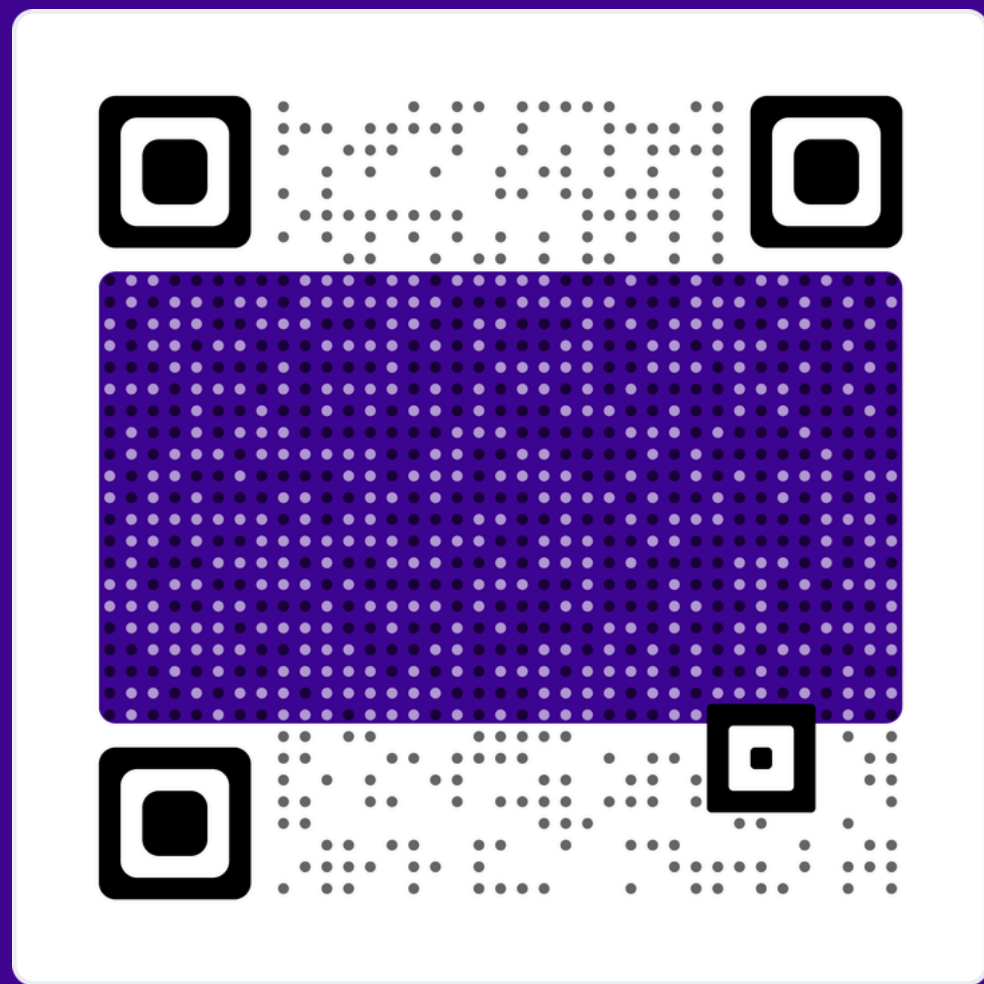


FROM RESISTANCE TO ROCKSTAR

What Strategic Leaders Do Differently

Mindy Honcoop | Ed Stockwell





Scan the QR code

Download the slides and access the appendix for the breakout conversations.



MEET YOUR FACILITATORS



Ed Stockwell

Ed Stockwell is a product, program, and portfolio executive with experience leading cross-functional teams across SaaS, professional services, and B2B/B2C e-commerce organizations. He has built and scaled new-to-market service programs, led operational and agile transformations, and helped teams turn complexity into practical execution. Ed now works with businesses and nonprofits through Edalston Group, bringing an operator's lens to strategy, AI adoption, and organizational change.



