

BOOK EXCERPT

The Human Side of the Strategic Planning Process in Higher Education

Chapter 3: The Challenges of Change as Part of Strategic Planning

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If you want to make enemies, try to change something.

—Woodrow Wilson, Address at the Salesmanship Congress, Detroit MI, July 10, 1916.

It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end.

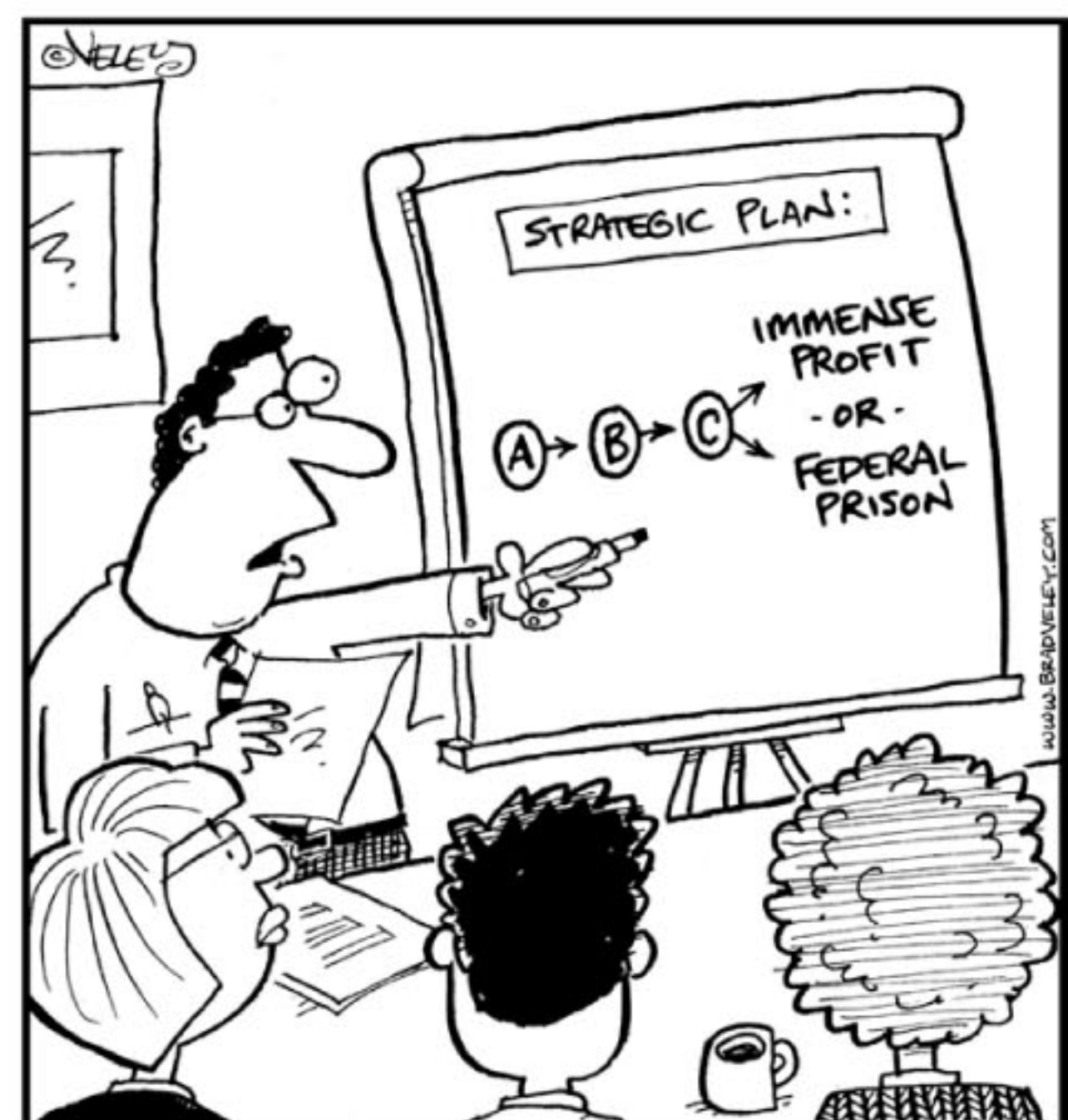
—Leonardo da Vinci, *Notebooks*, 1508–1518

THERE MAY BE COUNTLESS REASONS from both an individual and organizational perspective why various groups will resist the strategic planning process on campus and the change it may require. It appears to be just part of the process that cannot be avoided. You will be damned if you do and damned if you don't. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (2001) make this point in reference to the development of a vision statement by the president of an institution. Some will criticize the president for a lack of leadership if no vision is provided. If a vision is provided, it will be criticized unless, as the authors state, it is an "inclusive Christmas tree" (p. 270) on which each constituency gets to hang a glittery ornament that may be more show than substance.

Strategic planning that is more than just a show will challenge the current way of doing things on campus. As indicated in figure 3.1, on one hand, the strategic management process provides an institution with a direction that can lead to a positive outcome but, on the other, propels the institution onto an uncharted and potentially perilous course (Taylor and Machado 2006). Given that perspective, some resistance is inevitable. In strategic planning, the goal may not be to

avoid the resistance people have to the process; rather, a more realistic goal may be to anticipate the resistance, identify its source, and manage it the best you can. It can be tricky to get those involved to focus on the potential positive outcomes rather than fixate on the possible negatives.

Figure 3.1 The Duality of Strategic Planning



“Stay with me now, people, because in Step C, things get a bit delicate.”

