Get Everyone Along

Turn Resistance Into Motivation for Change

Lisette van de Sandt



How to create a culture of experimentation, innovation, and continuous learning, in order to help your organization navigate through times of great uncertainty.

Published in Dutch in 2024 by S2 Publishers | 256 pages | ca. 60.000 words, the book is to be updated, revised, and shortened for translation | longlisted for Management Book of the Year 2025

'Change can be more than an ordeal filled with resistance. Make change more human. Be positive about what works well today and be optimistic about what can be improved tomorrow.' – Lisette van de Sandt



Lisette van de Sandt (MSc.) is an internationally recognized expert in change and leadership — and was herself General Manager of a technical-industrial company in Germany. With experience at 60+ organizations including Haskoning, Arvato Bertelsmann, Radboud University, the Province of Limburg and Boston Consulting Group across 12 countries, she has trained 2,000+ managers and 3,500+ employees to embrace change — in Dutch, German, English, French and Spanish. Her book shows managers how to turn resistance into motivation.

The list of German companies she has worked with includes:

- Airbus
- April international
- Arthrex
- Arvato Bertelsmann
- Arvato IT
- AZ Direct
- BAT
- Bertelsmann Printing Group
- Boston Consulting Group
- Bredenoord
- Cognizant
- Croda
- CTC composites
- DB Schenker
- Deutsche Telekom
- ERIKS
- Flixbus
- IABG
- Jimdo
- Kupferstadt Stollberg
- Landeschauptstadt Düsseldorf
- Limango
- OSI
- PassportCard Europe
- Stadt Geldern
- Userlane
- Varengold Bank

ABOUT THE BOOK

Why does change often fail and how do you prevent this? How do you effectively deal with resistance and change sceptics? How do you create a culture of experimentation where colleagues continuously innovate?

According to research, 30 to 70 percent of all change processes fail. In *Get Everyone Along*, internationally renowned change expert Lisette van de Sandt reveals how, as a manager, you transform resistance into change motivation by experimenting together.

Explore the unique combination of focus on the human side of change, behavioral and neuroscience and practical applicability. Immerse yourself in stories of successful and failed change initiatives, understand the psychology behind them and immediately apply the practical tools and experiments. You'll also find favorite change tips from leaders at organizations such as ASML, the Dutch National Police, Rabobank, and ProRail.

Rest assured: you don't need to get your people on board one by one to make the change successful. What you do need, you'll discover in this book.

How to get everyone on board

Make change meaningful: Organizations are all about people. Make change meaningful so people can work together better. Tap into what motivates different people.

Do it together: Change that is imposed with a big bang rarely succeeds. In successful change, people are part of the change. Involve people interactively from the beginning to get the change going together.

Experiment and learn: Build a courageous experimentation culture where you experiment together and learn quickly from mistakes. Turn continuous improvement and innovation into a habit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

‘According to McKinsey, 70% of all change projects fail. With this comprehensive and practical change manual, you can make the much-needed change.’ – Stephan Ummelen, author

‘Lisette’s people-centered approach ensures that change is not just implemented, but embraced, fostering a culture where both individuals and organizations thrive. Her expertise shines through in everything she does, making her a trusted guide for meaningful, lasting change.’ – Dr. Myriam Hadnes, CEO & Founder of workshops.work

‘What makes the book unique is the combination of theory and practice, which has resulted in a set of valuable tools to successfully shape change within organizations.' – Dr. Vincent Pijnenburg, Professor of Cross-border Business Development, Fontys

‘The book draws extensively on scientific research and a wealth of practical experience across diverse contexts, written in an engaging, readable style. The result: numerous quick wins for both you as a manager and your team!’ – reader review

‘In her book, Lisette gives a lot of pointers, with appealing titles such as ‘resisters', 'change roller coaster' and 'rattles and bombs'. It automatically makes you smile. These are the books I like to read; and they are well-organized, with lots of tips. Let the next change come soon!' – Cock Aquarius, Commissioner in corporates and social sectors

‘Van de Sandt is a true change expert which is evident on every page of her readable and interesting book. *Get Everyone Along* makes it painfully clear that you’ll won’t succeed with just a positive outlook. In the real world it takes more than a plan on paper.’ – Margreet Noordanus, Managementboek.nl

‘This clear, accessible book offers teams and organizations insights and practical tools to successfully navigate change processes together. Highly recommended!’ – Marc Pruijssers, Teacher and Advisor Food Innovation, HAS Green Academy

