

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

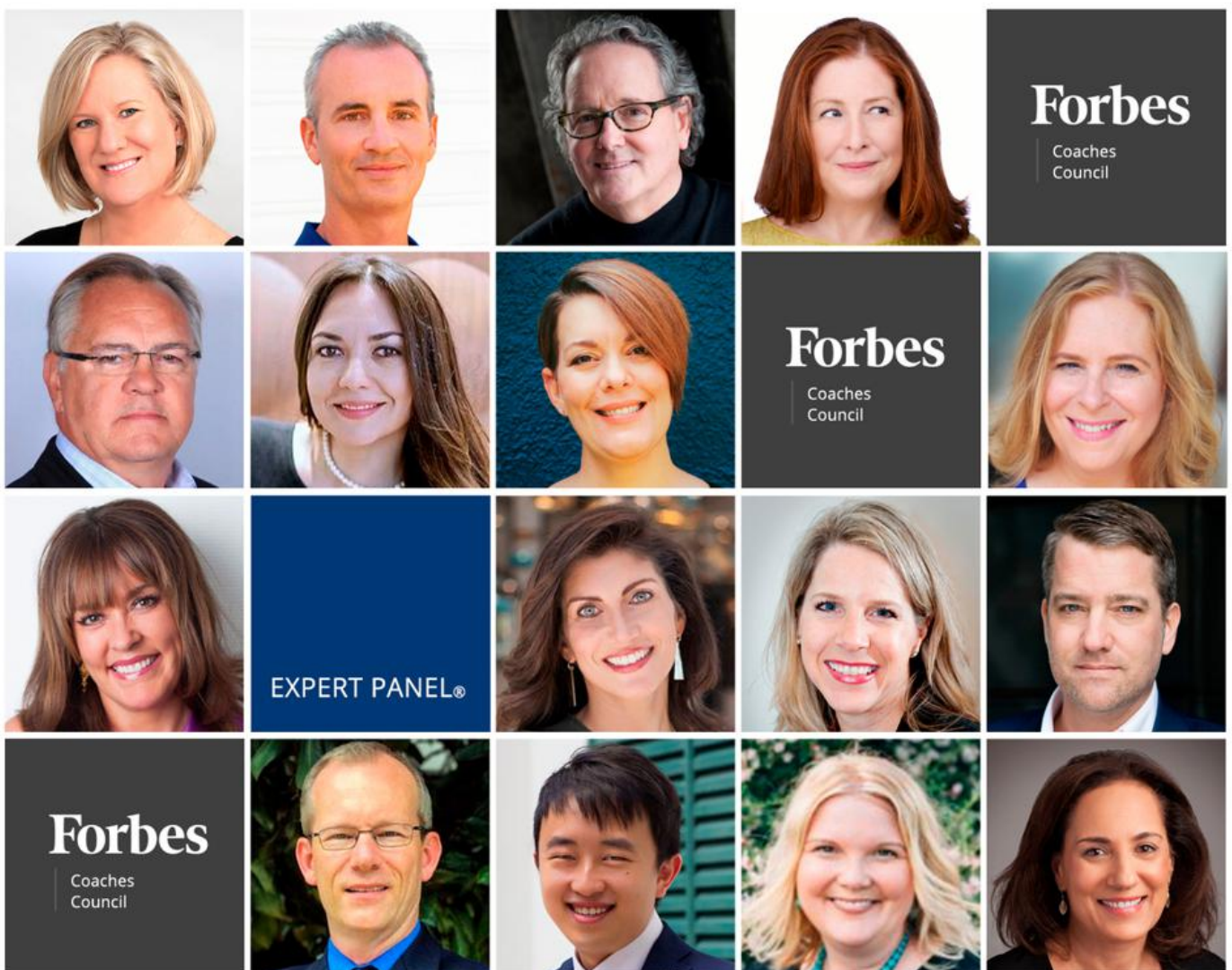


16 Coaching
Techniques To Help
Your Team Overcome
Resistance To Change

16 Coaching Techniques To Help Your Team Overcome Resistance To Change

Many humans are creatures of habit. They like their routine and feel uncomfortable or hesitant when that consistency is broken. However, change is often needed in the workplace, and it's crucial to get your team onboard.

There are many coaching techniques leaders can use to help overcome resistance to change from their staff. We asked 16 [Forbes Coaches Council](#) members to share their best approaches and why they're so effective.



Photos courtesy of the individual members.

16 Coaching Techniques To Help Your Team Overcome Resistance To Change

Members of Forbes Coaches Council share how leaders can help teams embrace change.

