



Resistance to Innovation: Its Sources and Manifestations

Shaul Oreg, Jacob Goldenberg

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Every year, about 25,000 new products are introduced in the United States. Most of these products fail—at considerable expense to the companies that produce them. Such failures are typically thought to result from consumers' resistance to innovation, but marketers have tended to focus instead on consumers who show little resistance, despite these “early adopters” comprising only 20 percent of the consumer population.

Shaul Oreg and Jacob Goldenberg bring the insights of marketing and organizational behavior to bear on the attitudes and behaviors of the remaining 80 percent who resist innovation. The authors identify two competing definitions of resistance: In marketing, resistance denotes a reluctance to adopt a worthy new product, or one that offers a clear benefit and carries little or no risk. In the field of organizational behavior, employees are defined as resistant if they are unwilling to implement changes regardless of the reasons behind their reluctance. Seeking to clarify the act of rejecting a new product from the reasons—rational or not—consumers may have for doing so, Oreg and Goldenberg propose a more coherent definition of resistance less encumbered by subjective, context-specific factors and personality traits. The application of this tighter definition makes it possible to disentangle resistance from its sources and ultimately offers a richer understanding of consumers' underlying motivations. This important research is made clear through the use of many real-life examples.

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