Source: Brad Veley, <http://bradveley.com>

There may be some unexpected benefits realized and lessons learned from challenges to the strategic planning process, such as exposing the vulnerabilities of the process. Challenges can also clarify issues that different groups may have and

foster the process of identifying remedies. A faculty member shared a story of the challenge faced by his institution in refurbishing a central and historical building on campus. The building had a great deal of significant and sentimental value to alumni as well as to faculty who had served on the campus for many years. The building included a beautiful arched walkway that led up to its entrance. However, after many years of neglect, the building was beyond repair. The investment needed to restore it was greater than that to tear it down and just build a new building in its place. Although the building had become an eye sore as well as a potential hazard, there was a great deal of resistance from alumni, faculty, and the current student body to losing such a treasured symbol. This building was part of the character of the institution. Dealing with this challenge resulted in an important lesson for the newer administration as to how powerful traditions were on that campus; although this was a necessary change, it still seemed to displease the majority. The solution developed by the administration and some insightful architects involved integrating parts of the old symbol with a new tradition. The arched walkway could be saved and refinished. While there was much grumbling from stakeholders during the construction process, many members of the college community joined in the procession led by bagpipers as they marched under the arched walkway for the opening of the new building. This procession under the archway has now become a tradition at the opening of each new academic year and at spring commencement. This example demonstrates how even necessary and sensible change can be viewed as a disturbance. Each institution has its own traditions and character. Changes, especially strategic changes, ought to be undertaken with careful consideration given to the institution's strengths, traditions, and character.

The first two chapters make the case for the importance of considering the people side of strategic planning in higher education. Where there are people, there are politics. In strategic planning, as different stakeholder groups vie for control of resources or fight to protect their positions, political behavior may proliferate beyond the already

existing campus politics. At some level, strategic planning is a political process, and politics will influence the strategic planning process. Within an organization, creating effective change and helping others adapt to the uncertainty of change depends on the effective use of politics. For those involved, there is value in grasping the realities of the political process as they relate to strategic planning.

THE POLITICS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

While some may argue that politics are neither good nor bad (Hochwarter 2003; McIntyre 2005), they can certainly muck up the process. Organizational politics potentially have both negative and positive effects on strategic planning as well as on organizational life. Zahra (1987) reports that the intensity of organizational politics is associated negatively with consensus on mission but positively with the quality of long-range planning efforts. A study by Hochwarter (2003) finds that those participating in political behavior at work had greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment when the level of politics in the work setting was high. However, those participating in political behavior at work were less satisfied and committed when the work setting possessed a low level of politics, perhaps because they were disappointed that others were not playing along.

Regardless of the research that can offer direction based on the connection between organizational politics and workplace behavior, some may want to avoid considering the politics related to strategic planning altogether. This may be a very noble thought. Like workplace gossip, some would rather avoid politics and the potential perceived resentments that may lead to the obstruction of effective communication and collaboration. However, politics, like gossip, cannot just be avoided. Knowing about the gossip allows one to deal with the gossiping colleague or address being the target of gossip. Also, workplace gossip may contain information that, on some level, is noteworthy and should be addressed. So while it may not be necessary to be totally immersed in the world of gossip and politics on campus, it may be helpful to at least be aware

of what the grapevine and informal networks are saying in relation to the strategic planning process.

Understanding the potential influence of politics on the strategic planning process becomes even more important when there is uncertainty, when there are ambiguous lines of authority (Ralston 1985), or when negative politics come into play. Some level of uncertainty and ambiguity will always be part of the strategic planning process. Negative politics can include attacking the plan or those overseeing it with a variety of accusations and innuendoes. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (2001) refer to negative politics related to strategic change in higher education as “veto politics” (p. 70). While they have no real ability to create change, some groups may be able to rally enough support to block change with a resounding vote of no.

Eisenhardt and Zbaracki (1992), in an empirical review of the literature on decision making from that time, contend that it is appropriate to view organizations as political systems. In such systems, strategic decision makers must deal with what at times may appear to be conflicting objectives and their own limited cognitive capacity to address all of the issues. Benveniste (1989) contends that planners do not always know what they are doing, not because of ignorance or confusion, but as a result of not thinking through the political dimensions of their role. Planners usually deal with “messy or wicked problems,” as Benveniste (1989, pp. 34–35) calls them, where goals are unclear and how to proceed is even less clear. Situations that may seem to be resolved best by a relatively simple technical solution are often more complex politically. For example, if students’ inability to graduate in a timely manner was due to a lack of course availability, there would seem to be a simple technical solution. To improve the four-year graduation rate, a greater variety and number of sections of courses could be offered each semester. Courses could also be offered during evening hours to improve access. In addition, a number of introductory courses that are prerequisites for advanced courses could be offered online. This seems like a straightforward technical solution. However, there would be a number of political implications

and push back from several fronts. Departments that view themselves as already strapped for resources may resist as they struggle just to maintain their current course offerings. An offer to provide resources to hire adjunct faculty may raise concerns about changing the character of student-faculty interactions. Adjunct faculty may be viewed as having less of an allegiance to students, a department, or the institution. Also, questions may arise as to why not make the investment in more full-time faculty positions. In a unionized setting, a request to increase class size or the number of sections taught by a faculty member to accommodate more students will lead to opposition by union leaders over increased workloads without adequate compensation. An increase in the number of courses offered in the evening can meet with resistance from a faculty that has become accustomed to a teaching schedule that accommodates their lifestyle. As for online courses, there are the costs of start-up technology and ongoing maintenance. Such costs could again lead to the question of why not invest the funds in more full-time faculty positions instead. An increase in online courses may also put more pressure on the staff responsible for updating and maintaining technology on campus. There is also the issue of developing online courses in a way that optimizes student success. Further, how will these courses be evaluated? For those who teach them, how will they be considered in the process of faculty tenure and promotion? So, what may appear to be a rational and simple technical solution has the potential to create many ripples of discontent with political implications. At some point the possible scenarios need to be considered because each one has the potential to become a reality.