‘A compelling analysis that reveals how resistance is ultimately the key to clarifying the "why" behind a change—enabling you to get (almost) everyone on board.’ – reader review

‘By tackling change together in a conscious and human-centric way, the chances of success are high. Lisette’s determined enthusiasm, optimism, and perseverance shine through in the book.’ – Jacqueline Hanssen, Director, Perspectief Inzicht

‘This book holds a wealth of knowledge not only for managers but for anyone wishing to learn how to handle change effectively.’ – Stephanie Holst-Bernal, Program Coordinator, Climate Research Nederland (KIN)

‘The wealth of practical tips and tools makes it an indispensable guide for anyone working with change processes. The book is well-structured, an easy read, and offers valuable practical guidance.’ – Wilbert van den Braak, Director, Inpladi Communication

‘This is an extremely good book in which Lisette van de Sandt addresses half-assed work and resistance to much-needed change, using the power of positivity – something we could all use.’ – Stijn de Wilde, Managementboek.nl

‘With this book in hand, you can immediately get to work on change management in a solid, effective way. For me, it has become a staple of my daily work in project management.’ – Linda Bakker, Execution & Delivery Consultant, ABN AMRO Bank NV

‘Lisette van de Sandt offers a refreshing perspective on how to transform resistance into motivation for change through a human-centric approach and clear communication.’ – reader review

‘The combination of accessible language, a familiar yet varied structure, practical tools, playful design, and the personal experiences of Lisette and the interviewees

ensures the book really sticks with you.' – Lanny Roest, International Trade Developer, LIOF

'*Get Everyone Along* offers numerous tools and striking examples that, when applied in practice, help reduce resistance and lead the team to embrace the changes positively.' – Mirjam Kapoen, former Executive, World Cancer Research Fund International

'If you want to stay relevant, there's no avoiding change. With *Get Everyone Along* it even becomes fun!' – Patrick van Ginneken, European Patent Attorney, AOMB

'In our VUCA world, this book provides a valuable foundation and a sense of recognition, enabling us, as individuals, people, organizations, and companies, to keep changing or, better yet, to keep evolving.' – Roger Feller, Commercial Director, BLM Infrastructure and BLM Industrial Contracting

'It is wonderful to see how Lisette opts for a positive approach without underestimating or dismissing the pain and resistance. Highly recommended.' – Huub Narinx, Director, Limburg Employers Association

'This is a practical, substantive book on organizational change that places special emphasis on the human element.' – reader review

'A compelling analysis that clearly shows how resistance is ultimately the key to sharpening the focus on the "why" of the change and to getting (almost) everyone on board.' – Michel Weijers, Managing Director, Veldhoen + Company GmbH

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Why is it often so difficult to get people on board with change?

Because of our evolutionary tendency to cling to the familiar. Our brains are simply hardwired to perceive the unknown as potentially dangerous, even when it isn't. Consequently, change can trigger a whole spectrum of resistance—ranging from fight-or-flight to freezing or, in extreme cases, fainting, and everything in between. You see this reflex even in hierarchical organizations. Team members may appear to be following their general like an army, but in reality, they are only giving a mediocre effort—a six or seven out of ten.

How can a leader overcome that resistance?

The first step is to give the change meaning so that people understand the "why" behind it. That might sound obvious, yet organizations often fall short in this regard. A while back, I spoke with managers at an international company who were in charge of a three-million-euro project to make operations more efficient and effective. But when I asked what concrete impact this would have on customers and employees, they had no idea. It’s hardly surprising, then, when a project fails to gain any traction.

So, you need a compelling story.

With the caveat that this involves more than just a rational justification. It is just as important for people to *feel* why the change is necessary. In the book, I cite the example of the aluminum manufacturer Mifa. The company itself admits that, from a distance, its products aren't particularly sexy. That is, until you realize that their aluminum parts enable planes to land safely and play a crucial role in medical ventilators, helping to save lives. Something like that appeals not only to the prefrontal cortex—which focuses on logic—but also to the emotional parts of the brain. Furthermore, a good story needs to be credible. For instance, you cannot force people to show greater engagement or share their honest opinions—

something I once experienced at a municipality in Germany. A change process is equally doomed to fail if you prioritize your own agenda over the team's—perhaps because your bonus as a leader depends on it. That undermines your credibility, and without credibility, trust cannot develop.

Of course, there will always be naysayers who simply cannot be convinced by any story.

