

SKIP LEVEL

strategic leadership for leaders ready to think two levels up

EPISODE 126 · WORKSHEET

EPISODE 126

Find the Stuck Letter

When a change stalls, leaders usually blame resistance. But what if the problem is not resistance at all — just one stuck letter? Drawing on Prosci's ADKAR model, Maya and Marcus turn change into a diagnostic: score five letters, and fix only the one that's actually stuck.

KEY STRATEGIES & IDEAS

1. Organizations Do Not Change. People Do.

Prosci's ADKAR model breaks change into five outcomes every single person must reach, in order. Awareness of the need for change. Desire to participate. Knowledge of how to change. Ability to do it on the job. Reinforcement to sustain it. Organizations do not change. People do, one person at a time.

2. Below Three Is the Barrier

Score a person from one to five on each letter. Any score below three is a barrier point. That is where your effort goes. Not everywhere. There.

3. Resistance Is Usually Misdiagnosis

A team member nods in every meeting and changes nothing after it, so the leader sends them to training. But training is Knowledge. If the person is stuck at Desire, if they see nothing in it for them, training changes nothing. You fixed a letter that was never broken.

4. An Announcement Is Not Awareness

An announcement is not Awareness. Awareness means the person can tell you why the change is happening, in their own words. And Desire is not agreement. Desire means they want to be part of it.

5. Your Letter, Not Your Message

Plenty of leaders are stuck at Desire on a change they are supposed to champion, because nobody sold it to them either. A leader stuck at Desire cannot sell Desire. Your team can tell, and they will match your letter, not your message.

The proof: Plenty of leaders are stuck at Desire on a change they are supposed to champion, because nobody sold it to them either. A leader stuck at Desire cannot sell Desire — and the team will match the leader's letter, not the leader's message.

Joe Dutkiewicz

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ACTION & REFLECTION STEPS

- [ ] **Step one — score your own five letters first.** Think of the problem the organization's leaders have asked you to address, and the solution proposed for it. Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement, one to five each. Be honest about the lowest score. That is your barrier.

My five scores:

- [ ] **Step two — pick one stuck person and score their five letters.** Find the lowest one. Do not fix everything. Name the one barrier point, and say it out loud to yourself before you act.

The person and their lowest letter:

- [ ] **Step three — fix only that letter.** If it is Desire, have the conversation about what is in it for them. If it is Knowledge, train them. If it is Ability, give them practice and coaching on the real job, not another deck. Match the fix to the letter, and nothing else.

- [ ] **Step four — design the reinforcement now, before the change goes live.** Recognition, metrics, feedback that catches the new behavior and rewards it. Reinforcement is not an afterthought. It is the fifth letter, and without it, people drift quietly back to the old way.

The reinforcement I will design:

Think two levels up. — Maya & Marcus

Joe Dutkiewicz

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