

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



“Open Window” Communication

This document is part of the training materials for the RCRA Corrective Action Workshop on Results-Based Project Management. It contains summaries of EPA statutory authorities, regulations, and guidance materials. This document does not substitute for any of these authorities or materials. In addition, this document is not an EPA regulation and therefore cannot impose legally binding requirements on EPA, States, or the regulated community. EPA may change this document in the future, as appropriate.

Objectives

You will be given an opportunity to:

- Learn about a factor affecting many interactions between the regulator and regulated
- Learn to use a communication tool to more proactively improve coordination between the regulator and regulated
- Practice using this tool to enhance communication with the facility, public, and other regulatory agencies

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Notes:

In this module, you will be introduced to a tool to help you channel the emotions, energy, and natural conflicts inherent in a Corrective Action toward a focus on the substantive and technical issues. This improves your ability to achieve Corrective Action Results more easily, effectively, and quickly.

You may use this tool to reduce the amount of unknown information in a Corrective Action project. As you reduce the amount of unknown information, you can better reduce or manage the level of uncertainty in a Corrective Action project.

You will practice using this tool to enhance communication between the facility, the public, and other regulatory agencies to achieve a Corrective Action Result.

A task
of a RCRA Corrective
Action Project Manager
is to **influence another**
to change.

Resistance

- Often a person's first response to making a change
- Natural human tendency when faced with:
 - uncertainty
 - unfamiliarity
 - the unknown
 - being “pushed” or forced
 - areas where one has been “burned”
 - no valid options or the opportunity to make a choice



Reducing Resistance

- Resistance results from:
- Uncertainty
- Unfamiliarity
- The Unknown
- Perception of being thwarted or disregarded
- Pushing or forcing
- No valid options or the ability to make a choice
- Resistance reduced by:
- Managing uncertainty
- Gaining knowledge
- Removing surprises
- Involve early and continuously
- Trying other solutions
- Options and flexibility

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A Tool - The Johari Window

- Tool to help you manage uncertainty, gain knowledge, remove surprises
- Dr. Joseph Luft and Dr. Harrington V. Ingham
- Johari Window Operator = YOU

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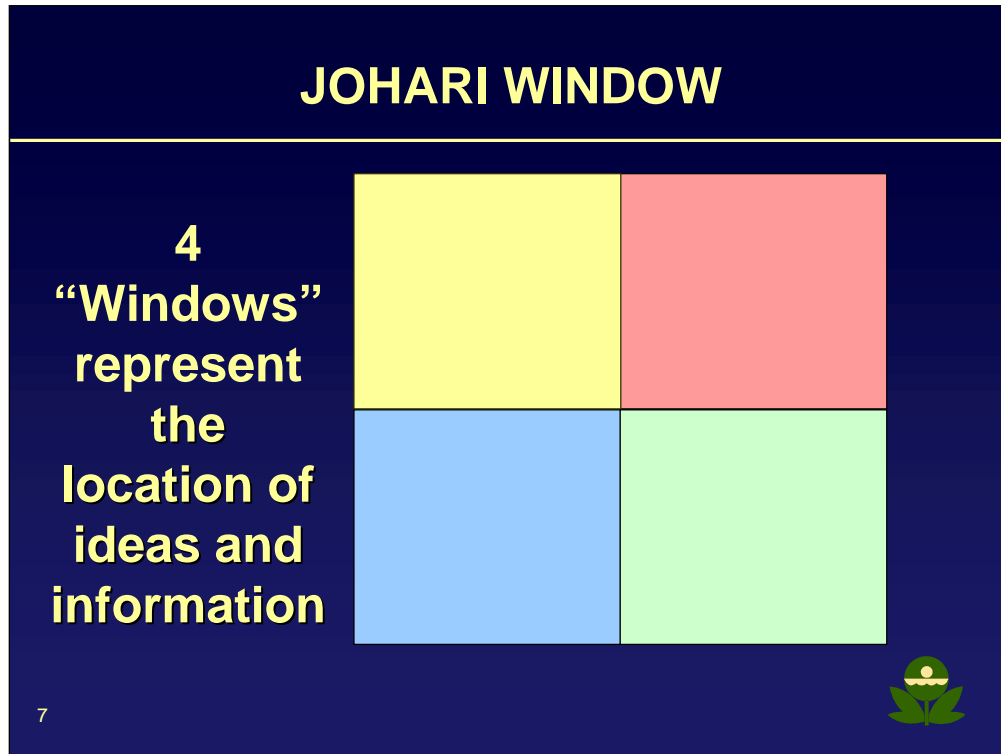


