

6 WAYS TO ACHIEVE VOLUNTARY ALIGNMENT TO YOUR DESIRED WORKPLACE CULTURE



Clear Communication

Provide thorough and transparent explanations of policies, including the rationale and benefits behind them. Clarity and open communication can reduce resistance by fostering understanding and trust.



Participation and Involvement

Involve employees in the policy-making process whenever possible. Solicit their input, consider their perspectives, and allow them to have a voice in shaping the rules. By including employees in decision-making, they feel valued and are more likely to support and comply with policies.



Fairness and Consistency

Ensure that policies are fair, equitable, and consistently enforced across all levels of the organization. Transparent and consistent implementation builds trust and reduces resistance. Make sure that all leaders in the organisation apply the policy consistently.

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UNVEILING THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND RESISTANCE

By Willie Maritz (Founder of Habiit)

People are naturally resistant to change. This is because change can be unpredictable and can disrupt our routine. When we're asked to change our behavior, it can feel like we're being forced to do something that we don't want to do. This can lead to feelings of resentment, frustration, and resistance.

There are 5 main psychological reasons for resistance:

1. **Autonomy and Individualism:** We all have an innate need for autonomy and a sense of control over our own lives. When policies or rules are perceived as restricting this autonomy, we tend to resist in order to maintain personal agency and make decisions based on our own judgments.
2. **Perceived Lack of Fairness:** When we believe that rules are arbitrarily imposed or unfairly applied, we resist compliance as a form of protest. Fairness is a fundamental psychological expectation.
3. **Limited Understanding or Clarity:** When we don't understand the purpose, rationale, and implications of policies, we naturally resist them. Some cultural groupings may have a higher propensity for compliance but at a deeper level, we still feel resentment.
4. **Previous Negative Experiences:** If we've experienced negative consequences or perceive a history of unfair or ineffective enforcement, we may resist compliance as a defense mechanism.
5. **Reactance and Reactivity:** Reactance refers to the psychological reaction people have when they perceive their freedom is being threatened or restricted. When we feel forced or coerced to comply with policies, we experience reactance, leading to resisting behaviours or even rebellion.

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Education and Training

Provide training sessions or workshops to educate employees about policies, their purpose, and the potential consequences of non-compliance. Education helps individuals understand the importance and relevance of policies, addressing any misconceptions or resistance due to lack of knowledge.



Positive Reinforcement

Recognize and reward employees who demonstrate compliance and adherence to policies. Positive reinforcement can motivate individuals to align their behaviors with the desired rules, creating a culture of voluntary compliance.



Storytelling and Practical Examples

Often employees need practical examples to translate the policy into the desired behaviours and consequences. Sharing true stories and personal testimonies are very powerful ways to achieve this.



THE "DOOR-IN-THE-FACE" EXPERIMENT



An interesting approach to achieving participation was illustrated in a well-known psychological experiment by researchers Cialdini, Vincent, Lewis, Catalan, Wheeler, and Darby in 1975.

The "Door-in-the-Face" experiment is a study that shows how people are more likely to say "yes" to a smaller request if they have previously been asked to do something bigger and more unreasonable.

In the experiment, researchers approached people and first asked them to commit a large amount of time to volunteer as counselors for delinquent teenagers. Unsurprisingly, most people declined this big request. However, when the researchers then asked for a smaller commitment, like just a couple of hours per week, many people agreed (Significantly more than in the scientific control group).

The interesting thing is that by starting with the big request and then making the smaller request, the researchers were able to increase people's willingness to comply. It seems that when faced with the extreme request, people felt uncomfortable saying no and wanted to maintain a positive social image. So, when the smaller request came along, it seemed much more reasonable in comparison, and people were more likely to agree to it. The contrast between the two requests also created a positive perception of the requester, as they were perceived as being flexible and willing to compromise.

The key takeaway from this experiment is that if you want someone to agree to something, starting with a bigger request can actually work in your favor. It creates a contrast that makes the smaller request seem more reasonable and easier to say yes to. So, the next time you need someone's help or support, consider starting with a larger request and then follow it up with the smaller one you actually want them to agree to.