

Overcoming resistance to ideas

Figuring out the real reasons team members resist your ideas can help you win their support.

There are two main levels of resistance:

Level one: “I don't get it.” The team member doesn't understand your idea or may be confused by it. Usually you only need to clarify the idea to get their support. Sometimes level one resistance results from different interpretations of the same thing. One person may be in favor of a school-wide family picnic while another sees only busy parents who don't have enough time as it is. Neither person is wrong; they merely differ on which way they understand the idea and the purposes behind it. Once you clarify and discuss the interpretations, both may very likely support the idea.

Level two: “I don't like it” This kind of resistance is based on emotion, fear of losing status, control, wasting money, etc. To overcome this type of resistance, you must work to find common ground to defuse the fears.



Listen, and not just long enough to hear the objection so you can better go on the offensive. Try to take in what the resister isn't saying as well as what the individual is.

Be flexible. If what you perceive as criticism of your idea prompts an instant reflexive “fight back” response, you will likely only redouble your efforts to get support or perhaps give up the idea entirely. Don't abandon the idea; be willing to adapt it to what you hear.