FROM RESISTANCE TO ROCKSTAR

Turning Friction into Forward Momentum

Mindy Honcoop | Ed Stockwell



Scan the QR code

Download the slides and access the appendix for the breakout conversations.



MEET YOUR FACILITATORS



Ed Stockwell

Ed Stockwell is a product, program, and portfolio executive with experience leading cross-functional teams across SaaS, professional services, and B2B/B2C e-commerce organizations. He has built and scaled new-to-market service programs, led operational and agile transformations, and helped teams turn complexity into practical execution. Ed now works with businesses and nonprofits through Edalston Group, bringing an operator’s lens to strategy, AI adoption, and organizational change.



Mindy Honcoop

Mindy Honcoop is the founder of Agile in HR, where she helps growing companies build the people infrastructure they need to scale. With 26 years in the people function, including roles as a CPO and senior people leader, she has led transformation from inside the work rather than from the sidelines.

Mindy's focus is AI-driven HR transformation and organizational resilience. Her core conviction is that HR is uniquely positioned to lead organizational change, and consistently underleveraged in that role. She is a speaker, executive advisor, and coach, co-founder of AltHR Hive, and currently serves as fractional VP of Customer Success at MeBeBot

IS FRICTION A BAD THING?

Most organizations treat friction as the obstacle.

The best leaders treat it as intelligence.



CHANGE IS RELENTLESS, AND WE WASTE IT FROM THE START

Gartner: The average employee faced 10 planned enterprise changes in 2022, up from 2 in 2016.

McKinsey: Yet nearly a quarter of each transformation's value is lost at target-setting, before execution even begins.

The problem isn't one bad rollout. It's a fivefold rise in change, with the value leaking out on day one of each.



Sources: https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/successful-transformations | "Employees Are Losing Patience with Change Initiatives." Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2023/05/employees-are-losing-patience-with-change-initiatives

The skills that elevate project managers are the ones AI cannot replace.



Lead without authority

You move work through people who don't report to you. That runs on trust and influence, not the org chart.



Think critically under pressure

AI hands you an answer fast. Deciding whether it is the right answer, and what it misses, is still your job.



Model possibility

Teams take their emotional read from the person leading. You set whether the room sees threat or opportunity.

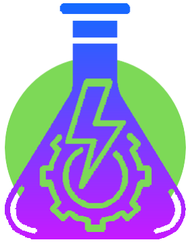


Read the friction

You feel the heat in a team before it shows up in the plan. That early read is a human skill, and a rare one.

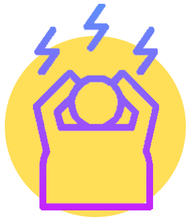
DETECTING THE FRICTION

A mental model for calibrating your response intensity



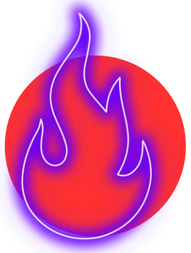
Catlyst for Change

Build trust, set expectations, create culture. This is where you harness friction before it becomes destructive. Effective 1:1s, clear goals, team norms, coaching mindset.



Friction

Patterns emerging —a formerly reliable person starts missing deadlines, quality drops, emotional shifts in meetings. Stay curious before getting corrective. Name the pattern.

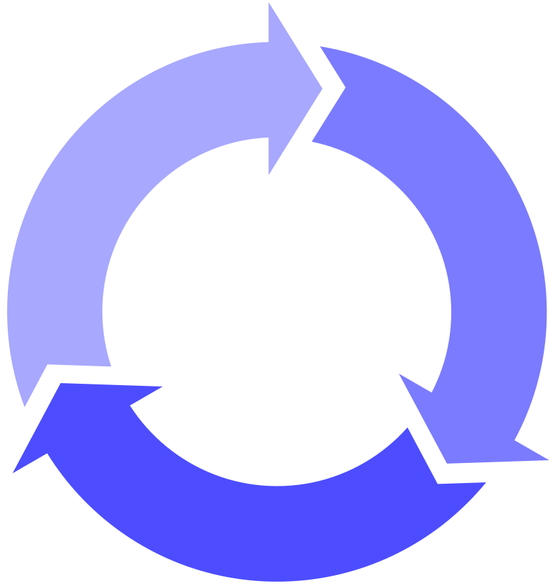


Destructive Fire

Friction missed or ignored can become the fires that work against us and keep us from progressing forward.