Even with a clear narrative, emotional friction can arise—simply because people dislike the change. You might try to pretend those concerns don't exist, but they will continue to play on people's minds. In such cases, it is important to use open-ended questions to identify the source of that resistance.

What are these people trying to hold onto, and why?

Simply acknowledging the fear can help reduce its intensity. How many people do you need to get on board to set the entire organization in motion? Actually, not all that many. In the book, I draw a parallel with the innovation and adoption curve seen when a new consumer product hits the market. Momentum is driven by the 2.5 percent who are innovators and the 13.5 percent who consider themselves early adopters—the kind of fans who will queue for hours outside an Apple Store to get their hands on a new iPhone. Similarly, in a change process, active participation from just 16 percent of your team is often enough to win over the majority. However, it also depends on the scale of the change. In the case of a truly radical transformation, it is quite possible that ten percent might drop out and move on to something else.

Does that mean the change project has failed?

Not necessarily. While the book's title promises that you can get *everyone* on board, there are times—even after you've done everything possible—when an employee simply won't budge; at that point, you have to accept the situation and part ways amicably. However, it is crucial to first distinguish between team members who are struggling emotionally to adapt and those who are hitting the

brakes because they have critical feedback. You can actually leverage that latter group to make the change process run more smoothly. For instance, when implementing a new IT system, Annemarie Peijnenborgh of Marel—a company supplying software and machinery to the meat and fish processing industries—invites critics to a "hole-poking" session where they are free to point out everything that could possibly go wrong. This not only helps iron out the project's teething troubles but also builds buy-in, since these individuals have actively contributed to the change process themselves.

Lasting change never happens overnight. How do you keep your people engaged in the process?

One way is to view your failures as input. While failing in the same way ten times certainly won't get you anywhere, there are also errors that Harvard professor Amy Edmondson calls "intelligent mistakes"—errors you can learn from. For instance, Mifa presents a "Most Instructive Mistake" award to employees who have helped the company move forward through an intelligent error.

And how do you hold your own as a leader?

By having the courage to make clear choices. Managers often vastly underestimate the time required for change. Consequently, they fail to set priorities, which increases the risk of change fatigue. As productivity expert Cal Newport puts it in his book *Slow Productivity*, a project is not just a matter of execution; the team also needs regular updates. I recently heard about an employee who had so many meetings and progress reports to write that he was left with only two hours in a forty-hour workweek to actually work on his projects. So, not making a choice is a choice in itself—and often the worst one.

MORE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LISETTE VAN DE SANDT

‘Entrusting Lisette with the development of our leadership team and our young talents was one of the best decisions I have made as a managing director. What sets her apart is the rare combination of clarity, genuine warmth and a keen sense of what truly moves people.’ – Frank Reuter, Interim Managing Director, PassportCard Europe

‘Attending Lisette's Empowerment trainings was a truly transformative experience. From the very beginning, her energy, authenticity, and deep knowledge created a space where everyone felt seen, heard, motivated and inspired. I can't recommend this experience highly enough - it's a game-changer.’ – Yvonne Ziesemer, VP Revenue Management and Commercial Excellence, Flix SE

‘Lisette held a keynote on the theme of ‘Beyond the comfort zone’. Lisette is an enthusiastic and inspiring professional, who approaches things from different angles and perspectives in a very interesting and meaningful way.’ – Erik Jansman, Chief Operating Officer, KGS Diamond Group SA

‘Working with Lisette has been a true pleasure. She is not just an excellent leadership trainer, she's become a true partner in helping leaders and teams grow. I highly recommend Lisette to any organization looking to develop strong leaders, strengthen collaboration, and build a lasting leadership culture.’ – Shirley Atia, CHRO, PassportCard

‘As a result of experiencing the exercises during the Leadership Weekend, we became aware of the kind of behavior we display and how some behavior actually inhibits collaboration instead of stimulating it.’ – Rob van Oene, Managing Director, Mifa

‘In the corona pandemic the Behavioural Science Institute at Radboud University asked Lisette to provide an uplifting, interactive session for our colleagues around 'Positivity and change'. Lisette, with her knowledge and energy, proved to be the

perfect speaker for this purpose.' – Sander Berends, Managing Director BSI, Radboud University

'My team and I embarked on a change process to develop a feedback culture, which takes time and commitment. The team training provided me with the essential tools to successfully achieve this.' – Dirkjan Douma, Associate Director Consultancy Climate Resilience, Haskoning

