FOR ANYONE LEADING A CHANGE

Pushback Is Information

The why behind it is valuable.

1. **Value it. Don't label it.**
   Calling someone a "resister" shuts down their input. Treat critical comments as useful feedback.

2. **You are not your project.**
   Get defensive and people stop telling you. Listen to understand, not to defend the plan.

3. **Pick the right setting.**
   Talk through concerns one-on-one, then share what you learned with the group. Meet in person when you can.

4. **Sometimes they're right.**
   Does the change fit the real work, and is there capacity for it? If not, thank them and adjust the plan.

5. **Quiet and friendly isn't buy-in.**
   People may be waiting for the change to die. Visible sponsorship from leaders shows it really is happening.

WHAT GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Start Here

1. Walk through the work with them.

"Can you show me where this gets stuck?" Seeing it shows whether the plan fits. Listening shows how they feel about it.

2. Repeat it back before you answer.

"What I'm hearing is... Did I get that right?" Use neutral words. Help them feel heard before you explore the root cause.

3. Turn "always" into one example.

"Can you tell me about a time when that happened?" A real example helps you identify the source.

4. "I don't know yet" keeps trust.

Guessing or going quiet costs trust. Say, "I'll update you by Friday." Then update everyone, even if it's still "not yet."

5. Make the first follow-through visible.

Fix one concern people raised, then tell the team it's done. It shows they're being heard.

The person pushing back may be the only one telling you that your plan has a gap.

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