THE RESISTANCE DECODER

THREE LENSES FOR STRATEGIC RESPONSE





Read the Signal

What type of resistance is this?

Recognize & Respond

What stage of change are they in?

Move Forward Together

What's the right response?

TURNING SIGNALS INTO LEVERS



	Barrier Signals	You Hear and See	The Lever	Your Move
	**Doubt**	"I don't know enough." Inaction, second-guessing, disengagement	Build Clarity	Define the why, what, and how. Make it concrete.
	**Overwhelm**	"Too much, too fast." Burnout, surface-level adoption	Create Focus	Prioritize and sequence. Show what can wait.
	**Isolation**	"Nobody asked us." Lack of influence, missed collaboration	Foster Connection	Bring stakeholders in. Co-design, don't inform.
	**Fear**	"Will I still matter?" Guardedness, active resistance	Establish Safety	Reward learning. Normalize experimentation.

ACTIVITY 1

Meet Alan

Alan is your executive stakeholder. Every request is priority one. Asked to rank scope, he says, *"just find a way."*

Underneath: he doesn't trust that deprioritizing won't cost him something later.

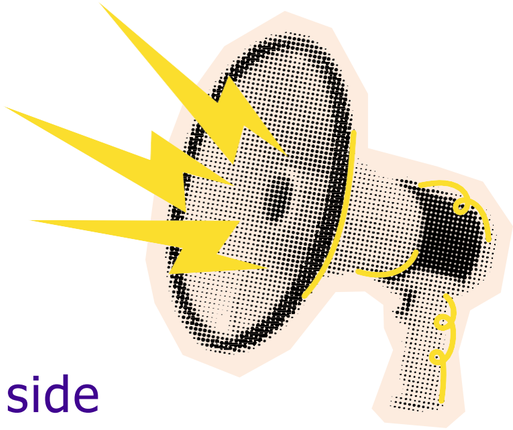
Circle up at your table. One person plays Alan; the rest are the project team.

1. What is Alan actually saying? Capture his real words.
2. What are you seeing in how he shows up — body language, follow-up emails, escalations?
3. How hot is the friction — catalyst, early friction, or destructive fire?
4. Which barrier is underneath — doubt, overwhelm, isolation, or fear?



7 min table discussion | 2 min share

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND TALENT



Most change fails not because the technology is wrong, but because the human side was an afterthought.

Co-design vs inform

Bring people into the design process early. The people closest to the work see what leadership can't.

Experiment vs mandate

Start small. Pilot with willing teams. Let results build the case instead of slides.

Bridge vs push

Connect what's changing to what matters to your people. Career growth, workload relief, better tools.

Discover vs assume

Find out where people are in their journey. Emotions vary depending on stage.

ACTIVITY 2

Meet Marcus

Marcus never objects out loud — and never adopts the new process either. He nods in meetings, then quietly reverts to the old way. You find out from a teammate, not from him.

Underneath: he doesn't believe it'll stick, and no one asked how it fits his day-to-day.

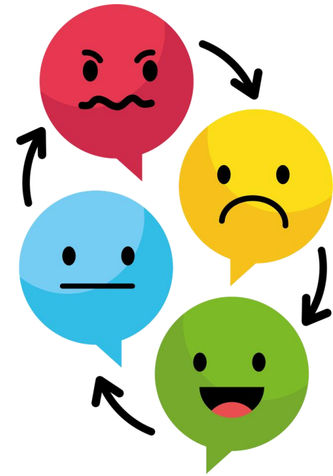
Circle up at your table. One person plays Marcus; the rest are his PM planning the conversation.

1. Draft the opening using SBI: Situation, Behavior, Impact.
2. Ask the question that invites his real objection — without naming the teammate who told you.
3. Agree one next step and one outcome that would prove it stuck.