'The collaboration with Lisette for the Essential Leadership Program at Schenker is extremely customer-oriented, uncomplicated and professional. She manages to flexibly adapt the program content to the different groups in order to meet the needs of the participants and to make the training particularly practice-oriented.' – Aline Fischer, Talent Management, E.ON Digital Technology

'The training helped me understand that organizational change is actually a complex, long-term process that requires constant communication and broad involvement of the people who are affected by it.' – Thomas Nuspl, Central Europe FP&A Director, Boston Consulting Group

'This training was super valuable to me as it conveyed the central aspects of change management in a concise and ready-to-apply way, putting a lot of focus on how to identify different stakeholder groups that require custom-fit measures.' – Andy Ebert, Data Product Owner – Director Global Data Tribe, Boston Consulting Group

'It was very enriching for me to work with Lisette. Particularly her likeable and positive presence, her quick comprehension and her excellent analytical abilities made a lasting impression. During our collaboration, she defined and implemented many processes at our location. She was able to motivate and excite the employees for the changes.' – Daniel Dankworth, Head of Global Business Unit Metalworking & Cleaning, Chemische Werke Kluthe GmbH

'We really appreciated the workshop on developing a common vision and improving communication that Lisette delivered to our staff members at WUR. It made us reflect on common directions and focused us on clear actions to foster

positive change.' – Prof. Dr. Maria Suarez-Diez, Professor and Chair Holder Systems and Synthetic Biology, Wageningen University & Research

'Lisette's communicates easily in an international setting due to her remarkable English and German language skills.' – Steven Sels, Member Of The Management Board and Chief Operating Officer, SHV Energy

'Lisette van de Sandt is characterized by a highly analytical working method and structural approach. The resulting considerateness was essential for her success.' – Roland Rudolf, Director, ERIKS Frankfurt, Mannheim, Saarbrücken

'What I truly appreciate about Lisette is her warm and caring personality. She knows how to get change started. Her feedback is to the point, but at the same time, everything she does is trust-based and always accompanied by a smile.' – Loes Keijsers, Professor in Clinical Child and Family Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam

'Lisette is a professional speaker who knows how to engage participants. Her positive presence creates an atmosphere where people feel safe to share personal experiences. Participants were enthusiastic and indicated that they learned how to implement positivity in their own organizations.' – Janou Martens-Goetstouwers, Policy Advisor Economic Affairs, City of Roermond

'Creating the HR Strategy of ERIKS Group with Lisette was an inspirational process. She greatly contributed with her intelligence and fast analytical skills. She possesses the scarce capability to be able to advise on a strategic level and to convert strategy into practical plans. Her international experience made the HR Strategy appealing to different nationalities.' – René Höppener, Management & Co-Owner, Peters Rubber & Plastics

'Lisette is a wonderful and targeted trainer! She is very informed to not only read the room right but also participant's energy. This is one of the best trainings I ever attended especially the fact that I am reviewing and implementing the Change

topics and my actions even weeks after the training.' – Garima Mongia, Global L&D Transformation Manager, Boston Consulting Group

'Theoretical knowledge is effortlessly combined with her business experience and as a result she is able to give me practical tools for the execution.' – Funs Ebus, Owner, Ebus Planten

'The combination of basic theory and interactivity come first in Lisette's workshops. Most importantly, however, is that her enthusiasm inspires people and (certainly not less significant!) enables them to move forward.' – Janet Antonissen, Coordinator organizational collaboration, Fontys University of Applied Sciences

'We have been working with Lisette as a trainer for our team leader program in Germany for many years. I particularly appreciate her open and cheerful nature, with which she approaches all participants, taking them, in a very personal way, on their learning journey.' – Katharina Schoof, Senior Expert Learning, Development & Talent Management, Arvato SE

'Lisette offered clear, practically applicable knowledge, backed up by relevant scientific insights. She presents clearly, energetically and with infectious enthusiasm!' – Jur Venema, Event Coordinator Knowledge Festival

'Lisette helped me tremendously to improve my leadership coaching skills in a short time. Through her knowledge of Radical Candor and her ability to quickly see through my strengths and development points, I was equipped with concrete tools to coach and develop myself more effectively. Thanks to her guidance, I feel much more confident and a much stronger manager.' – Celine Merkx, Manager Digital Marketing, Fingerspitz

'Lisette guided managers through topics such as hybrid working, limited workspaces and maintaining connection and engagement. A pleasant and solid start to a change process, with room for further deepening and customization.' – Nina Lak, Internal Communications Advisor, University of Amsterdam