Mindy Honcoop

Mindy Honcoop is the founder of Agile in HR, where she helps growing companies build the people infrastructure they need to scale. With 26 years in the people function, including roles as a CPO and senior people leader, she has led transformation from inside the work rather than from the sidelines.

Mindy's focus is AI-driven HR transformation and organizational resilience. Her core conviction is that HR is uniquely positioned to lead organizational change, and consistently underleveraged in that role. She is a speaker, executive advisor, and coach, co-founder of AlthR Hive, and currently serves as fractional VP of Customer Success at MeBeBot.

WHAT IF THE SMARTEST THING HAPPENING IN YOUR ORGANIZATION RIGHT NOW is the resistance?

Most organizations treat resistance as the obstacle.
The best leaders treat it as intelligence.



TABLE TALK

NAME A CHANGE THAT MET RESISTANCE

1. Think of a recent change initiative that met resistance — technology rollout, policy shift, restructuring, anything.
2. Share with your table: What happened? What did the resistance sound like?
3. Discuss: Was the resistance about the change itself, or something underneath it?

5 min table | 3 min share

SOUND FAMILIAR?

"We don't have time for this."

"Everything is changing too fast."

"Nobody asked us before deciding."

"Will this make my role irrelevant?"

"We tried this before. It didn't work."

These aren't complaints. They're signals.



CHANGE IS RELENTLESS, AND WE WASTE IT FROM THE START

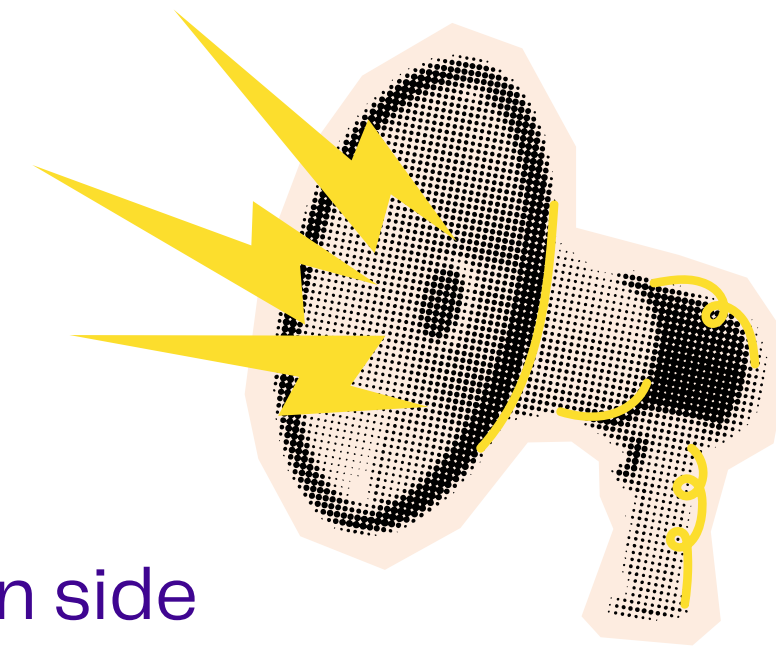
Gartner: The average employee faced 10 planned enterprise changes in 2022, up from 2 in 2016.

McKinsey: Yet nearly a quarter of each transformation's value is lost at target-setting, before execution even begins.

The problem isn't one bad rollout. It's a fivefold rise in change, with the value leaking out on day one of each.



THE BRIDGE BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND TALENT



Most change fails not because the technology is wrong, but because the human side was an afterthought.

Co-design vs inform

Bring people into the design process early. The people closest to the work see what leadership can't.

Experiment vs mandate

Start small. Pilot with willing teams. Let results build the case instead of slides.

Bridge vs push

Connect what's changing to what matters to your people. Career growth, workload relief, better tools.

Discover vs assume

Find out where people are in their journey. Emotions vary depending on stage.