8 min table discussion
1min share

THE COST OF MISREADING RESISTANCE



When we treat resistance as the problem instead of reading the signal:

Compliance vs Committment

People comply but never commit. The change looks successful on paper but falls apart under pressure.

Trust Escrow

Employees learn that their concerns don't matter. Next time you need buy-in, you start from a deficit.

Running in wet sand

Pushing through resistance actually slows things down. You end up re-doing work that wasn't adopted the first time.

It’s not me, it’s you

Your most thoughtful people —the ones paying closest attention —check out first.

ACTIVITY 3

Meet Gina

Gina is your project sponsor. She approved the project, then went quiet — she won't clear blockers, skips steering committee updates, and keeps saying, *"just send me a summary, I trust your judgment."*

Underneath: she's stretched thin and has mentally filed this project as handled.

Circle up at your table. One person plays Gina; the rest are the PM trying to escalate a real blocker.

1. What's the specific blocker only Gina can clear?
2. Practice the ask — get one specific commitment: a date, a decision, or a named delegate.
3. What did it take to turn "I trust you" into an actual decision?



7 min table discussion | 2 min share

ACTIVITY 4

Meet Lucy

Lucy was your most reliable contributor two quarters ago. Now she's missing intermediate deadlines, quieter in status meetings, and her work has slipped as peers have leveled up.

Underneath: *"Will I still matter here?"*

1. What's the why behind her pullback? Listen for it, don't guess.
2. What might be underneath — recognize it, then check. Don't name it for her.
3. Where is she: friction, curiosity, or readiness?
4. Draft one open, curiosity-first opening line you'd actually say to her.

Circle up at your table. One person plays Lucy; the rest are her project lead and teammates.

8 min table discussion | 1min share



WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU



Resistance is a signal, not a setback.

Stop trying to overcome it. Start trying to understand it.

Match your response to the barrier.

Doubt needs clarity. Overwhelm needs focus. Isolation needs connection. Fear needs safety.

Start with curiosity, not correction.

The coaching sequence —curiosity, clarity, consequence —works because people need to feel heard before they can hear you.

Connect technology and talent through dialogue.

Co-design beats compliance. Small experiments beat big mandates. People adopt what they help create.

THANK YOU

AI may accelerate the work.

People create the momentum.

Friction tells us where to listen.

Connect on LinkedIn

Mindy Honcoop
in/mindyhoncoop

Ed Stockwell
in/edstockwell



Appendix



ACTIVITY 1 · LENS 1 — READ THE SIGNAL

Meet Alan

Alan is your executive stakeholder. Every request is priority one. Asked to rank scope, he says, *"just find a way."*

Underneath: he doesn't trust that deprioritizing won't cost him something later.

Circle up at your table. One person plays Alan; the rest are the project team.

1. What is Alan actually saying? Capture his real words.
2. What are you seeing in how he shows up — body language, follow-up emails, escalations?
3. How hot is the friction — catalyst, early friction, or destructive fire?
4. Which barrier is underneath — doubt, overwhelm, isolation, or fear?



7 min table discussion | 2 min share

ACTIVITY 4 · LENS 3 — MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER

Meet Marcus

Marcus never objects out loud — and never adopts the new process either. He nods in meetings, then quietly reverts to the old way. You find out from a teammate, not from him.

Underneath: he doesn't believe it'll stick, and no one asked how it fits his day-to-day.

1. Draft the opening using SBI: Situation, Behavior, Impact.
2. Ask the question that invites his real objection — without naming the teammate who told you.
3. Agree one next step and one outcome that would prove it stuck.

Circle up at your table. One person plays Marcus; the rest are his PM planning the conversation.



8 min table discussion
1min share

ACTIVITY 3 · LENS 2 — RECOGNIZE & RESPOND

Meet Gina

Gina is your project sponsor. She approved the project, then went quiet — she won't clear blockers, skips steering committee updates, and keeps saying, *"just send me a summary, I trust your judgment."*

Underneath: she's stretched thin and has mentally filed this project as handled.