1. Trust Employee Reactions

Instead of reacting to charged emotions that feel like a stress reaction in someone, the best thing to do is trust they are having a reaction for a good reason. Then, inquire about the golden nugget that is underneath. When someone feels heard, the charged emotions dissipate and everyone can get back into the flow quickly. - [Pam Boney](#), [tilt365.com](#)

2. Create A Listening Circle

Have a group of people sit in a circle without tables. Create a safe environment and allow everyone to share their concerns and frustrations. For the majority of the session, do not defend or explain the company policy or change. Just repeat back what they said with care. Empathize and then ask their permission to share your thoughts. This completely changes the dynamic. - [Dan Messinger](#), [Cream of the Crop Leaders](#)

3. Recognize Different Reactions

Recognize that there are different reactions to change, not just resistance. Most people will go along with the change as long as there is a clear personal and business case to do so. Others will fight the change, no matter what, and that should just be condoned. Some will jump on board and be cheerleaders. Build and communicate a strong business case and elicit the cheerleaders help. - [Michael Couch](#), [Michael Couch and Associates Inc.](#)

4. Invite Employees To Have A Voice

Change requires trust. Resistance to change tells you it's time to reflect on the psychological safety and trust inherent within the system. Too often, change sounds like, "Do this now." If an organization is committed to overcoming resistance, increasing trust and building buy-in are fundamental. Inviting people to have a voice in the changes that impact them typically lowers resistance. - [Lyssa deHart](#), [Lyssa deHart, LLC](#)

16 Coaching Techniques To Help Your Team Overcome Resistance To Change

5. Give People Time To Adapt

To change the way people are working usually requires giving up old habits. Recognize what is being lost and give people time to adapt. Highlight and celebrate successes that come from working in a new way and create role models of the people working in the new way. If the change is effective there will be early successes to reward and celebrate. - [Charles Dormer, APEX STP, LLC](#)

6. Uncover Hidden Pain Points

When value and desired outcomes are clearly identified through active listening and perceived obstacles removed, we can proceed with much needed and desired change at that point. But to get there, it is essential to uncover all key pain or trigger points. Then go through a new desired state while utilizing data, and real and relevant examples. - [Izabela Lundberg, Legacy Leaders Institute](#)

7. Articulate What Is Changing

Be prepared to clearly articulate what's in it for them. Resistance to change is normal, but when people understand why the change is necessary and more importantly, how it will improve their personal situation, they become more open to it. Linking the change to specific positive outcomes, that directly impact the staff, is one way to overcome resistance. - [Cheryl Czach, Cheryl Czach Coaching and Consulting, LLC](#)

8. Practice Active Listening

Active listening is one technique leaders should embrace to overcome resistance. Don't fall into the trap of embracing falsehoods, such as the idea that people don't like change. Some people love change! To overcome resistance, you have to understand why there is resistance. Is it emotional, is it a sound business objection or both? The answers will help determine how you coach through the opposition. - [Tracy Levine, Advantage Talent, Inc.](#)

16 Coaching Techniques To Help Your Team Overcome Resistance To Change

9. Understand Deeply Held Values

Understanding deeply held values and beliefs is an important enabler for change. Edgar Schein's work on the three levels of culture (visible, conscious, unconscious) is a great model to explore what lies beneath the visible for key change information. By working together to make seen that which is below the surface, we are able to surface and leverage that which supports and/or undermines change. - [Palena Neale, Ph.D](#), [unabridged](#)

10. Take Small Steps

Break down a goal into small steps. Our minds naturally resist change, so thinking about taking the tiniest step tricks the brain into taking action. This helps your team focus on one step at a time. It also boosts confidence to make progress at each step by associating a positive outcome to the goal and motivating people to stick with pursuing it, ultimately achieving the desired result. - [Rosie Guagliardo](#), [InnerBrilliance Coaching](#)

11. Get Employees Involved

Include employees in the change management process. Their perspective is valuable and they should feel that. Help them understand the need for change, why it is good for the business and what's in it for them. Enlist their help in making the change happen. Gather their ideas to evolve to the new way of doing things. As their commitment increases, you have a much greater chance of success. - [Kimberly Svoboda](#), [Aspiration Catalyst](#)

12. Enable Others To Act

Leaders can review their view of the current management culture in the company, visibly adjust their own behavior and provide middle management with support. Courage, a commitment to modern work and visible trust in the team are required. Top managers do not have to be superheroes. Their own mistakes, limitations or certain uncertainties in relation to the complex requirements are also part of credibility. - [Cristian Hofmann](#), [Empowering Executives | SUPERGROUP LTD](#)

16 Coaching Techniques To Help Your Team Overcome Resistance To Change

13. Share Positive Stories

Share stories of how previous change led to good things. The creative use of stories over cold data cannot be underestimated. Combine the power of story with data and you have a compelling argument that won't sound like you are arguing with your employees. They will hear how the company faced a problem like this before, how the people responded and how the "change" created a positive outcome. - [John M. O'Connor, Career Pro Inc.](#)