Notes:

The word “Johari” is a combination of the names “Joe” and “Harry,” Joseph Luft, Ph.D., and Harrington V. Ingham, M.D., of the University of California at Los Angeles. Drs. Luft and Ingham developed the Johari Window model during a summer laboratory session in the 1950’s. It first appeared in the *Proceedings of the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development* issued by the University of California at Los Angeles.

The Johari Window model addresses awareness in interpersonal relationships. The Johari Window is a tool to help you increase your understanding and skill in interpersonal relationships, such as those between the public, facility, and regulatory agencies in Corrective Action.

Although the facility and public can also operate the Johari Window, for the purposes of this presentation, assume the “operator” of the Johari Window is YOU.



Notes:

The Johari Window is a model that includes four “windows” to represent the location of ideas and information available within a group of people who are dependent upon one another to achieve a common outcome. In the case of a Corrective Action, the group represented by the Johari Window is the regulatory agency, the facility, and the public. At any one time during a Corrective Action, information important to the success of the project is available in one of four “windows:”

- Open Window;
- Blind Window;
- Hidden Window; or
- Unknown Window

The OPEN WINDOW

OPEN WINDOW

- Information that is **KNOWN** or **SHARED** by all parties
- Clarity in what you want and what others want
- Examples ?



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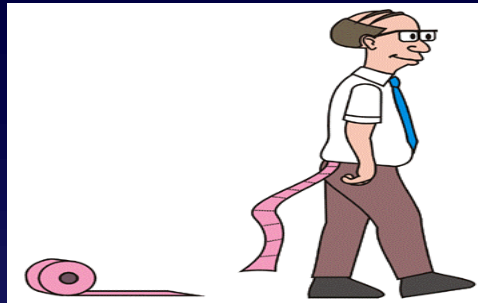
Notes:

The Open Window contains information that is known or shared by all parties. In a Corrective Action, it is information that is readily known to the regulatory agencies, the facility, the public, and any other involved party.

Examples of information typically in the Open Window in a Corrective Action include information as written in a RCRA Facility Assessment that is both understandable and available to all parties, the publicly stated concerns of an environmental group, or an annual report made available by a facility.

The BLIND WINDOW

BLIND WINDOW



- Information OTHERS KNOW but YOU DO NOT
- Cannot address what you do not know



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Notes:

The Blind Window contains information that others know but you do not know, information that others have but you do not have. Lacking certain information, you may be “in the dark” when it comes to making certain educated decisions.

Examples of information that may be in a Blind Window in a Corrective Action include specific public needs and concerns, site characterization data or information regarding a facility’s past history that the facility may be reluctant to reveal, or the results of another regulatory agency’s recent facility inspection.

The HIDDEN WINDOW

HIDDEN WINDOW



- Information YOU know but OTHERS DO NOT
- Others cannot use information they do not have




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Notes:


The Hidden Window contains information you know but others do not know, information that is visible to us but not to others. Lacking certain information, others may be “in the dark” when it comes to making certain educated decisions.

Examples of information that may be in a Hidden Window in a Corrective Action include a pending enforcement action on the facility, the stated concerns of an EPA or State technical support group that likely will significantly impact the facility’s proposed technical approach, or the lack of EPA or State resources to conduct significant public participation efforts.

