Clearfield Group

3 COMMON MISTAKES WHEN LEADING CHANGE

And what you can do about it

See resistance in a positive way

Include others to create lasting change

Use curiosity to be the leader others will follow

I know a thing or 3, because I've seen a thing or 3.

Including the mistakes listed below. These are the 3 I see most often. I created this simple guide to help leaders re-focus when feeling stuck. *Keep this nearby, say on your computer desktop. Refer to it often.*

Chris Clearfield
Founder of The Clearfield Group

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TAKING ACTION TOO SOON

What I often see

Leaders have a good idea of what to change. And a vision of how it could all work differently. **But then take action before drawing in the others.**

Why this is a mistake

Without engaging others, your change will never stick. **When taking action too soon, leaders…**

- Waste time **doing things themselves** what the team should being doing together
- Waste energy **inspiring vs. actually helping** others through change
- Create distance **when *telling* instead of *listening***
- Frustrate people **convincing them to do things differently**
- **Bore people** talking about their own work vs. hearing what the others do

So then, people… **Don't relate well** with leaders. **Lack confidence** to create the needed change. **Keep doing only what's comfortable** vs. what could stretch them.

Try this instead

Bring along the others to **create change that matters**—to everyone:

- **Help others** see the challenge
- **Show how** the problem impacts the business
- **Be curious** about their experiences
- **Reflect together** so change can become deep rooted for the team
- **Articulate your vision** to create common understanding
- **Create space** for the team to serve up their best ideas
- **Find others** who care about this change, to test your ideas
- **Incorporate their feedback** to include even more great ideas
- **Start seeing results** across disciplines, departments & locations
- **Notice what's working**, what's not—to adapt, adopt & improve next time

Remember, change is iterative—not prescriptive.

What life could look like

- People working together to **create worthwhile changes**
- A team that knows how to **create change themselves**
- A place where **people welcome change** vs. fear it
- A workplace where **experimenting, iterating & learning** is encouraged
- An activity people will **seek out themselves**
- Build on past changes to **make them even better**
- **Respect from leaders**, board members & peers for doing such a great job

What I often see

Leaders see the problems facing their organizations. They have the data. They have the time to *dig in*. They see a better way. They imagine that others will too. **Then they make their case.** They highlight the problem and try to fix it. **And that's where things go wrong.**

Why this is a mistake

Pushing for change creates resistance in others. The more one *pushes*, the more others *push back*. Like a rubber band that slaps your hand. Ouch. The expensive, business kind of ouch.

When you push for *your* solution, people on the ground...

- Resist you for not **understanding their work**
- **Resist solutions** that don't make sense to them
- Don't like **being told what to do**
- **Feel unappreciated** when they're not included in the process
- **Lose trust in leaders** because problems don't even get fixed

Try this instead

- **Express the problem** and how it affects the business
- **Be curious** to know how others see it
- Make sure **everyone understands** it
- **Admit when you don't know** the answer
- **Co–create** bold solutions
- **Keeping showing** genuine curiosity about what they see
- **Create a solution** using the best of everyone

What life could look like

People aren't lazy. It **only looks that way** when they don't understand. Or agree. But when they're part of a solution that will make their life better? **Primo!**

- **People will feel appreciated**, heard and valued
- They'll see **that you care**
- **Experience less struggle**, less fighting and more understanding
- **Better ideas**, better energy, better camaraderie…
- **More sharing**, more caring, more commitments…
- And… **better change**, the kind that sticks

All because you **lead with curiosity**, instead of authority.

3 TRY *OVERCOMING* RESISTANCE

What I often see

Leaders see resistance to change **as a problem**. A negative. A force to power through. And then they try to get the others **to submit & comply**. This can happen in subtle ways. But it's doesn't feel subtle to others when forcing them to adopt **our position.**

Why this is a mistake

It's like saying out loud, *"I know what I'm doing. Do as I say."* Yikes.
When this happens people...

- **Stop listening** to the leader
- **Dig in** even further
- **Resist change** even more
- Agree superficially while **resenting silently**
- Go silent—and **lose valuable insights** of those closer to the solution
- **Leave the business** to be heard & appreciated elsewhere

Try this instead

See resistance **as a signal**, not an obstacle. Know that others are seeing things you're not. Things that are in your blind spot. Because they are.

- **Notice *your* resistance** to their resistance
- Convert that **into a healthy cue**
- Be the leader that **brings people together**, not splits them apart
- Recognize that **ya'll can create a better solution** than just you
- **Create a space & mentality** where everyone's sharing their thoughts & ideas
- Keep everyone **focused on the problem & impact** to the business
- **Share your top–level view** so they'll feel closer to the problem

Once again, because **you let curiosity be your guide** and everyone's else's leader.

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Got questions? Let's talk.

We'll have a good chat about leading change—the right way.

SCHEDULE CALL NOW

Ready to lead with curiosity to get the best of everybody?

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Too many leaders facing big change struggle to get started. I coach leaders & teams to use curiosity as their guide. And shift their mindset to solve complex problems with ease.

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