

Overcoming Resistance to Change

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Agile is good. So, why do people resist it?

Some popular theories...

- They are stupid.
- They are stubborn.
- They are mean-spirited.
- They revel in mediocrity.

Which of those theories
helps us achieve positive
results?

What if we ask...

Why would “an intelligent, competent, sincere person of good will” resist a proposed change?

The “Resistance as a Resource” Game

We will play the game in an “agile” way:

1. Self-organizing teams
2. Iterative process
3. Time-boxed activities
4. Retrospection

People resist change when they perceive that the change is a threat to them.

Must threat be real?

Like what?

Types of
resistance

Cognitive

I don't understand...

...what should change

...why it should change (benefits)

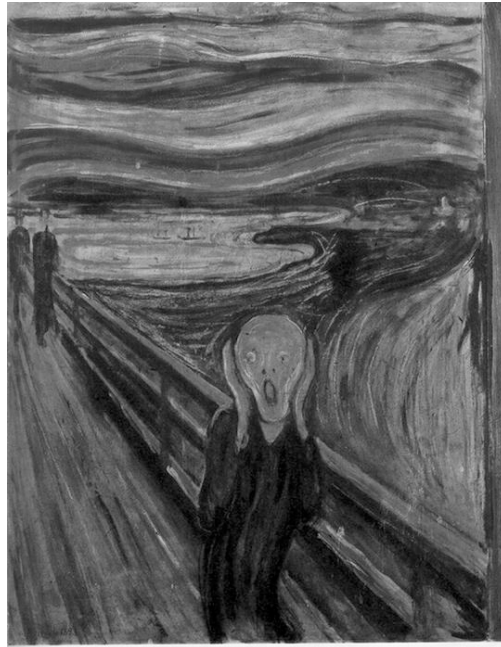
...how to change (what to do)

**MY
BRAIN
HURTS!**



Types of Emotional resistance

Can I do this?
Will I like it?
Will I look foolish?
Do I feel threatened?
Why didn't they ask me?
I'm comfortable as-is.



Types of Behavioral resistance

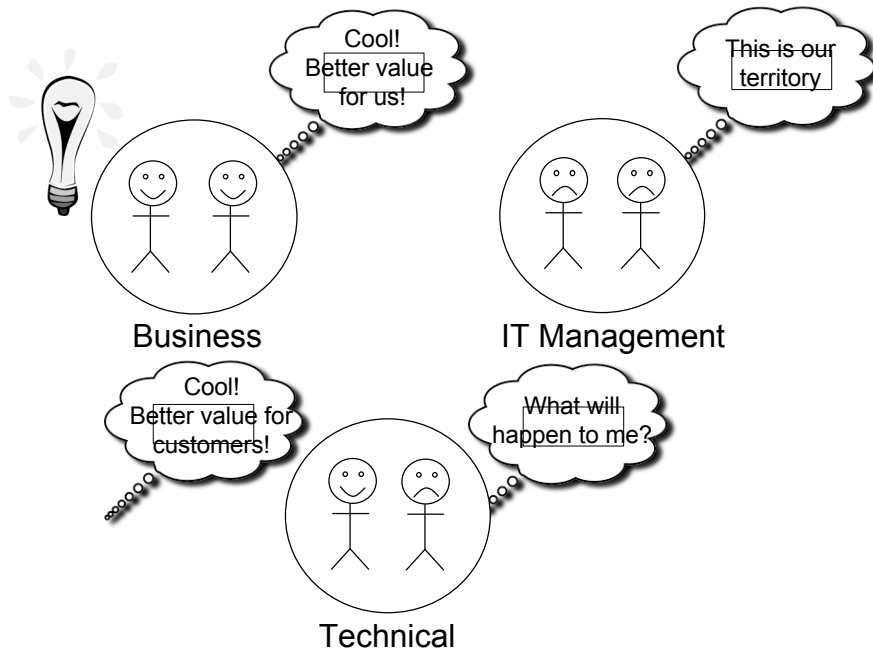
I will stop this change.