The UNKNOWN WINDOW



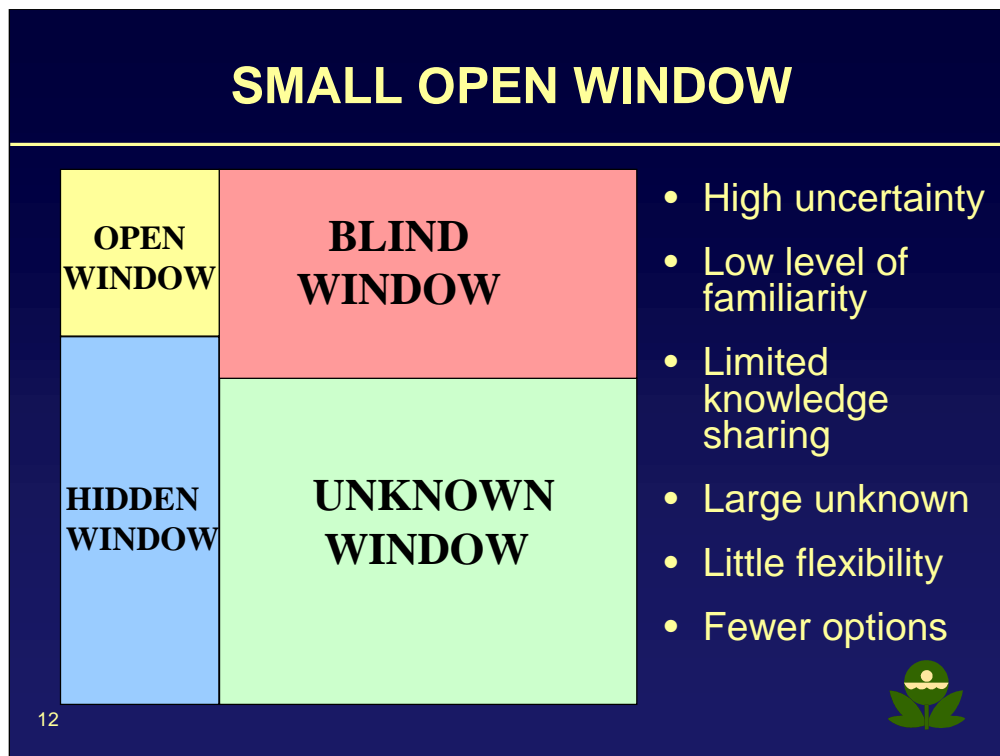
- Unknown data
- Unknown solutions
- Unknown opportunities
- Everyone is “in the dark”



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Notes:

The Unknown Window contains information not yet available to either you or others. This information may be in the form of data, solutions, or opportunities. In a Corrective Action, this information may be an innovative technical approach to a Corrective Action, a new available technology developed yet not known by the particular facility, regulatory agency, or public. Or, it may be site characterization data, such as buried drums, as yet completely unknown to anyone.



Notes:

Generally, in a new or difficult working relationship, the Open Window is small. Communication is superficial and guarded. Suggestions are not implemented and often left undeveloped. Productivity is low. Much information is kept hidden or is unknown, and people are often blind to information that others have.

Your task in building open and productive communication is two-fold: to reduce the size of the Hidden Window, and to reduce the size of the Blind Window. Through reducing the size of the Hidden and Blind Windows, the size of the Unknown Window is automatically decreased.

LARGE OPEN WINDOW



**OPEN
WINDOW**

- Easier to manage uncertainty
- Familiarity
- Knowledge sharing
- Little that's not known
- More options