THE COST OF MISREADING RESISTANCE



When we treat resistance as the problem instead of reading the signal:



Compliance vs Commitment

People comply but never commit. The change looks successful on paper but falls apart under pressure.



Trust Escrow

Employees learn that their concerns don't matter. Next time you need buy-in, you start from a deficit.



Running in wet sand

Pushing through resistance actually slows things down. You end up re-doing work that wasn't adopted the first time.



It's not me, it's you

Your most thoughtful people — the ones paying closest attention — check out first.

The Reframe

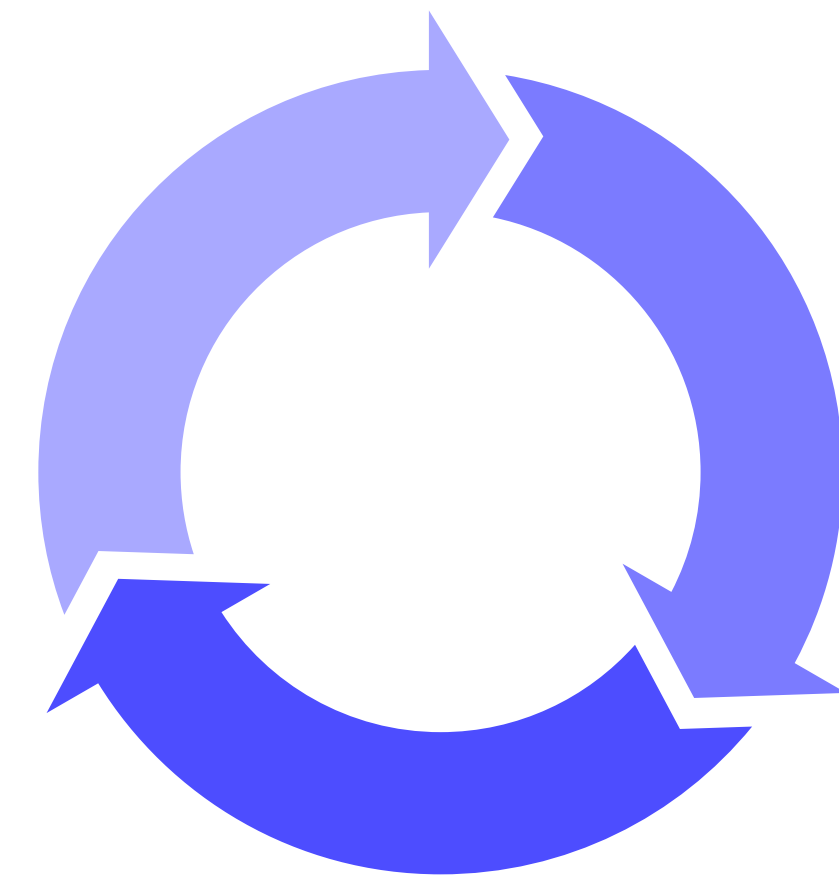
RESISTANCE ISN'T FAILURE. IT'S FEEDBACK.

It's your invitation to slow down,
listen, and realign.



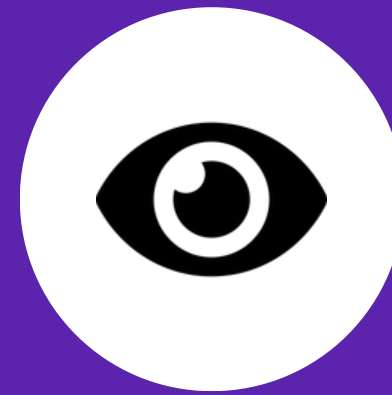
THE RESISTANCE DECODER

THREE LENSES FOR STRATEGIC RESPONSE



Read the Signal

What type of resistance is this?



Recognize & Respond

What stage of change are they in?



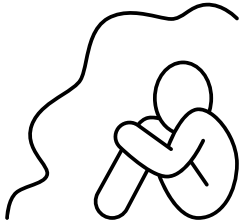
**Move Forward
Together**

What's the right response?



