An organizational change model to navigate change leaders, employee resistance and work-based identities

**A summary of**

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**Categories:**
Method, Implement, Organizational capacity and management, Organizational change

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**Method**

**Relevance For Public Health**

This method was developed in the context of recent law firm mergers in Australia. However, the principles regarding resistance to change can be applied within a public health setting. As such, public health can apply the principles of resistance to change when departments merge, or in other instances where resistance occurs, such as trying to develop evidence-based programs.

**Description**

The purpose of this article is to bring insight into resistance to organizational change—from the perspective of why employees may resist change and how change leaders approach resistance—by examining resistance in the context of identity change. The authors used the social identity theory and self-categorization theory to examine the interaction between the different parties involved in a change process.

Change may impact the way individuals within the organization categorize themselves and others, and the value placed on these categories. The identity-based process model of resistance to change includes a cyclical process of:
- Change and change management
- Impact: employee work identity
- Resistance
- Impact: change agent work identity

**Implementing the Tool**

**Who is Involved?**

All organizational members involved in the organizational change are part of the change process since different organizational members impact one another’s work-based identity.

**Steps for Using Tool**

- **Resistance and interaction**
  For employees, the way different organizational members impact one another’s work-based identity is largely via change management; for change leaders, this is via the resistance attitudes toward the changes they are responsible for.

- **Mobility, creativity and competition**
  Use of all three key self-enhancement strategies (individual mobility, social creativity and social competition) can help reduce resistance to change. Threats to employee work-based identities stem largely from a difference in the way they are treated by management compared to their pre-merger experience.

- **Self-enhancement**
The more involved change leaders are in decision-making regarding the changes, the more positive their attitude toward those changes.

**Genuine or token participation**

To encourage greater buy-in to change from employees, ensure any encouragement to participate and ideas about the change are not token and are followed-up by communicating ideas with other change leaders. Implement suggestions where appropriate.

### Evaluation and Measurement Characteristics

**Evaluation**

Information not available

**Validity**

Information not available

**Reliability**

Information not available

**Methodological Rating**

N/A Not applicable

### Tool Development

**Developers**

Rebecca (van Dijk) Newton

**Method of Development**

- The research used a multiple case study—the merger process in two law firm offices.
- Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were administered to all employees in both case study organizations.
- Explanation-building was used for data analysis using descriptive statistics for quantitative data and coding interview text (resistance attitudes; impact of change on employee work-based identity; impact of resistance on change leader work-based identity; change leader response to resistance).

**Release Date**

2009

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