



KOTTER'S 8 Steps of Change

In 1995, Kotter, a professor at Harvard Business School and world-renowned change expert, introduced his eight-step change process in his 1995 book, "Leading Change."

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STEP 1: INCREASE URGENCY

In order to change, we need to understand the need to do it. Leaders must describe an opportunity that will appeal to individuals' heads and hearts. What are the stakes if you succeed? What are consequences if you don't move?

STEP 2: BUILD GUIDING COALITION

Change needs leadership. This comes from influential people throughout the organization (or community), not necessarily the 'senior' people. They need to work together as a team to build momentum around the change. All relevant points of view should be included. Do you have a way to engage a formalized network to take on innovative change?

STEP 3: GET THE VISION RIGHT

We need to understand and remember why we are doing the change. A vision helps us to understand what we are trying to achieve. The vision must be inspirational and achievable. Are people aligned around a unified idea that inspires them to move forward?

STEP 4: COMMUNICATE THE VISION

The vision needs to be shared frequently and powerfully. It should be part of all communication. We need to see that leaders are practicing what the vision says. Behavior is more powerful than words. Is it possible to create and tap a volunteer 'army' that shares the vision?

STEP 5: ENABLE ACTION, REMOVING BARRIERS

There will be some processes and structures that get in the way of change. Some people will also resist it. The hierarchies that serve us so well in terms of efficiency and order can limit transformation. Where there is resistance, honest discussion is needed. "Innovation is less about generating brand new ideas and more about knocking down barriers to making those ideas reality." -Kotter

STEP 6: CREATE SHORT-TERM WINS

Look for things that you can achieve as you go along, set goals that can be met in the short-term so that everyone is motivated by the early successes and is rewarded for their effort. This makes everyone more positive and optimistic. Generating and celebrating wins along the way is vital to acceleration towards and focus on the goal.

STEP 7: SUSTAIN ACCELERATION

Evaluate as you go along to see what is working and what needs to improve. Keep on building on the successes. Continue sharing the vision and get more people engaged. Balance management and leadership; create the space for people to behave like leaders.

STEP 8: INSTITUTE CHANGE

In what way have you invested in making the change stick? Culture change comes last, not first and happens because people can see the new way is better than the old. Remember what people have achieved. How are new ways of working becoming embedded in the day-to-day?