JOHARI WINDOW FOR YOUR PROJECT



- Your space to draw JoHari Window for your project

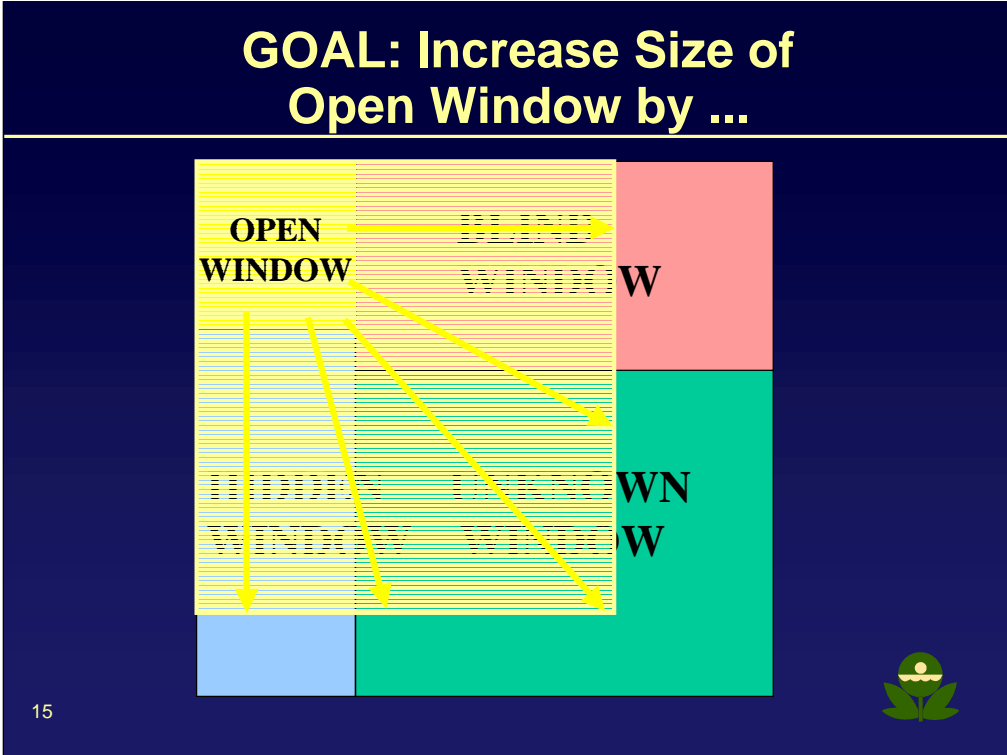
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Notes:

The Open Window contains information that is known or shared by all parties. In a Corrective Action, it is information that is readily known to the regulatory agencies, the facility, the public, and any other involved party.

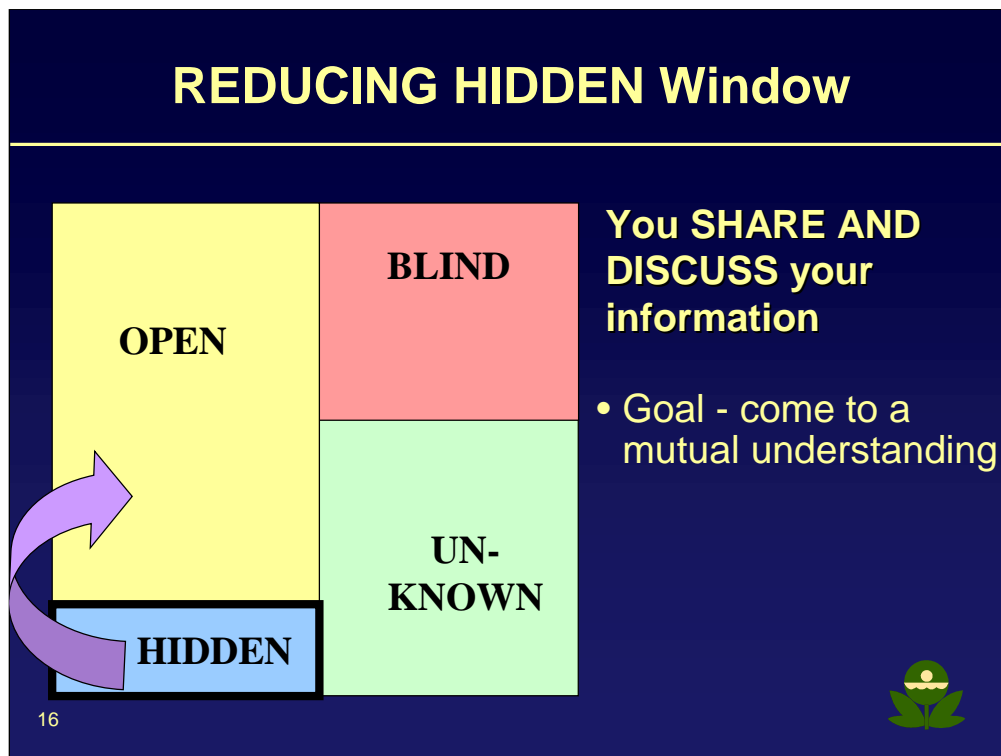
Examples of information typically in the Open Window in a Corrective Action include information as written in a RCRA Facility Assessment that is both understandable and available to all parties, the publicly stated concerns of an environmental group, or an annual report made available by a facility.