Given this example, thinking through the potential political dimensions of decision making as the institution moves through the strategic planning process may be considered a compulsory activity for planners. Ranker (2008) offers three additional reasons as to why there is value in understanding politics. The first is the value of increasing the probability that one gets what one wants. The second is the value of being able to have an effect at an increasingly greater level as the

number of people one influences grows. The third is the value of having a greater number of options and more control over the way things get done. These reasons offered by Ranker seem rather self-serving, and perhaps that is why politics and political behavior are considered distasteful by some. Political behavior has often been considered primarily in terms of personal gain (Mayes and Allen 1977; Vigoda 2003). However, politics does not necessarily have to refer to the dark side of employee behavior. Some authors on the topic view politics as an inherently necessary component of organizational functioning and political behavior as an activity designed to minimize ambiguity and give meaning to what occurs in an organization (Ammeter et al. 2002; Ferris et al. 2002). Not all politics are necessarily bad, and those who engage in politics do not always do so exclusively out of self-interest or to oppose organizational objectives (Ferris et al. 2007). Ranker suggests that wise politicians understand the significance of politics because they appreciate that the method by which an objective is reached can affect how they feel about themselves and the outcome. To add to Ranker's suggestion, politics can also influence how stakeholders will feel about an outcome. Rather than focusing just on the benefits to oneself, the value of understanding politics is in the value they can have to the institution as part of a successful strategic planning process.

To better understand how the politics on campus may influence the strategic planning process, it may be helpful to contemplate the differences between the perceptions and realities of how campus members relate to one another and espoused campus values are actually propagated. Individuals as well as institutions may go to great lengths to protect an image even if it is not an accurate representation. For a number of reasons that may include protecting a power position or maintaining a sense of prestige or self-worth, the perception for some may be more important than the reality. If a strategic process jeopardizes those perceptions, then some may be compelled to act against it. For example, the term "collegiality" may be commonly used to describe relationships among faculty members who supposedly share a unified set of values regarding education. However, the

mere use of the word does not necessarily mean that friendly, collegial relationships are the norm for behavior. Similarly, a college that publicly promotes a high degree of interaction between faculty and students may be challenged to provide common examples of such behavior.

The truth is that as part of the initial strategic planning process, it may not be possible to change many of the contradictions between the realities of everyday behaviors and the institution's public relations hype. Burgelman and Grove (as cited in Gummer 1997) use the term "strategic dissonance" to describe the divergence between what the company puts forth as its strategy and the actions taken by its managers. Gummer (1997) contends that managing strategic dissonance requires "strategic recognition," which includes the ability of top managers to appreciate the strategic importance of managerial initiatives after they are implemented but before clear environmental feedback is available. Considering the political implications ahead of time and having an awareness of the contradictions that exist can possibly reduce the development of strategic dissonance and aid in defusing potential political tempests as the strategic planning process proceeds. Dealing with such contradictions can become at some point a strategic goal. The trick may be to give some thought to which issues are worth fighting over to move the strategic process forward and which are only smoke screens with little substance or ability to actually slow or derail the process.

Perhaps the words of St. Ignatius in his letter to Bishop Polycarp may offer shrewd advice: "In all circumstances, be wise as the serpent, though always harmless as the dove" (Antypas n.d., ¶ 8). In strategic planning, a balance must be struck between commitment to the strategic process and the reality of dealing with political entities that may try to obstruct it. At times this may be a difficult balance to maintain. Dedication and steadfastness to the process may require speaking the truth about the subtle and perhaps blatant hypocrisies that exist on the campus and obstruct change. However, one needs to be cautious. For the sake

of speaking the truth, one does not need to be unkind or insensitive. There is a danger that an offense inflicted, even if just perceived, will close the mind of the hearer, a stakeholder, to the truth of the message. Also, there is no need to provide naysayers with a reason to unite. As McClamroch, Byrd, and Sowell (2001) indicate, a goal of strategic planning should be to gain a consensus of commitment to a process and shared goals. Consensus will require compromise and a mindfulness that the intent is not about who is right but what is right. Obtaining the backing needed to implement and support the chosen direction does not require all parties to be passionate about the idea. Rather, it may be enough to have them not mess with it and, as a group, to defer to the greater good of the institution. To achieve this may require the use of political tactics as a means to influence and negotiate with powerful groups on campus (Zahra 1987). So, the use of political tactics may actually benefit the strategic process when such tactics are used to benefit the institution as a whole rather than selfishly for personal interest.

An introductory text on organizational behavior with a chapter devoted to politics and power will provide a detailed discussion of influence and political tactics. A few of the tactics commonly presented include ingratiation (get one in a good mood or to see you in a good light), rational persuasion (use logical arguments or factual evidence), and consultation (seek participation in making a decision). These three influencing tactics have been identified as among the ones most often used (Falbe and Yukl 1992; Steensma 2007; Yukl and Tracey 1992).

In keeping with the premise of this book, the point to be made here is that the success of any tactic may depend less on the tactic itself and more on understanding and matching the relationship between the tactic and the characteristics of the individual or group to be influenced. For example, Ralston (1985) proposes that certain situations are more conducive to ingratiation than others. The use of ingratiation results from a combination of individual and organizational factors. Organizational factors such as role clarity, management style, task clarity, and resource scarcity, when combined with certain

individual personality factors, can contribute to a greater use of ingratiation as a tactic to influence others. The success of ingratiation as a tactic will depend on the relationship between the influencer and those to be influenced. Furst and Cable (2008) report that when employees consider the quality of their relationship with their supervisor to be good, they are less likely to resist change when ingratiation is used as a tactic. Conversely, employees who view their relationship with their supervisor as poor are more likely to resist change when ingratiation is used.

On an institutional level, the use of rational persuasion by administration to convince the campus of the cost savings from investing in a new system that will seamlessly merge students' academic and financial information will probably fall on deaf ears, especially if there is a relatively recent history of significant financial and staffing resources having been spent on similar projects that failed. In the same way, it should not be surprising that the use of consultation to influence strategy implementation will be viewed with skepticism in an institution where decision making has historically been top down. Therefore, it is beneficial to understand individual and organizational issues related to resistance to change. That way, an approach or tactic can be chosen with consideration given to the needs, concerns, and questions of individuals or groups that may incite a resistance to change.

MANAGING INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES OF RESISTANCE

Oreg (2003) makes the point that modern industrial societies value people who are willing and able to initiate and respond positively to change. However, attempts to initiate change are frequently hindered by individuals or groups within the organization who resist the changes. So, why do people and organizations resist change? A significant amount of energy has gone into the study of resistance to change. A quick database search will identify over 100,000 articles on the topic. Erwin and Garman (2010) note that researchers and scholars have been studying and commenting on resistance to organizational

change for decades. Dent and Goldberg (1999) attribute the first published reference to research on resistance to change in organizations to Coch and French (1948), who concluded that resistance to change is a combination of an individual's reaction to frustration and strong group-induced forces.

Resistance as well as acceptance to change takes place on intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and organizational levels. For institutions and their managers, organizational change can pose an enigma that requires a balancing act between dealing with those who resist change while at the same time encouraging those who embrace it. A number of lists have been developed of the individual and organizational reasons for resistance to change. A compilation of a few of the lists developed over the past 20 years is offered in table 3.1. While the reasons for resisting change and their interconnections can be rather complex, without doing an injustice to the research on the topic it might be possible to further summarize the factors that contribute to individual and organizational resistance to change. For individuals, resistance may be due to fear, an inability to comprehend the need for change, or a lack of caring. For organizations, resistance may be the result of organizational processes and structures that inhibit the organization's ability to monitor the need for change or respond to it; it also may be the result of poor and ineffective leadership.

For those leaders who do understand the necessity of responding to change as well as the need to promote change in their institution, the question is how to deal with the resistance and move the organization and its members in the desired strategic direction. As indicated in table 3.1, part of the issue lies with the people who are members of the institution: their fears, their personality traits, their lack of understanding of the need for change. From this perspective, a possible solution may be found in hiring individuals who embrace the strategic planning process. Also, filling strategic planning committees with the appropriate players and surrounding oneself with the few (connectors, salespeople, and mavens) can help resolve some individual resistance

issues. However, dealing with resistance to change as part of the strategic planning process can also be viewed as a managerial activity and not just a reaction to personality differences.

Methods for dealing with resistance to the strategic planning process are similar to those for dealing with resistance to any organizational change. It appears that the consensus regarding strategies for dealing with resistance offered by writers on the topic (Boomer 2010; Dent and Goldberg 1999; Erwin and Garman 2010; Greenberg 2011; Harlan-Evans 1994; Kazemek 1990; Kotter and Schlesinger 1979; Lenz and Lyles 1986; Maurer 1996; Moorhead and Griffin 1992; Rousseau 1997; Sullivan 1995) can be condensed to the following: (1) understand the resistance and sensitivity, (2) provide communication and education, (3) facilitate participation, and (4) offer and encourage support.

1. UNDERSTAND THE RESISTANCE AND SENSITIVITY

Some explanations for resistance to the strategic planning process have been offered above, but first the resistance and fears have to be uncovered. Active listening or expressing concern about institutional members' fears can provide valuable feedback. Also, understanding what members may experience as they adapt to the changes associated with the strategic planning process makes it possible to support those whose fears will lead to resistance and keep their concerns from becoming contagious.

Bovey and Hede (2001) explain resistance to organizational change as the maladaptive use of defense mechanisms by employees in response to their fear of the change. It has been suggested that an institutional member's negative behavior, such as lack of involvement, procrastination, or avoidance, can be addressed with clear, direct, and assertive statements as to why the person is being spoken with coupled with a genuine attempt to understand and appreciate the person's perspective (McIluff and Coghlan 2000).

Table 3.1 **A Sample from the Literature of Factors That May Contribute to Individual and Organizational Resistance to Change**

A. Individual Resistance to Change (from Greenberg 2011; Kirkpatrick 1985; Oreg 2003; Waddell and Sohal 1998)	B. Organizational Resistance to Change (from Appelbaum, St-Pierre, and Glavas 1998; Greenberg 2011; Moorhead and Griffin 1992; Nahavandi and Malekzadeh 1999; Steers and Black 1994)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reluctance to lose control/Fear of the unknown/Personal loss. People may feel a loss of control over their life when a change is imposed on them rather than self-initiated. There is a sense of security in doing things the same way, knowing who your coworkers are, and knowing to whom you answer. Altering well-established, comfortable patterns creates unfamiliar conditions and rejection of the change. 2. Cognitive rigidity/Negative attitude/Objectionable manner. There are some people who will resist change no matter what it is. They may have some form of cognitive rigidity or do not like to be told what to do. 3. Lack of psychological resilience. Change for some is a stressor. An individual’s level of resiliency may predict the ability to cope with change. 4. Intolerance to the adjustment period involved in change/Creates burden/Requires effort. People resist change because it often involves more work in the short term than they want to do. 5. Preference for low levels of stimulation and novelty. Those who prefer lower levels of stimulus may resist change and exposure to new and disruptive situations. 6. Reluctance to give up old habits. Well-learned jobs are easy for an individual to perform. Potentially changing the way a job is done will challenge people to develop new job skills. For some, altering from the “same-old, same-old” may be stressful. 7. Economic insecurity. Changes in the job can be perceived as a threat to one’s livelihood through job loss or reduced pay. 8. Threats to social relationships. Organizations are social environments, and workplace relationships provide members with valuable social rewards. Changes may be viewed as threatening the integrity of friendship groups. 9. Failure to recognize the need for change. Employees may view a change as a mistake doing more harm than good. They may not be able to recognize and appreciate the need for change in organizations. 10. Political factors/Challenge to authority. Some may view resistance as a way to test their power and influence or as a means to score points against those initiating the change effort. 11. Management factors/No input. Inappropriate or poor management styles also contribute to resistance. For example, not asking individuals for their ideas concerning the change, or not properly informing them about the change or letting them find out from a secondhand source. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership. The organizational leader or top administrators neither see the need for change nor have the skills and ability to lead a successful change process. 2. Organizational design/Structural inertia/Rigidity. Structures are in place to ensure that employees and systems behave as expected to maintain stability. These structures make it difficult to overcome the forces that created the stability or to react quickly to external forces. 3. Reward systems reward the status quo. There is no incentive or reward for employees to embrace change and no consequences for not adapting to change. 4. Work group inertia. Group norms act as a brake on attempts to change behavior. Introducing change is viewed as a disruption to established normative expectations. 5. Threat to the unit’s existing balance of power. Changes that lead to shifts in the balance of power between organizational subunits may result in the fear that a subunit will lose its advantageous position. 6. Past history of unsuccessful change efforts. Past unsuccessful change efforts experienced by groups or the entire organization hinder further attempts at introducing change. 7. Sunk costs in past decisions and actions. A significant investment (either financial or in terms of human resources) has been made. To make a change may cost more or result in loss of credibility. 8. Organizational culture. If the organization’s culture is not aligned with the mission and goals of change, organizational members are less inclined to embrace change. 9. Lack of a clear mission. A clear organizational mission helps members focus on what matters and provides guidance. It can bind members together by defining the path to take and the values that guide the organization toward its destination.

Another way to understand the resistance is through the concept of workplace psychological contracts. Employees may feel that their psychological contract with the institution has been broken. A psychological contract goes beyond a formal contract and includes the expectations between the employee and employer. It is built upon the implied beliefs, values, and aspirations of both the employee and the employer (Smithson and Lewis 2000). Psychological contracts are mental models that shape understanding about what employees can expect to receive in exchange for their contribution. The psychological contract is a useful concept for understanding the employment relationship and the potential negative behaviors that result when the contract is perceived to have been breached.

It is possible that members of an institution may view changes associated with the strategic plan as a breach of their perceived psychological contract. For example, a faculty member may have chosen an employment opportunity with a college in part due to the institution's focus on teaching and student development. That faculty member may have worked diligently over years of employment to enhance student learning by developing courses and other applied experiences for students. The faculty member may even have gained tenure based in part on that work. Over the years of this faculty member's employment, a strategic decision may have been made to refocus the institution on research and the pursuit of funded grants. Now, such behaviors are given greater weight in hiring practices and in tenure and promotion decisions. The faculty member who dedicated years of his/her work life to—and who was previously rewarded for—fulfilling the institution's goals may now see the opportunity for promotion to the next level reduced and his/her status at the institution diminished. The psychological contract, the beliefs this faculty member had about work and rewards, can be viewed as having been breached. A person in such a position cannot be expected to be enthusiastic about or supportive of the strategic planning process. Cantisano, Domínguez, and Depolo (2008) studied the relationship between a breach of the

psychological contract and outcomes in areas such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and citizenship behavior. Perceived breach of the psychological contract was associated with an increase in negative outcomes related to organizational behaviors and a decrease in positive ones. Understanding how strategic changes may influence members' perceptions of their psychological contract may provide an opportunity to limit any perceived breach and the potential negative outcomes for both the individual and the institution.

Building upon the concept of psychological contracts, Nalbandian (1985) notes that organizational members become attached to their work in a way that goes beyond a mere economic explanation of the employment contract. For some members, work provides meaning, stability, and predictability. These attachments can explain why some view change as a psychological loss rather than an opportunity. As a result, some members of the institution may require more time than others to successfully make the transition. Zell (2003) explains the way individuals and groups work through their resistance to change as a process of death, dying, and rebirth. Bridges (1980) identifies these stages of transition as ending, the neutral zone, and new beginnings. All transitions begin with an ending. This may include the ending of relationships, ways of working, or other familiarities of the workplace. Endings are experiences of loss. According to Nalbandian (1985), resistance may be a marker of this initial state of transition. During the neutral zone, neither old nor new ways work properly. This can be a confusing and frustrating time as members feel that change is taking forever with no clear sense of when the confusion will end. The new beginnings phase is the period in which members attempt to change but find it difficult and experience setbacks and frustrations. Nalbandian suggests that time and responsible guidance will gradually lead to a new sense of competence and psychological security. An organizational strategy designed to facilitate the transition process needs to consider individual differences in the motivation and ability to adjust to change among the members of the institution.

