



## I'm With The Brand!

So here we are... yet again embarking on a new adventure with the team. My palms are sweaty and I'm so excited to tell them about the new changes! But wait, is that an eye roll? I hear a sigh and worse yet, somebody is staring at their feet! Could it be? They don't want to change?!

Resistance to change arises for a multitude of reasons. That said, a perceived shift in Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness or Fairness (SCARF) is inevitably going to create discomfort. When presenting change it is always important to evaluate these five areas in advance and ensure that your introduction of the change addresses anything that may stir the resistance pot. Getting ahead of their perceptions will allow you to better control your outcomes.

People inherently want to fit in and structure is important to them. Knowing where they stand, feeling appreciated, understanding what is expected of them and treating them as individuals will help with team unity and dynamic. Their personal involvement in the hospital is important as a feeling of ownership towards their work instills a sense of personal pride and commitment you cannot just force upon somebody.

At the end of the day you have a certain set of philosophies you are trying to uphold within the hospital. By way of practice Brand, a Mission Statement or Vision Statement you have outlined a way of being and goals that are important to your hospital. We are quick to involve people in the creation of these elements but what do we do with them afterwards? Two little words help to keep your team on track for ongoing success – Reflect and Contradict. These can be used for personal behavior, assessment of regularly used tools, creation of new ones, marketing materials and everything in between. Are we reflecting or contradicting our values? Are we reflecting or contradicting who we are? Is this on point with our story? By assigning these two words we can open a conversation around whether something is working or not, and what we want to do to shift.

I've found that using the word "contradict" brings about strong emotions with the team as it immediately acknowledges we are somehow creating an outcome that is the opposite to the thing we take pride in. Their sign off that something is being contradicted creates an immediate need for change and a buy-in from the team that a change is required. Even in the best hospitals where we are reflecting our philosophies there is always the ability to push the envelope – how can we better reflect who we are? Will somebody's experience with this element allow them to tell our story and really get it right? I have seen team members criticize everything from cleanliness to service promotions (from the standpoint of poor Brand reflection) – this isn't "enough" of who we are! Getting everybody involved in this process inspires a sense of community throughout the team – it removes hierarchy and creates an equal playing field. We are all involved in being our best self as a practice – the key is that all opinions need to be heard, considered and discussed. Every team member represents a portion of your client base with their perspective and, while not everybody's ideas can always be incorporated, all opinions should be heard.



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Now that we have overcome resistance to change and gotten our team involved in assessing change and coming up with reasons for new initiatives, changes and tools, something to keep in mind is how different individuals have different preferences for how they learn. A hospital is a teaching environment. There is always something new to learn. Starting with “Why” is an important element for learning and, from there, the actual act of learning can be broken down into different learning modes.

VARK was a concept developed by educational theorist Neil Fleming; Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing and Kinesthetic. Again, just like with SCARF, accounting for these variants can lead to a smoother path with swifter successes. Taking it a step further, appreciating that every person has a preference for how they learn, client education can also be an area to apply this new found knowledge. Educating your entire team on learning styles allows for more creativity with how we present information and this can propel your compliance.

Let's face it, people who do not understand a circumstance cannot be expected to make confident decisions about the circumstance. Whether for preventative care or managing illness, the client's ability to appreciate the complexities of medical conditions and potential threats to their pet's health allows them to take ownership and partner with you on providing the best care within their means. Knowing that time is never on your side for these conversations, maximizing your explanations by minimizing their effort required to learn is a win-win.

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## OBJECTIVES

Being progressive as a hospital requires a team who can handle and embrace change. Tools to better handle resistance, engage the team in change and understand learning styles will all be explored as a way of not only tackling team culture, but also client compliance.

## TOOL KIT

### SCARF

- Assess your resistance
- Anticipate resistance of others
- Provide structure and reassurance
- Normalize resistance in order to encourage open dialogue
- Use open dialogue to remove barriers to change

### Philosophies Test

- Measure and monitor alignment to practice philosophies
- Engage the team in the process past the creation stage
- Use Reflect versus Contradict as your preliminary assessment
- Manage existing and new concepts with Reflection as your goal
- Use for practice, team and individual growth and development

### VARK

- Questionnaire for assessment
- Team training around learning preferences
- Everybody is different and everybody can learn
- Incorporate learning styles in team development
- Assess current tools and messaging
- Consider learning styles when creating new tools/messaging

## KEY POINTS

Resistance isn't defiance, it's a commitment to something different.

Acknowledging and normalizing resistance is critical to moving past it.

Frequently assessing our reflection of philosophies holds us accountable to them.

Simplifying learning maximizes efficiency and buy-in.

**Becoming The Brand! Let's play...**