TURNING SIGNALS INTO LEVERS



	Barrier Signals	You Hear and See	The Lever	Your Move
	Doubt	"I don't know enough." Inaction, second-guessing, disengagement	Build Clarity	Define the why, what, and how. Make it concrete.
	Overwhelm	"Too much, too fast." Burnout, surface-level adoption	Create Focus	Prioritize and sequence. Show what can wait.
	Isolation	"Nobody asked us." Lack of influence, missed collaboration	Foster Connection	Bring stakeholders in. Co-design, don't inform.
	Fear	"Will I still matter?" Guardedness, active resistance	Establish Safety	Reward learning. Normalize experimentation.

ACTIVITY

DECODE YOUR SITUATION

Think of a specific person or group resisting a change you're leading or supporting right now.

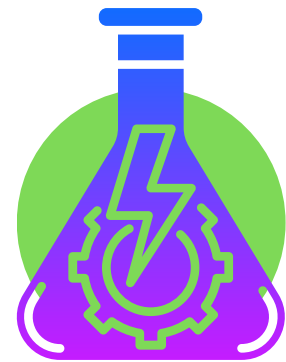
1. What does the resistance sound like? (Capture their actual words.)
2. Which barrier is driving it? (Doubt, overwhelm, isolation, or fear?)
3. What lever should you pull? What would that look like practically?

Individual: 3 min | Pair share: 4 min | Debrief: 3 min



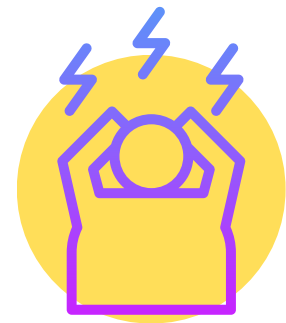
DETECTING THE FRICTION

A mental model for calibrating your response intensity



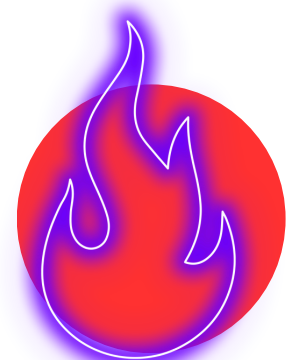
Catalyst for Change

Build trust, set expectations, create culture. This is where you prevent resistance before it starts: effective 1:1s, clear goals, team norms, coaching mindset.



Friction (Early Detection)

Patterns emerging — a formerly reliable person starts missing deadlines, quality drops, emotional shifts in meetings. Stay curious before getting corrective. Name the pattern. Escalate supportively.



Destructive Fire

Repeated feedback hasn't changed behavior, or a serious issue demands immediate response.

LENS 2

RECOGNIZE & RESPOND

People move through change in stages. Your response needs to match their stage — not yours.



1

Resistance

"We don't have time for this."

Listen for the why behind
hesitation.

Normalize uncertainty. Don't argue.



2

Curiosity

"Let's try one thing and see."

Create small, visible experiments.
Celebrate small wins. Make
learning safe.



3

Readiness

"We can build on this."

Share outcomes. Sustain
momentum
through shared ownership.

ACTIVITY

PRACTICE THE CONVERSATION

Scenario:

Your team is rolling out a new technology platform. One of your strongest contributors, Jordan, has gone quiet in meetings, started missing intermediate deadlines, and told a colleague, "I don't see why we need to change what's already working."

1. Use the **Resistance Decoder (slide 24)**: What signal is Jordan sending? Which barrier(s)?
2. Draft your opening using the **coaching sequence (slide 21)**.
3. Role-play: One person is the leader, one is Jordan. Use SBI if needed.
4. Switch roles. Then discuss: What worked? What felt hard?

Pairs: 10 min | Debrief: 5 min



ACTIVITY

PLAN YOUR NEXT MOVE

Using the **Resistance Decoder** (slide 24) framework, plan one real conversation you need to have in the next two weeks.

