

IB Business Management - Topic 2.1 Introduction to Human Resource Management

Worksheet 3 (Version C)

Focus: Reasons for resistance to change; HR strategies to reduce resistance; ethical change management

Suggested time	60 minutes
Total marks	50
Instructions	Answer all questions. For multiple choice, select the best answer (A-D). For written responses, show clear business reasoning and use terminology accurately.

Command terms reminder: define (give the meaning), explain (give reasons or causes), analyse (break down with cause-effect), discuss/evaluate (consider different viewpoints and reach a justified conclusion).

Section A: Multiple choice

Choose the best answer for each question. **[10 marks]**

1. According to Kotter and Schlesinger, resistance to change may occur because employees: **[1]**

- A. always prefer working overtime
- B. want the business to grow too quickly
- C. misunderstand why change is needed
- D. are legally prevented from changing job roles

2. An employee who says 'the current system works fine; changing it is a hassle' is most clearly showing: **[1]**

- A. self-interest
- B. preference for the present situation
- C. differing assessment of the situation
- D. facilitation and support

3. Which strategy involves making a deal with employees (e.g., higher productivity in return for higher pay)? **[1]**

- A. Education and communication
- B. Negotiation and bargaining
- C. Manipulation and co-option
- D. Explicit coercion

4. Manipulation and co-option is best described as: **[1]**

- A. giving employees full decision-making power over the change
- B. forcing change through using threats
- C. bringing key resisters into the process to win them over and influence others
- D. providing training and counselling to help employees cope

5. A potential disadvantage of participation and involvement is that it may: **[1]**

- A. always increase resistance
- B. lead to delays and conflict about how much involvement is appropriate
- C. eliminate the need for communication
- D. reduce employee insights about the change

6. Explicit or implicit coercion is most likely to be used when: **[1]**

- A. managers have plenty of time and need full consensus
- B. fast change is essential and persuasion has failed
- C. employees already fully support the change
- D. the change has no impact on employees

7. In a strategic HRM approach, developing employees' skills primarily helps an organisation by: **[1]**

- A. ensuring employees never need feedback
- B. meeting future organisational needs and improving competitiveness
- C. reducing customer expectations
- D. removing the need for corporate objectives

8. Which statement best links ethical HR systems to performance? **[1]**

- A. Ethical HR systems only matter for public-sector organisations
- B. Ethical HR systems can increase trust and motivation, improving employee performance
- C. Ethical HR systems always increase labour costs and reduce performance
- D. Ethical HR systems replace the need for training

9. The argument that creative employees are essential for business success is most closely linked to: **[1]**

- A. the idea that technology and competition create opportunities for innovation
- B. the idea that wages should always be cut
- C. the view that all employees should be contractors
- D. the belief that change should always be resisted

10. Which option is the best example of an HR strategy designed to provide support during change? [1]
- A. Threatening redundancies for anyone who disagrees
 - B. Providing training and equipment so employees can succeed in the new system
 - C. Hiding information about the change to prevent questions
 - D. Reducing communication to avoid rumours

Section B: Short answer

Answer all questions in this section. [12 marks]

1. Define 'self-interest' as a reason for resistance to change. [2]

2. Explain two reasons why employees might resist change in the workplace. [4]

3. Explain two strategies managers can use to reduce resistance to change. [4]

4. Explain one drawback of using manipulation and co-option. [2]

Section C: Data response / case study

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow. [18 marks]

Case study: CityLink Logistics (managing resistance to change)

CityLink Logistics operates a fleet of delivery vans. To improve on-time delivery and reduce fuel costs, management plans to introduce a new route-optimisation app and a digital performance system. Drivers will receive more detailed performance feedback and a small part of pay will depend on meeting on-time targets. CityLink will also move to more team-based working at depots so that drivers share best practices and support each other.

A staff survey (below) suggests that many drivers are worried about the change.

Employee concern (survey - multiple responses allowed)	Percentage of drivers selecting
Fear that the new performance system will reduce earnings	48%
Worry about job security due to increased automation	35%
Belief that the change is the wrong plan / will fail	30%
Lack of understanding of why the change is needed	28%

1. Using the survey data, identify two reasons for resistance to the change and classify each using Kotter and Schlesinger's categories. [4]

Answer key and marking guidance (teacher copy)

Use this section for marking. Student responses may vary; award marks for accurate business knowledge, application to the scenario, and logical reasoning.

Question type	How to award marks
[2] Define	1 mark for an accurate definition; +1 mark for clear wording and/or a relevant example.
[4] Explain two	Typically 2 marks per point: 1 for identification, 1 for explanation linked to the question/context.
[6] Analyse	Reward cause-effect chains, depth, and application. Often 3 marks per developed point (identification + development + application).
[10] Evaluate/Discuss	Use the level descriptors provided. Look for balance, application, evaluation of trade-offs, and a justified conclusion.

