after the change has been announced. As a planning tool, however, the development of such balance sheets can help the manager to anticipate and prepare for how people will probably react to the change. Forewarned and forearmed, he should be able to conduct more meaningful and productive discussions. More important, the results of such a preliminary analysis might encourage the manager to reconsider his approach and perhaps even his objectives.

In constructing a balance sheet, the manager should first list as many of the possible gains and losses as he can imagine from his knowledge of the situation and of those affected. Next, he should try to estimate which of the possible reasons for resistance and acceptance might be the most compelling. This might be defined in terms either of the greatest number in the group affected or of the attitudes and values of each individual involved (if the number is very small). The manager might classify each reason according to its probable importance. The manager could then determine the extent of the "losses" as compared with the "gains."

The manager must then temper his over-all analysis of the summarized balance sheet. He must consider how much trust seems to exist in the relationships between those affected and himself, management as a whole, and the union. He must also try to identify the relevant historical events that might prejudice people either in favour of or against the change. Both these factors should tend either to increase or lessen the intensity of resistant feelings.

Thus, it would seem worthwhile for any manager to attempt to anticipate the likely reactions to an intended change before he makes it known to anyone affected. When a systematic analysis is made an integral element in planning for the change, management will be in a position to develop the most effective strategy for presenting their proposals and for discussing them with those affected.

**BALANCE SHEET FOR ESTIMATING GAINS AND LOSSES FROM A CHANGE**

Resistance		Acceptance	
Estimated losses	Importance	Estimated gains	Importance
Economic		Economic	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Security		Security	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Inconvenience		Convenience	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Satisfactions		Satisfactions	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Social		Social	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
Manner of change		Manner of change	
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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Worment regards

Bob Guilkey