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Notes:

As the size of the Open Window increases, the size of the Unknown Window automatically decreases. New solutions, unknown data, and unforeseen opportunities become known by either yourself, the public, the facility, or another regulatory agency. As more information is both shared and sought out by these parties, innovative solutions become more and more available.



Notes:

You reduce the size of the Hidden Window by **SHARING AND DISCUSSING INFORMATION** that you or your agency knows but that the public, facility, or other regulatory agencies may not know. Such information might include your personal goals and expectations regarding a particular corrective action, the requirements of your agency or of the regulations, or technical information in a form that is both understandable and useable.

TOOLS TO HELP YOU COME TO A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

- Conceptual Site Model
- Your Environmental Indicator Forms
- Letter of Expectations
- Site Visits, Interactive Briefings, Working Meetings
- Core Technical Group
- Public Availability/Poster Sessions
- Interagency committees

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Notes:

Some means for you to SHARE AND PROVIDE INFORMATION with the public, facility, and other regulatory agencies regarding a Corrective Action include:

The EPA or State's Conceptual Site Model for the Facility. This is a tool to help focus discussions on substantive and technical issues versus personalities.

Environmental Indicators. The facility and public may benefit from being made aware of the EPA or State regulatory agency assumptions regarding the corrective action.

Letter of Expectations. This describes your agency's primary expectations for a facility deliverable or activities, such as a focused RCRA Facility Investigation or a Facility-led (Voluntary) Corrective Action.

Site Visits, Interactive Briefings, Working Meetings. Early, regular, and routinely scheduled opportunities for the facility, regulatory agency, and public to interface provide the means for the exchange of information.

Core Technical Group. This is a group of designated representatives from the facility, regulatory agency, and public that meets on a routine basis to discuss the goals and progress of a corrective action. The Core Group minimizes opportunities for the spread of misinformation or miscommunication by serving as a focal point for the exchange of information between the regulatory agency, the facility, and the public.

Public Availability/Poster Sessions. These offer an opportunity to share information with the public, and to seek information from the public.

Interagency Committees. These offer an opportunity to share information with other regulatory agencies relevant to a corrective action project or program.

REDUCING BLIND Window

The diagram illustrates a window with three distinct sections. The top-left section is yellow and labeled 'OPEN'. The bottom-left section is blue and labeled 'HIDDEN'. The right side of the window is red and labeled 'BLIND'. A purple arrow originates from the top of the 'BLIND' section and points towards the 'OPEN' section, signifying the process of reducing the blind window by seeking information.

You SEEK information from facility, public, regulatory agencies

- Their assumptions, questions, understanding
- Goal - come to a mutual understanding

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Notes:

You reduce the size of the Blind Window by SEEKING INFORMATION. You seek information from the facility and the public, information you need to know that you don't currently know that will help achieve a Corrective Action. Such information might include the specific goals of the facility (near and long-term) for the corrective action, the facility's predicted end land use, the public's specific questions and concerns, and the facility's risk assessment assumptions that help determine a Corrective Action decision.

TOOLS TO HELP YOU COME TO A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

- Facility's Conceptual Site Model
- Facility's Environmental Indicator Forms
- Monthly Progress Reports
- Site visits, Interactive Briefings, Working Meetings
- Inter-Agency Workgroups
- Questions, such as, "When you said/offered such and such, did you mean [my interpretation]?"

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Notes:

Some means for you to share, discuss, and more easily come to a mutual understanding with the facility, the public, or other regulatory agencies for a Corrective Action include:

Conceptual Site Model. This is a tool to help focus discussions on substantive and technical issues versus personalities. It helps you understand the facility's fundamental technical assumptions for a Corrective Action. Many of these are obtained in a facility's conceptual site model. Through seeking a facility's assumptions, you begin to understand where the assumptions (yours, the facility's, and even the public's) differ.

Facility's Environmental Indicator Forms. Some EPA Regional Project Managers have suggested facilities complete Environmental Indicator (EI) forms for the purpose of comparing their (Project Manager) technical assumptions with those of the facility. This helps identify the specific areas of agreement and disagreement which in turn helps focus the discussions on the technical issues.