14. Keep What They Like

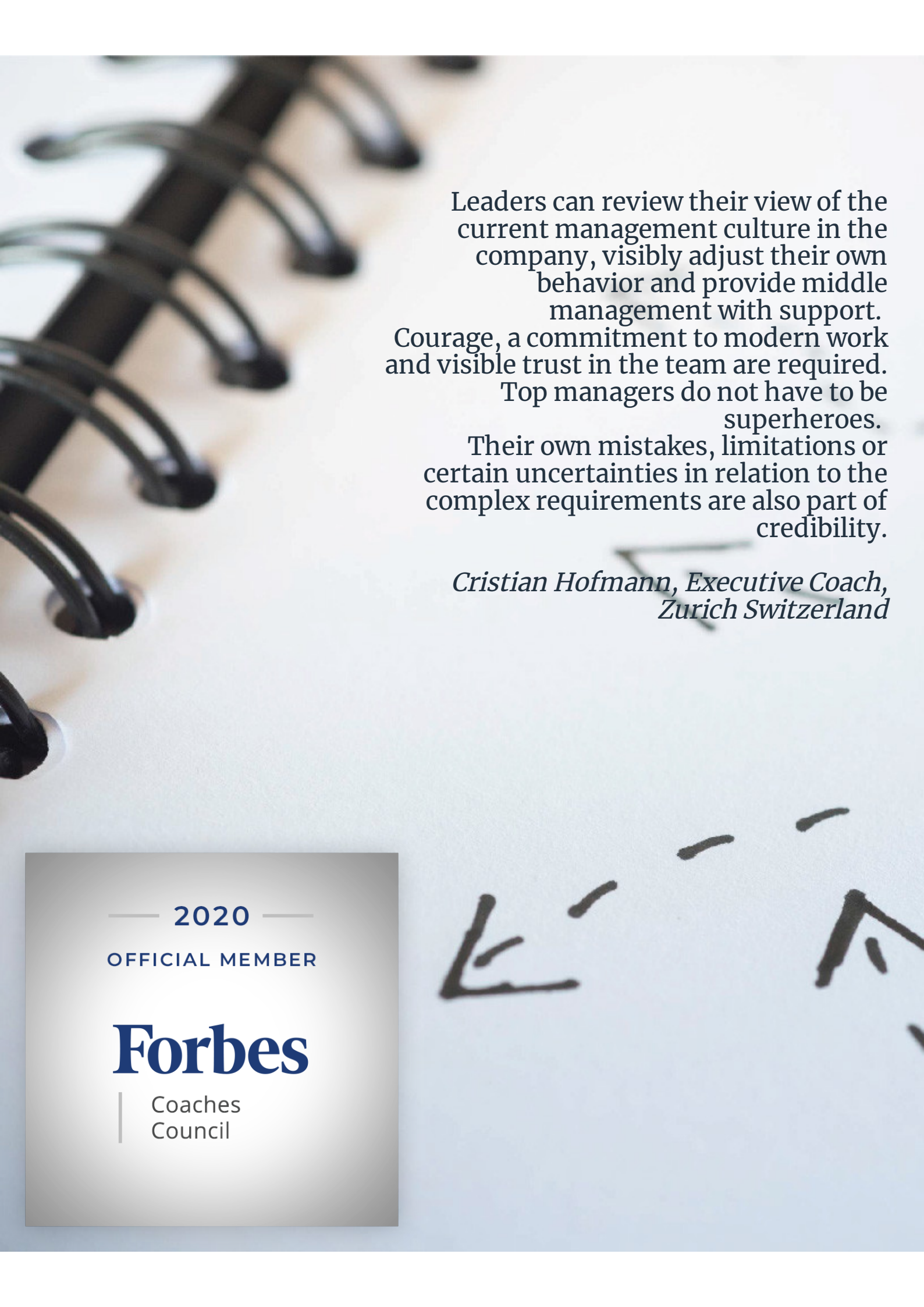
This is a powerful technique to get them to think about what they would like to keep, which will give leaders a clue on what they would be open to change. Oftentimes, they resist because they are attached to the things that mean something to them. Asking them why they like that process, why they would want to keep them and how it supports the team will lower resistance to change. - [Jedidiah Alex Koh, Coaching Changes Lives](#)

15. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

In the absence of data, we make up stories. Those stories can cause frustration, fear and anxiety in an organization. Counter that by overcommunicating, and not just by email! Create safe spaces where team members can share their ideas and concerns about the change. - [Amy Leneker, Compass Consulting, LLC](#)

16. Consider Your Employees' Sacrifices

Consider asking the team or an individual employee what they need to give up in order for the change to take place. Seek to understand, listen and acknowledge the feelings and behaviors that they will need to let go of. Once employees feel validated, they will be more open to change. In addition, the leader may uncover true issues that will need to be addressed before any change is instituted. - [Julie Kantor, PhD, JP Kantor Consulting](#)



Leaders can review their view of the current management culture in the company, visibly adjust their own behavior and provide middle management with support. Courage, a commitment to modern work and visible trust in the team are required. Top managers do not have to be superheroes. Their own mistakes, limitations or certain uncertainties in relation to the complex requirements are also part of credibility.

*Cristian Hofmann, Executive Coach,
Zurich Switzerland*

— 2020 —
OFFICIAL MEMBER

Forbes

Coaches
Council