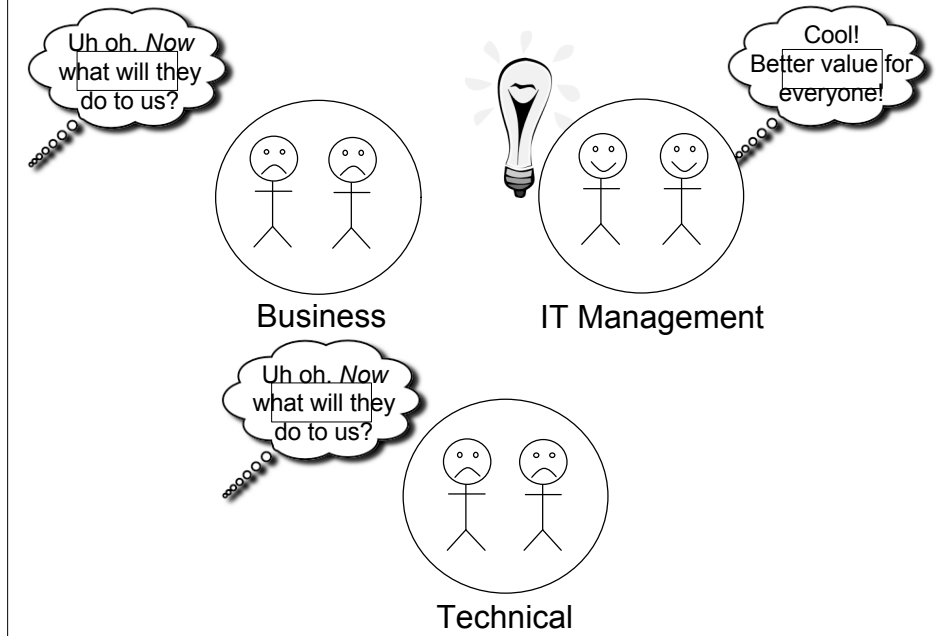
Forms of Resistance

active	↔	passive
overt	↔	covert
individual	↔	organized
aggressive	↔	timid

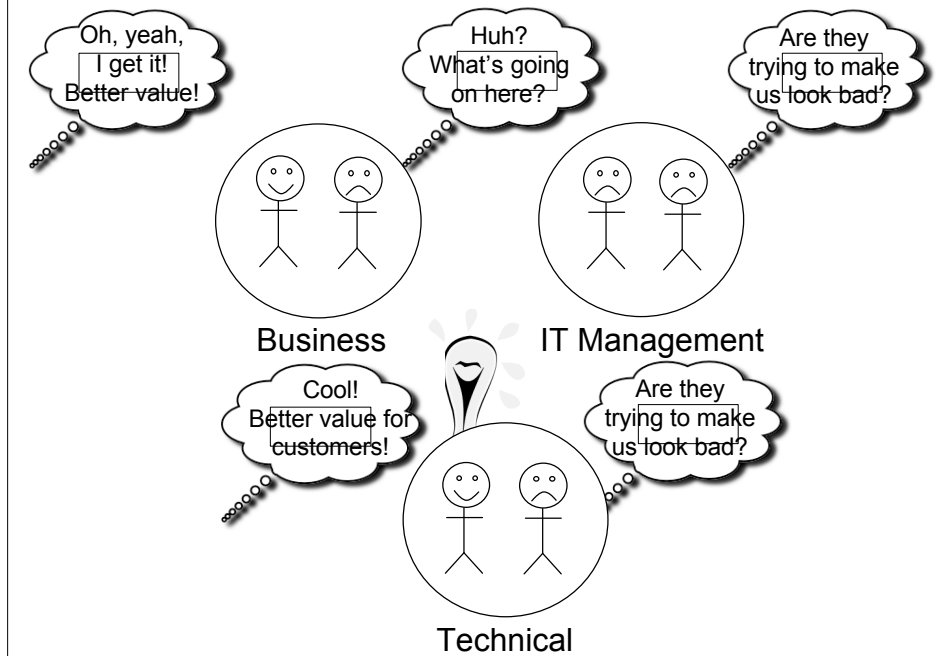
Who will resist depends on whose idea it is to change



Who will resist depends on whose idea it is to change



Who will resist depends on whose idea it is to change



Differences in Priorities

Business
Profit center mentality

1. Time to market
2. Business alignment
3. Cost of ownership
4. Quality

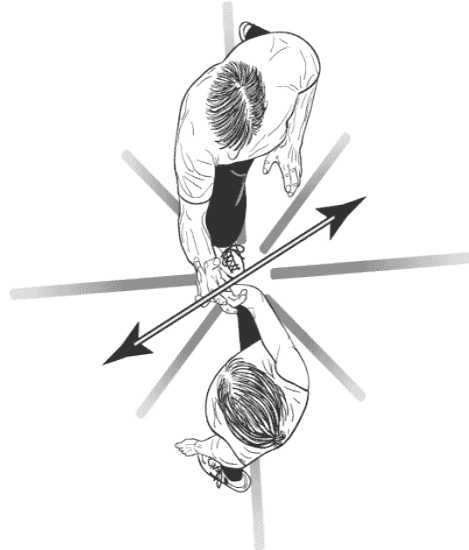
IT Management
Cost center mentality

1. Cost of ownership
2. Business alignment
3. Quality
4. Time to market

IT Technical Staff
R & D mentality

1. Quality
2. Business alignment
3. Time to market
4. Cost of ownership

Is resistance ^{necessarily} bad?



Counter-Implementation Strategies



- Divert resources
- Exploit inertia
- Keep goals vague and complex
- Encourage/exploit lack of organizational awareness
- Overload the process ("let's do it right")
- Dissipate energies
- Reduce the champion's influence/credibility
- Keep a low profile

Counter-Counter-Implementation Strategies



- Wait them out
- Wear them out
- Appeal to higher authority
- Invite them in
- Send emissaries
- Display support
- Reduce the stakes
- Warn them off

Six-Stage Approach to Overcoming Resistance

1. Facilitation
2. Education
3. Involvement
4. Negotiation
5. Manipulation
6. Coercion

Overcoming Preconceptions About “Agile”

Focus on the value proposition

Avoid using buzzwords

And now for another game...

Role-playing:
Overcoming resistance to change.

We will do it in the "agile" way:

1. Self-organizing teams
2. Iterative process
3. Time-boxed activities
4. Retrospection

Retrospective

What went well in this session?

What could be improved?

Do you recognize any of these types/forms of resistance in your organization?

Can you apply this approach in your organization?