Site Visits, Interactive Briefings, Working Meetings. A site visit to the facility can provide you with valuable information. The old adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" appropriately describes the value of getting information firsthand, seeing with your own eyes, and hearing with your own ears. As with opening the Hidden Window, interactive briefings and working meetings with the facility, public, or other regulatory agencies is a means to exchange (provide and seek) information relative to a Corrective Action.

Teleconferences. Regular and routine teleconferences with the facility, the public, or the other regulatory agencies afford you the opportunity to continually build your knowledge base.

Communication with the Public

Lead Agency



Facility

Public

Chapter 4 of the RCRA Public Participation Manual calls for:

- Early participation
- Consistency with Superfund
- Shared responsibility for public participation activities



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Notes:

EPA's most comprehensive public involvement guidance for RCRA Corrective Action under permits and 3008(h) orders is outlined in Chapter 4 of RCRA Public Participation Manual, EPA 530-R-96-007, September 1996. Following are the overarching principles outlined in this manual for you to consider in developing effective communication between the regulatory agency, facility, and public.

Early participation. The need for public information and involvement varies from site to site. By canvassing the public early in the Corrective Action process, the regulatory agency and facility can determine the level of public interest and need for information. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of a public participation effort tailored to meet the specific community needs.

Public participation is often most effective if initiated early in the Corrective Action process. An important benefit of early participation is an increased likelihood of gaining the public's trust. Parties that trust one another can more easily communicate and cooperate to achieve a Corrective Action.

Consistency with Superfund. EPA encourages permitting agencies and facilities to make public participation activities during Corrective Action consistent with those activities required under Superfund. For example, public participation activities for a significant interim action would equal or exceed those required for a Superfund removal action.

Shared responsibility for public participation activities. The Corrective Action process may involve several steps initiated by a regulatory agency or a facility. Thus, public participation is an activity shared by the regulatory agency and the facility. Public participation activities will often be more useful if initiated by the party who performed the latest cleanup step.

Minimum Public Participation

- At the initiation of Corrective Action
- At selection of significant interim measures
- Prior to remedy proposal, when community acceptance is weighed as a remedy balancing factor
- At selection of a final remedy
- At completion of Corrective Action

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Early and Continuous Participation

- Public Availability/Poster Sessions
- Public Meetings
- Comprehensive Goal Setting-Community Visioning Process
- Community Advisory Groups
- Community Remediation Committee
- Others ???

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Notes:

You can refer to the following documents to learn more about some means to SEEK (and share) INFORMATION from the public. Although many of these are Superfund documents, the same fundamental principles and practices apply to developing open and productive communication with the public in a RCRA Corrective Action.

The *Superfund Community Involvement Handbook and Toolkit* Dec 15, 1998 includes the following sections:

- Public Availability/Poster Sessions
- Public Meetings
- The Community Visioning Process
- Risk Communication
- Facilitation
- Conflict Resolution/ADR

“About the Community Advisory Group Toolkit: A Summary of the Tools,” EPA 540-K-97-007, September 1998

“Guidance for Community Advisory Groups at Superfund Sites,” EPA 540-K-96-001, December 1995

“Community Advisory Groups (CAGs) at Superfund Sites,” EPA 540-F-96-016, August 1996

Reducing Resistance

- Resistance results from:
- Uncertainty
- Unfamiliarity
- The Unknown
- Perception of being thwarted or disregarded
- **Pushing or forcing**
- **No valid options or the ability to make a choice**
- Resistance reduced by:
- Managing uncertainty
- Gaining knowledge
- Removing surprises
- Involve early and continuously
- **Trying other solutions**
- **Options and flexibility**

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LARGE OPEN WINDOW

**OPEN
WINDOW**



- Now, build on areas of agreement
- “Break off a small piece”
- Look for small successes
- Take change in “chunks”
- Be flexible



**“Imagination is more
important than knowledge.”**

Albert Einstein

Additional Communication Tools

- “Working with Resistance”
- “Effective Meetings with the Facility”
- “Effective Group Participation Skills”

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Notes:

These Communication Tools are designed specifically for a RCRA Corrective Action Project Manager. You can find these communication tool sheets in your Handbook.