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The Project Leader's Toolkit

## Disruptive Stakeholder Diagnostic

### Note on Use

#### Purpose

This tool helps project leaders distinguish between stakeholders that are displaying typical resistant behavior, and those that are trying to sabotage the project. The tool also provides guidance on how to confront stakeholders on disruptive behavior.

#### For Use By

Project leader

### Instructions

- 1 Complete the worksheet on the following page for each person who is displaying resistance. Answer each question on the scale provided. Score 0 points for each "Never," 1 point for each "Occasionally," and 2 points for each "Often." Follow the recommendation corresponding to the total score.
- 2 Although it is important to respond to all resistance, it is particularly important and urgent to identify those who threaten to derail a project. Leaders should intervene to prevent derailment, and prepare by reviewing the Common Deflection Techniques and Suggested Responses.

# Disruptive Stakeholder Diagnostic

## Part 1: Worksheet

	Question	Never	Occasionally	Often
1	Is the person noticeably more upset about the change than others in a similar position?			
2	Does the person's behavior make others uncomfortable?			
3	Has the person resisted education on the change initiative?			
4	Has the person's behavior been disruptive in the past?			
5	Has the person been argumentative?			
6	Has the person spread rumors or inaccuracies about the change?			
7	Has the person attempted to convince others of his/her thinking?			
8	Have the person's actions appeared deliberate or pre-planned?			
9	Does the person exhibit more anger than stress?			
10	Has the person openly predicted the change will fail?			
11	Does the person speak in "us" and "them" terms?			
12	Does the person question the honesty, motives, or ability of management or executives?			

### Scoring Guide

- 0-7 → Person likely exhibiting only typical resistance. Speak with him/her one-on-one to determine if further information is needed.
- 8-12 → Caution. Approach as typical resistor, but be prepared to alter course if he/she is unresponsive.
- 13-26 → Person likely attempting active sabotage. Remind him/her of rationale for change, seek to understand sources of frustration, and try to mitigate dissenting actions and opinions. Do not hesitate to request intervention of executive sponsor or other senior leader.

# Disruptive Stakeholder Diagnostic

## Part 2: Common Deflection Techniques and Suggested Responses

### The Subject Changer

<b>Deflection Technique</b>	Distracts with different topic of discussion
<b>Example</b>	"How's the family?"
<b>Suggested Response</b>	Refuse to engage in tangents: <i>"Great, thanks. Today, however, I need to talk to you about..."</i>

### The Apologizer

<b>Deflection Technique</b>	Jumps to confession before hearing the message
<b>Example</b>	"I am so sorry. It will never happen again."
<b>Suggested Response</b>	Verify sincerity, ensure intention to change behavior: <i>"I appreciate your candor and commitment to not repeat this. What can I do to make sure that happens?"</i>

### The Denier

<b>Deflection Technique</b>	Claims incident did not occur as alleged
<b>Example</b>	"Who, me?"
<b>Suggested Response</b>	Provide well-researched accounts of events: <i>"At our last major meeting, you interrupted..."</i>

### The Rationalizer

<b>Deflection Technique</b>	Offers excuses to justify behavior
<b>Example</b>	"My staff needed the extra time to complete the transition."
<b>Suggested Response</b>	Indict behavior in spite of rationale: <i>"No other office required an extension, what was different in your case?"</i>

### The Blame-Shifter

<b>Deflection Technique</b>	Points finger to avoid accountability
<b>Example</b>	"It's not my fault, it was [colleague's name]."
<b>Suggested Response</b>	Force individual accountability for his/her role: <i>"After speaking to everyone else involved, it seems clear that primary responsibility lies with you."</i>

### The Negotiator

<b>Deflection Technique</b>	Bargains for alternative course of action
<b>Example</b>	"I don't think we should be focusing our resources on this capital improvement."
<b>Suggested Response</b>	Remain firm: <i>"We see the new facility as a value multiplier for a number of course offerings, and here's why..."</i>