1. Who is the person? What change is driving the resistance?
2. What signal are they sending? (Doubt, overwhelm, isolation, fear?)
3. What stage are they in? (Resistance, curiosity, readiness?)
4. What's your opening line? (Start with curiosity.)
5. What's the one thing you want them to walk away understanding?

Individual: 5 min



WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Resistance is a signal, not a setback.

Stop trying to overcome it. Start trying to understand it.

Match your response to the barrier.

Doubt needs clarity. Overwhelm needs focus. Isolation needs connection. Fear needs safety.

Start with curiosity, not correction.

The coaching sequence — curiosity, clarity, consequence — works because people need to feel heard before they can hear you.

Connect technology and talent through dialogue.

Co-design beats compliance. Small experiments beat big mandates. People adopt what they help create.



THANK YOU

The leaders who handle resistance best
aren't the ones who push hardest.

They're the ones who listen deepest.

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Appendix



MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER

The conversation is the strategy.

The Coaching Sequence: Curiosity → Clarity → Consequence



Set the Stage

Choose the right time and place. State your intention clearly. Prepare data, not just feelings. Align feedback with shared goals.



Listen to Understand

Listen with your mind (enter their frame). Listen with your body (non-verbals matter). Listen with your words (reflect, don't fix).



Reinforce & Follow Up

Clarify expectations and next steps. Schedule follow-up conversations. Celebrate progress, even small shifts.

A SIMPLE STRUCTURE FOR HARD CONVERSATIONS

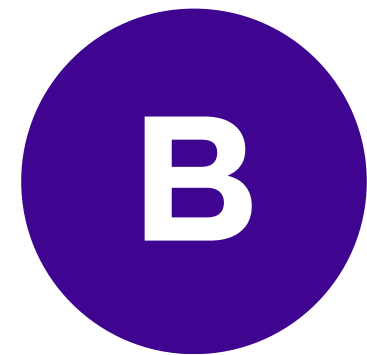
The SBI Model keeps feedback specific, behavioral, and future-focused.



Situation

Describe the specific context.

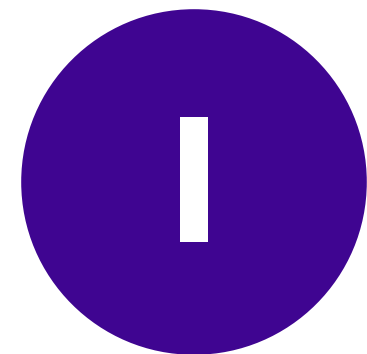
"During Monday's planning meeting..."



Behavior

Name the observable action.

"...you interrupted two team members while they were sharing their ideas."



Impact

Explain the effect.

"It disrupted the flow of ideas and made others hesitant to speak."

Then ask: "What was going on from your perspective?"

WHEN EMOTIONS SHOW UP

Resistance triggers emotional reactions. Here's how to stay grounded.

Reaction	Do This	Avoid This
Shock / Anger	Acknowledge emotion. Listen. Restate facts.	Don't personalize or dilute.
Self-Doubt	Reassure with examples. Break into small steps.	Don't echo negativity.
Blame-Shifting	Acknowledge context. Clarify expectations.	Don't validate excuses.
Denial	Provide examples. Stay calm. Outline consequences.	Don't argue or soften to avoid conflict.
Apathy	Ask for commitment. Highlight impact of inaction.	Don't ignore disengagement.

THE RESISTANCE DECODER — YOUR TAKEAWAY TOOL

THE SITUATION:

What change is driving resistance? Who is resisting? What do you hear them saying?

LENS 1 — READ THE SIGNAL:

Which barrier? ☐ Doubt ☐ Overwhelm ☐ Isolation ☐ Fear

Evidence (what makes you think this?):

LENS 2 — MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE:

Which stage? ☐ Resistance ☐ Curiosity ☐ Readiness

LENS 3 — MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER:

My opening (start with curiosity):

The one thing I want them to understand:

My follow-up plan: