

STRATEGY # 2: BREAK THE MOLD (Part 3)

8. Be prepared to take risks. It has been said that two attitudes toward change and sabotage success. One is: “But this is the way we’ve always done it.” The other is: “But we’ve never done it that way before.” Don’t fall prey to either of these. Always look for a better way to do things, and don’t be afraid of upsetting people. If you have a good idea, give it a chance. Remember, if it doesn’t work out, you can always change it again. There are only two kinds of decisions in life: those that are reversible and those that aren’t. If you’re on the fence about making a change, ask yourself this question: “Is the decision reversible or nonreversible?” Doing this has helped give me the confidence to take risks; I lean toward saying yes to risks when the decision is reversible and am more careful, exercising all due diligence, when it is not.

9. Expect resistance. Whenever you suggest major changes, some people in the organization will invariably fight it. Some folks are simply uncomfortable with change and cling to the status quo. Others fear that when the dust settles, they’ll be among the casualties. Great leaders listen to those objections seriously and pay attention to the reasonable arguments. But when they think they’re on the right track, they don’t let the resistance of others top them from doing what they believe in. It’s vital therefor to anticipate resistance, accept it, and honor it, but if you’ve done due diligence and you’re sure you’re on the right course, don’t be afraid to stick to your convictions. Because people naturally resist change, great leaders orient their people not only to expect change but to *welcome* it. In fact, they take it a step further: They train people to look for positive ways to *initiate* change. People don’t always recognize the merits of change right off the bat. But if you persist, they’ll soon come to see why breaking the mold is not only in the best interest of the company but in their best interest as well, and they may even follow your example by initiating changes themselves.

10. Don’t try to win every battle. This is a caveat for the previous point. While leaders need to be persistent and determined in the face of resistance, they also have to be flexible enough to fine-tune their vision at every step. The resisters might have very good reasons for opposing your plan, so listen to them carefully. You can’t fall on your sword for every issue, so it’s crucial to know when to let go and save your energy to fight another day. Ask yourself whether you’re fighting for a truly worthwhile goal or because you can’t admit you were wrong or you have to win, no matter what. Nobody likes to work for leaders who use their positions to go after personal victories at the expense of the organization’s long-term health. Don’t confuse being persuasive with winning at all costs. If you trust your vision, by all means work to overcome the resistance. But if the resisters offer compelling arguments and solid evidence, don’t be too stubborn to back down. People respect leaders who pick their battles and can admit to being wrong every once in a while.

"You've got to get up every morning with determination if you're going to go to bed with satisfaction."

George Horace Lorimer

"Either you run the day – or the day- runs you."

Jim Rohn

"You have made some mistakes and you may not be where you want to be, but that's got nothing to do with your future."

Zig Ziglar