Kirkpatrick (1985) notes that to accurately analyze and respond to the degree of resistance, it is necessary to consider each person's individual concerns related to change and identify their individual level of resistance. While this may not be practical for all institutions, some form of this can offer clues on how to proceed with the other strategies for dealing with resistance: communication, participation, and support.

2. PROVIDE COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

Communication is vital if members of the institution are to have an opportunity to adjust to and accept change. While it can be time consuming and costly, proper communication can build trust and diminish resistance. Rowley, Lujan, and Dolence (2001) note that the way the campus community is informed about the strategic plan and how members' opinions and concerns are heard are vital issues. These authors further advise that if planners take communication lightly, then the strategic plan is destined to fail.

Messages from key administrators that detail the rationale for the change as well as the consequences of the change and what it means for various stakeholder groups can reduce unfounded fears. Without this communication, there is the possibility that any gaps in information will be filled with rumor and other inappropriate information.

It is not enough to just present the information to selected groups and assume it will trickle down to the masses. At one college, in an effort to create a flow of communication across the campus and keep everyone informed, a newly hired provost held separate monthly group meetings with all deans and department chairs and heads to share and discuss matters of importance to the institution. The idea was that by regularly sharing information with these groups, the information would also be shared with others both informally and formally as part of department meetings. However, at this institution where information was equated with power, department chairs and heads did not disseminate the information shared with them to the members of their

departments. Instead, they held it for their own use or shared it with a select few. Communication strategies need to be monitored to ensure that the information conveyed is reaching its target.

Another concern is that if the information does get to the masses, will they be able to integrate it into their work in a meaningful way and feel that their concerns have been addressed? From the information provided it may not be apparent how the changes will benefit them or how the information eases their transition from the old to the new. This does not mean that the message needs to be diluted, but there does need to be awareness that even simple phrases or terms can be misinterpreted. Each discipline, work group, and stakeholder group has vocabulary and phrases that are unique to or uniquely interpreted by their group. For an academic, "NSF" commonly refers to the National Science Foundation; for a facilities person, it refers to net square feet; and in finance, not sufficient funds. So strategic planning terms like "goals" and "objectives" or "action step" and "strategy" may need to be clarified as to what they mean for all groups and the institution as a whole. This may be an opportunity to make use of "connectors" for their suggestions on how to best craft the message for specific groups.

Consideration also needs to be given to the use of statistics and other analytics included in reports or presentations. Such information can be very valuable in justifying the need for change and communicating accomplishments. While some may say that numbers don't lie, they can mislead, so quality does matter. Poor use of statistics or claims made on inadequate sampling will not be well received by audience members who make their living on data analysis. While the audience might listen politely, such a presentation may be more a source of irritation than information and may result in distrust of current and future messages related to the strategic plan.

Communication is not meant to be a one-time occurrence at the beginning of the strategic planning process. To be

effective, clear and consistent communication must be continually provided throughout the process and as results become known or significant accomplishments are reached. Accomplishments can include the development of mission and vision statements, identification of committee memberships, status of specific action steps, or information gained from key indicators. Consideration also must be given to presenting the information in a way that allows stakeholders to provide feedback.

Welch and Jackson (2007) suggest that two-way communication can contribute to stakeholder engagement throughout the organization. Communication between an organization's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders can help create relationships characterized by employee commitment, promote a positive sense of belonging in employees, and develop stakeholders' understanding of the need for the organization to respond to and anticipate change.

While two-way communication may seem like a logical approach for gaining useful feedback as part of a communications process, its use is lacking in many organizations. Waters and Lemanski (2011) discovered that strategic communication for many Fortune 500 and Philanthropy 400 organizations primarily relied on one-way communications models to convey information online. These authors report that a large number of studies have shown that organizations are not using the conversational and interactive elements of the Web. Some organizations have moved toward the inclusion of two-way communications models to communicate with their stakeholders, but most just have a Web site that serves as a virtual brochure. The authors report that true indicators of stakeholder engagement, including online forums, discussion boards, social media, polls, and surveys, are used by less than one-quarter of the nation's top nonprofits or corporations. The use of interactive Web sites in addition to what may be considered more traditional methods of collecting information (e.g., focus groups, stakeholder surveys, open forums) should all be considered as means to inform stakeholders about the strategic planning process

and allow them to communicate their opinions and concerns. Methods should also be provided to allow those who may have reservations about publicly sharing their ideas and opinions to contribute.

Clampitt and Berk (1996) suggest that the following need to be considered as part of developing a strategic communications process to introduce organizational change:

- » CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS—an attempt to anticipate possible points of resistance to overcoming the status quo. This includes considering if the change is congruent with the culture, is perceived as manageable, will be viewed as advantageous over past practices, has readily observable benefits, and impacts key relationships. This should also assess whether management is prepared for employee reaction to the change.
- » AUDIENCE ANALYSIS—identification of key groups and consideration of how specific changes will affect these groups. A change in benefits or a union contract may entice employees with greater institutional longevity to consider retirement rather than face any loss in benefits. The audience analysis should include identification of the major groups of employees that will be affected, how they will be affected, the most likely points of resistance, and the communication preferences of each group.
- » STRATEGY—the strategy to be used must be based on the audience analysis, address major objectives, spend resources wisely, and include a unifying vision.
- » TACTICS—these are the operational plans. They include the number and types of channels to use (e.g., e-mail, face-to-face, newsletter, etc.); creation of a key message that can be easily comprehended and that identifies both positive and negative aspects, considers the timing of introducing information (perhaps related to the transition phases of ending, the neutral zone, and new beginnings), and seeks out concerns by harvesting dissent; and selection of who communicates the change and monitors the process.