Circle up at your table. One person plays Gina; the rest are the PM trying to escalate a real blocker.

1. What's the specific blocker only Gina can clear?
2. Practice the ask — get one specific commitment: a date, a decision, or a named delegate.
3. What did it take to turn "I trust you" into an actual decision?



7 min table discussion | 2 min share

ACTIVITY 2 · LENS 2 — RECOGNIZE & RESPOND

Meet Lucy

Lucy was your most reliable contributor two quarters ago. Now she's missing intermediate deadlines, quieter in status meetings, and her work has slipped as peers have leveled up.

Underneath: *"Will I still matter here?"*

1. What's the why behind her pullback? Listen for it, don't guess.
2. What might be underneath — recognize it, then check. Don't name it for her.
3. Where is she: friction, curiosity, or readiness?
4. Draft one open, curiosity-first opening line you'd actually say to her.

Circle up at your table. One person plays Lucy; the rest are her project lead and teammates.

8 min table discussion | 1min share



ACTIVITY

PLAN YOUR NEXT MOVE

Using the **Resistance Decoder** (slide 24) framework, plan one real conversation you need to have in the next two weeks.

1. Who is the person? What change is driving the resistance?
2. What signal are they sending? (Doubt, overwhelm, isolation, fear?)
3. What stage are they in? (Resistance, curiosity, readiness?)
4. What's your opening line? (Start with curiosity.)
5. What's the one thing you want them to walk away understanding?

Individual: 5 min



LENS 3

MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER

The conversation is the strategy.

The Coaching Sequence: **Curiosity** → **Clarity** → **Consequence**



Set the Stage

Choose the right time and place. State your intention clearly. Prepare data, not just feelings. Align feedback with shared goals.



Listen to Understand

Listen with your mind (enter their frame). Listen with your body (non-verbals matter). Listen with your words (reflect, don't fix).



Reinforce & Follow Up

Clarify expectations and next steps. Schedule follow-up conversations. Celebrate progress, even small shifts.

A SIMPLE STRUCTURE FOR HARD CONVERSATIONS

The SBI Model keeps feedback specific, behavioral, and future-focused.

S

Situation

Describe the specific context.

"During Monday's planning meeting..."

B

Behavior

Name the observable action.

"...you interrupted two team members while they were sharing their ideas."

I

Impact

Explain the effect.

"It disrupted the flow of ideas and made others hesitant to speak."

Then ask: "What was going on from your perspective?"

Source CCL: https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/closing-the-gap-between-intent-vs-impact-sbii/

WHEN EMOTIONS SHOW UP

Resistance triggers emotional reactions. Here's how to stay grounded.

Reaction	Do This	Avoid This
Shock / Anger	Acknowledge emotion. Listen. Restate facts.	Don't personalize or dilute.
Self-Doubt	Reassure with examples. Break into small steps.	Don't echo negativity.
Blame-Shifting	Acknowledge context. Clarify expectations.	Don't validate excuses.
Denial	Provide examples. Stay calm. Outline consequences.	Don't argue or soften to avoid conflict.
Apathy	Ask for commitment. Highlight impact of inaction.	Don't ignore disengagement.

THE RESISTANCE DECODER — YOUR TAKEAWAY TOOL

THE SITUATION:

What change is driving resistance? Who is resisting? What do you hear them saying?

LENS 1 — READ THE SIGNAL:

Which barrier? [ ] Doubt [ ] Overwhelm [ ] Isolation [ ] Fear

Evidence (what makes you think this?):

LENS 2 — MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE:

Which stage? [ ] Resistance [ ] Curiosity [ ] Readiness

LENS 3 — MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER:

My opening (start with curiosity):

The one thing I want them to understand:

My follow-up plan:

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU

Friction is a signal, not a setback.
Stop trying to overcome it. Start trying to understand it.

Read the signal before you respond.
How hot is the friction? What are you hearing and seeing?

Lean in and seek to understand.
Listen for the why. Recognize what's underneath. Get curious about what's possible.

Move forward on real outcomes.
Not activity, not transactional use. Progress you can see, check, and retro on.