I’m Doing This You’re Coming with Me, Part 2

This is part two of a two-part piece. Part one can be found here *[1].*

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When skeptics or unwilling participants are the first ones through the system and they meet the first bump in the road, they will present the roughness of the path as proof that the plan is flawed and cannot succeed. However, when an energetic enthusiast encounters bumps in the way, they will overcome them and say, “hey you might want to take care of that for the next guy.” Because their sights are set on the destination ahead, and not the comfort left behind, they are not turned aside by adversity that meets trailblazers.

Ironically, the leaders that are least useful to us are the ones we most need to address. They are the curmudgeons. Inevitably, someone in our organization will fit the description of a leader whom others naturally follow and they will not particularly like the direction we are trying to drive the organization.

We cannot afford to fight a battle of influence with these leaders, so we cannot ignore them, and should not leave them to be the last to change if we can help it. Nor, because often our greatest skeptics are those with great experience, who have adopted or adapted best to the status quo, do we want to simply dismiss them or remove them. We should keep them if at all possible, so we must win them over.

The key to winning over the curmudgeons and resistors is to address their concerns. This means that we must drill down to discover their concerns. Many times, their concerns are well founded and point to holes in our plans. When this comes to light, use that information to improve your plans.

When the resisters’ concerns are being addressed, and when they see that you are truly endeavoring to make things better, many of them will start to come around. Engage them to take a leadership role instead of a follower role. Encourage them to help you improve the plan. Help them experience the better way. When this happens, they sometimes evolve from your greatest threats to your greatest assets.

With the resisters, especially the more experienced ones; it is critical to maintain your devotion and determination to drive success for your enterprise. Many times the sole reason for the resistance is that they have experienced half-hearted, half-baked, attempts at change so many times that they are tired of the exercise and jaded against further attempts. Win them over by addressing their concerns and demonstrating your ability to make this one succeed.

Sometimes, it isn’t clear what a resister’s concerns are or how to address them. Sometimes the best answer you can get to your inquiries is, “It’s just not going to work. That’s all.” This kind of response isn’t helpful, except when we understand what it really means. It means that there really isn’t a logical or rational reason for their feelings; they just aren’t comfortable with the change.

If you find yourself meeting such motivations, don’t be judgmental. All of us are prone to such reactions sometimes. I have come to accept the belief that human beings do not make decisions based on logic or rationale, we make decisions based on what feels right. Sometimes logic and rationale can make us feel better about our decisions, but ultimately decisions are emotional. If you don’t agree with that belief, I won’t argue, but I will ask you to recognize that at least some decisions are emotional.

When we find that the reason for the resistance is emotional and not necessarily rational, we can address it that way. Sometimes we can even point it out. “I’m not sure I’m getting a clear understanding of why this new direction won’t work. Are you sure it’s the plan that your are worried about, or are you just nervous about going through a change?

Choose the words you need for the personality and the discussion you are having with him or her, but when we call someone out on the possibility that they don’t really have a good reason for resisting, other than fear of doing something differently, we can address the real issue, fear, directly. Sometimes, just challenging the notion, sets it to rest.

Ideally, we want the attitude of, “I’m doing this, and you’re coming with me,” to be a statement of your vision and leadership to drive a better future, and to be an invitation and expectation that other leaders in your organization should help. If we can’t win over the curmudgeons, then it takes on an implication of, “if you’re not coming with me, then you will be left behind.” When all else fails, a “join me or die” stance is better than allowing a leader to facilitate or garner more resistance.

As you make your plans for your improvement enterprise, be sure to engage your natural leaders within your organization in those plans for change. Address their

needs and concerns, and engage them to help you drive the initiative. Do not allow them to form a resistance, or to become an example of resistance, to your improvement. The strategy to include leaders will mean the difference between success and failure.

Stay wise, friends.

What’s your take? Please feel free to comment below! For more information, please visit www.bizwizwithin.com *[2].*

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