In summary, the considerations presented can aid in the development of an effective strategic planning communications process. Effective communications are vital in allowing institutional members to gain a deeper understanding of the strategic planning process and how their involvement in the process is tied to the institution's and their personal success.

3. FACILITATE PARTICIPATION

Although you may start with the premise that everyone at the institution will be involved or have a clearly evident opportunity to be involved, you cannot expect all contributions to offer great insight or wisdom or all members to make a meaningful difference in the strategic planning process. An acquaintance once said to me after listening to what I thought was a pretty good presentation of a position on my part, "Well, we are all entitled to our own stupid opinions." Regardless of the perceived value of what they say, a number of stakeholders will want to be heard and be a part of the process. Part of participation, of hearing what others have to say, begins with the communications process discussed above.

Stanislao and Stanislao (1983) state that facilitating participation, or at least the feeling of participation, is one way to deal with resistance to change. In their opinion, this works because people are concerned about making their own ideas and recommendations successful. It is interesting that these authors seem to suggest that the perception of participation can be as powerful as real participation in reducing resistance. While to some degree this is true and can be a strategy, there are potential downfalls to this approach and way of thinking. To achieve better buy-in, there is value in making a person's communication a real part of the process by using his/her advice. Participation should be more than just a superficial sense of contributing to the process.

It makes good sense to assume that participation in the planning process by institutional members would allow them to develop a sense of ownership in the change and avoid the

resentment that may be created when they are just informed that change will happen. While some literature supports employee participation as one of the best ways to reduce resistance to change (Giangreco and Peccei 2005; Lines 2004), just involving others or giving them the perception of participation does not mean there will be more success or less resistance. In fact, Elbanna (2008) found no significant relationship between management participation and strategic planning effectiveness. An explanation offered for this surprising finding was that the influence of participation on strategic planning effectiveness may be moderated by other variables. In an earlier study, Lines (2004) reports that the effects of participation on change are moderated by the change's compatibility with the organization's culture and the personal goals of the recipients of the change. So, participation alone may not be the issue; rather, the effectiveness of participation in reducing resistance may be moderated by how others are involved and allowed to participate.

Truly integrating members' participation into the process can be time-consuming, but it can also be effective if managed properly. To gain the most from member participation in the process, it may be useful for an institution to consider a large-scale intervention that includes multiple organizational levels and a large variety of stakeholders. Mellow and Talmadge (2005) conducted an organizational change initiative at a community college that included over 150 participants. Much of the campus and many external stakeholders were included in a process of identifying themes to develop a foundation for an integrated strategic plan. The technique of Whole-Scale Change (Dannemiller Tyson Associates 2000) was used to design a three-day summit. Whole-Scale Change, which is similar to real-time strategic change intervention, is a highly participative approach that helps organizations bring about change by involving the ideas and commitment of multiple stakeholders. Through a series of interactive group sessions, participants develop a common understanding of the current reality, a vision of the future, and the action steps to get there. Solutions are created in real time and implemented within

days or months instead of years (Eggers, James, and Johnson 2002). Arena (2004) reports using this technique with over 1,000 employees to enhance organizational awareness, including an understanding of organizational strategy, clarity regarding common group struggles, a unified view of the need for change, and appreciation of the various roles across the organization. It provides a forum for initiating and mobilizing systemwide solutions versus using a more traditional piecemeal approach.

Comprehensive approaches to facilitating participation on a large scale are challenging to implement successfully. They require careful planning. The approach must fit the realities of the relationships among organizational members. Use of a comprehensive approach assumes that the institution is a whole system and allows for the engagement of that system at a single point in time with large numbers of stakeholders sharing information and planning. Because they are based on collaboration, comprehensive interventions can help reduce resistance and build strategy ownership across the entire system.

4. OFFER AND ENCOURAGE SUPPORT

Successful strategic planning is dependent upon the broad-based support and participation of members of the institution. Welsh, Nunez, and Petrosko (2005) compared faculty and administrative support for strategic planning at two-year and four-year institutions of higher education on several dimensions that included organizational level and involvement. They found that administrators at both types of institutions were more likely to support strategic planning than were faculty. No doubt, administration's support of the change will provide the foundation needed to build a critical mass of support among other members of the institution. However, verbal praise and encouragement will only go so far. The kind of support that commits enough resources to make the change easier on those affected by it is also required. For example, if enhancing faculty, staff, and student competency with the most current computer technology is a goal, then resources have to be available to purchase the technology

and provide appropriate training. Also, a process would be needed to replace the equipment on a regular cycle. Similarly, a strategic goal to increase scholarly activity will not be met if funds to support travel to conference presentations or provide research incentives are cut. So, administrative support must be clear and consistent if others are to be encouraged to join the process in a meaningful way. Erwin and Garman (2010) identify management inconsistency as a factor that will influence resistance to change. Any inconsistencies between the change message and management behavior will give members of the institution a justification for resisting the change. Organizational policies may have to be altered to align better with proposed changes. Without clear support from faculty and administrators, the strategic planning process may be viewed and rejected as just another unsuccessful managerial fad (Welsh, Nunez, and Petrosko 2005).