Section A answers: Multiple choice

Q	Answer	Rationale (brief)
1	C	Misunderstanding is one of the four key reasons identified (along with self-interest, preference for the present, and differing assessment).
2	B	Preference for the present situation reflects comfort with existing routines and dislike of disruption.
3	B	Negotiation/bargaining uses incentives to gain acceptance of change.
4	C	Co-option targets influential resisters by involving them in committees/roles.
5	B	Participation can improve commitment but can slow implementation and create disagreement.
6	B	Coercion can be fast but risks damaging morale, trust and ethics.
7	B	Skill development supports future needs and competitive performance.
8	B	Ethical practices can improve commitment, reduce conflict and support performance.
9	A	Creative employees help firms exploit technological change and compete through new products/processes.
10	B	Facilitation and support includes training, resources and emotional support.

Section B markscheme: Short answer

1. Define 'self-interest' as a reason for resistance to change. [2]

Indicative answer: Self-interest means employees resist change to protect their personal position because they believe they may be worse off - for example, they fear losing pay/bonuses, job security, status or they feel they lack the skills needed after the change.

Marking guidance: 1 mark for protecting personal interests; 1 mark for explanation/example.

2. Explain two reasons why employees might resist change in the workplace. [4]

Indicative answer: Reasons include: self-interest (fear of losses), preference for the present situation (comfort with existing routines), differing assessment (believing the plan is wrong), and misunderstanding (not understanding why change is needed).

Marking guidance: 2 marks per explained reason (identify + explain), max 4.

3. Explain two strategies managers can use to reduce resistance to change. [4]

Indicative answer: Strategies include education and communication (explain why/how change will work), facilitation and support (training/resources), participation and involvement (include employees in decisions), negotiation and bargaining (incentives), manipulation/co-option, and coercion.

Marking guidance: 2 marks per explained strategy, max 4.

4. Explain one drawback of using manipulation and co-option. [2]

Indicative answer: Manipulation/co-option can be unethical or damage trust if employees feel management is 'using' influencers; it may create only superficial agreement and lead to backlash if staff discover information was managed selectively.

Marking guidance: Up to 2 for a clear drawback with brief explanation.

Section C markscheme: Case study

Case study: CityLink Logistics (managing resistance to change)

1. Using the survey data, identify two reasons for resistance to the change and classify each using Kotter and Schlesinger's categories. [4]

Indicative answer: Example 1: Fear of reduced earnings (48%) - **self-interest**. Example 2: Lack of understanding (28%) - **misunderstanding**. (Other valid pairings: job security/automation -> self-interest; belief plan will fail -> differing assessment).

Marking guidance: 2 marks per reason (reason + correct category), max 4.

2. Recommend one strategy CityLink should use to reduce resistance. Justify your choice using evidence from the case. [6]

Indicative answer: A strong recommendation is education/communication plus facilitation/support: clearly explain why the app and pay system are being introduced, how targets are calculated, and provide training and trial periods. This directly addresses misunderstanding (28%) and fear of earnings loss (48%) by reducing uncertainty and building competence. Alternatively, negotiation may be justified to redesign pay metrics with employee representatives.

Marking guidance: Up to 6 for a justified, case-linked recommendation using survey evidence.

3. Analyse one possible impact of resistance to change on CityLink's performance. [4]

Indicative answer: Resistance could reduce cooperation with the new system, leading to poor use of route optimisation, slower deliveries, higher fuel costs and lower on-time delivery. It may increase conflict/absenteeism or turnover, raising recruitment and training costs and harming customer satisfaction.

Marking guidance: Up to 4 for analysis linking resistance to performance outcomes.

4. Analyse how a strategic HRM approach to this change would differ from a traditional personnel management approach. [4]

Indicative answer: HRM would treat the change as strategic: align training, performance management and rewards with the goal of improved delivery efficiency; involve line managers and teams; manage culture and motivation. Personnel management would focus more on administering pay/contracts and may treat training, pay and communication as separate tasks, risking misalignment and higher resistance.

Marking guidance: Up to 4 for clear comparison with application.

Section D markscheme: Extended response

Question: Discuss the best approach CityLink should use to overcome resistance while maintaining an ethical HR system and high performance. In your answer, evaluate at least two strategies and recommend one. [10]

10-mark extended response (evaluation) - marking guidance

Award marks using a best-fit approach.

0: No relevant content.

1-2: Very limited knowledge; largely descriptive; little/no reference to the case; no judgement.

3-4: Some relevant knowledge; limited application to the bank; limited analysis; judgement is asserted rather than justified.

5-6: Clear knowledge and some application; some analysis of advantages/limitations; a conclusion is present but may be unbalanced or weakly supported.

7-8: Very good knowledge and strong application; balanced analysis including resistance to change; conclusion is well supported and context-based.

9-10: Excellent, integrated response; strong, precise application; perceptive evaluation (including trade-offs/ethics) and a fully justified conclusion.

Indicative content: Best-fit approach depends on causes: misunderstanding -> education/communication; self-interest -> negotiation and support; preference for present -> participation and clear benefits; differing assessment -> involvement and pilots. Ethical HRM favours transparency and fair rewards; coercion may be fast but risks trust and long-term performance. A strong answer evaluates at least two strategies (e.g., participation vs coercion) and recommends one with justification.

Marking guidance: Use the 10-mark level descriptors provided.