LEADING STRATEGIC CHANGE

Knowing about the issues associated with change, the influence of organizational politics, and the possibility of resistance is helpful in understanding the challenges of bringing about change associated with a strategic plan. However, at some point, the ability to actually bring about the change required as part of the strategic planning process will be determined by one's ability to influence the politics, others, and the system. Joan Welsh referred to influence as "What you think you have until you try to use it" (thinkexist.com n.d., ¶ 3). Knowledge of the issues is only part of the process. To successfully lead change requires understanding one's bases for power and influence in the institution, using them appropriately, and perhaps having a willingness to share them with others. Those responsible for the strategic planning process may find it beneficial to conduct a personal audit of their power and influence on campus.

Lines (2007) examined the impact of power on the influence tactics used in the course of implementing change. Change agents with different power bases tended to choose different

tactics in their attempts to bring about change. Change agents with high levels of power stemming from their position or expertise in the organization were more likely to use tactics of participation and providing meaning to the recipients of change compared to change agents with low levels of position or expert power. Based on the study's results, it was concluded that power, either earned or given, plays a role in predicting the success of strategy implementation.

Beyond any formal authority and power, consideration must be given as to how to influence others so that they want to and freely follow the change. This may be accomplished in part by the actions of a leader. Change leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting and sustaining the change agenda. Graetz (2000) reports that change leadership involves operational know-how and strong interpersonal skills. The role of senior management is to pinpoint well-defined institutional challenges that matter to all members on an individual level. One of the specifically identified characteristics of leaders that enable them to promote and foster organizational change is their support for efforts that expand skills, insights, and conceptual abilities across a much wider range of individuals within the organization (Nielsen, Saccoman, and Nykodym 1995). This leadership practice can allow individuals and units to develop and become more active players in the strategic planning process.

Kouzes and Posner (1993) define leadership as a reciprocal relationship between those who elect to lead and those who choose to follow. In their opinion, discussions of strategies and practices are hollow unless the fundamental aspirations that connect leaders to their constituents and the dynamics of that relationship are examined. Followers are the essence of leadership. Without them, the promoter of strategic planning is a lone voice. Planning for oneself and by oneself is not a pretty picture. Those who are leading change can promote the process by empowering and nurturing others, the followers. They can develop leadership in others by sharing their power through delegation and allowing themselves to be influenced by followers (Hollander and Offermann 1990).

The followers' role can be viewed as active rather than passive with the potential for the development of self-leadership. In strategic planning, this can mean that members of the institution will successfully manage and lead themselves as part of the change process. They will require less supervision to maintain attention on strategic objectives and will have the drive to reach them. Self-leading employees have more positive effects at work. They also tend to have higher productivity and more fulfilling careers (Stewart, Courtright, and Manz 2011). Given this perspective, leading successful change may be viewed as more about the followers than the leaders.

As part of a 2010 TED presentation (www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement.html), Derek Sivers (<http://sivers.org>) presented a humorous yet insightful discussion of the importance of followers in any movement. Sivers is a very successful entrepreneur and a self-proclaimed avid student of life. TED (www.ted.com/) is a nonprofit organization started in 1984 as a conference bringing together people from the worlds of technology, entertainment, and design. TED is devoted to spreading ideas to change attitudes, lives, and the world. In this short yet powerful presentation, Sivers narrates a video on how to start a movement and provides an example of the importance of first followers in igniting a movement and attracting others to join. The point made by Sivers is that while a leader may need the fortitude to stand alone and endure ridicule, it is the followers who actually transform this individual into a leader. The first followers show others how to follow. There is no movement without the first followers. Embracing others as equals, making the movement public and about others, will cause more people will join in. Future followers will emulate earlier followers. As more join in, the perceived risk of participating is reduced. At some point, others will view it as risky to stand out by not joining in.

In strategic planning, as in all change initiatives, it is important to nurture the followers from the various stakeholder groups. It may be necessary in the early phases

of the strategic planning process to connect the dots for others to show them how the strategic process will be of benefit to them, the stakeholders, and the institution. This can contribute to the ultimate goal of facilitating change and influencing those who are to move the plan forward. Will Rogers was quoted as saying, “We can’t all be heroes, for someone has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by” (Braude 1967, p. 16). One thing about clapping is that it can be contagious. Just a few people have to get started and an entire group joins in. This is what is hoped for during the strategic planning process, to have others spontaneously join in. Benveniste (1989) refers to this as the multiplier effect in planning. This is similar to the idea presented by Siviers that as the number of followers increases, it is easier for others to join in because they want to avoid standing out. The multiplier effect occurs in strategic planning as a result of the perception by stakeholders that there is a high probability that the plan will be implemented. A large number of stakeholders who have not committed to the plan commit to implementing it. This does not necessarily mean they are in favor of it, but indecision fades away and individuals and groups decide to support it. When it comes to accepting change, there may be truth in the quote by Leonardo da Vinci offered at the beginning of this chapter: “It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end.” As momentum for the strategic plan builds and the forces maintaining inertia are weakened, staying in one’s comfort zone becomes risky and uncomfortable. The multiplier effect is the moment in the strategic planning process when the idea catches on. As the shared generalized belief in the strategic plan gains momentum, members of the institution will act accordingly when faced with the inevitable. It is to be hoped that over time the motivation for joining in on the change process, the strategic planning process, will be not only about not wanting to stand out and miss joining what is popular, but also about doing what is best for the institution and its members.

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