Kotter's 8-Step Change Model

Implementing Change Powerfully and Successfully

CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN SOCIAL CARE

AJ recruitment

Contents

*We live in a world where "business as usual" **i**nvolves **change management;** whether its driving new initiatives, projects, technology improvements or staying ahead of the competition.*

When a business is considering a small change to one or two processes or a system wide change, it is common to feel intimidated by the size of the challenge.

*We often know what needs to happen, **but don't always know how** we might go about doing delivering it.*

There are many theories about how to "do" change. Many originate with the leadership and change management guru, John Kotter, a professor at Harvard Business School and world-renowned change expert.

*This year "business as usual" has been impacted by **Brexit** and the **COVID-19 pandemic** that no one was prepared for. Change management has had to happen in all organisations and it has had to happen fast.*

*Therefore, **change management** is more important now than ever before, and as a leader a key responsibility is to be able to lead and guide your colleagues and business successfully through this period of change. To do this, Kotter's Change Model uses 8 key steps*

Step 1: Establish a sense of Urgency

For change to happen, it helps if the whole company really wants it. Develop a sense of urgency around the need for change. This may help you spark the initial motivation to get things moving.

This isn't simply a matter of showing people poor sales statistics or talking about increased competition. Open an honest and convincing dialogue about what's happening in the marketplace and with your competition. If many people start talking about the change you propose, the urgency can build and feed on itself.

What you can do:
- Identify potential threats, and develop scenarios showing what could happen in the future.
- Examine opportunities that should be, or could be, exploited.
- Start honest discussions and give dynamic and convincing reasons to get people talking and thinking.
- Request support from customers, outside stakeholders and industry people to strengthen your argument.

Note: Kotter suggests that for change to be successful, 75 percent of a company's management needs to "buy into" the change. In other words, you have to really work hard on Step 1, and spend significant time and energy building urgency, before moving onto the next steps. Don't panic and jump in too fast because you don't want to risk further short-term losses – if you act without proper preparation, you could be in for a very bumpy ride.

Step 2: Build powerful teams to collaborate

Convince people that change is necessary. This often takes strong leadership and visible support from key people within your organization. Managing change isn't enough – you have to lead it.

You can find effective change leaders throughout your organization – they don't necessarily follow the traditional company hierarchy. To lead change, you need to bring together a coalition, or team, of influential people whose power comes from a variety of sources, including job title, status, expertise, and political importance.

Once formed, your "change coalition" needs to work as a team, continuing to build urgency and momentum around the need for change.

What you can do:
- Identify the true leaders in your organization.
- Ask for an emotional commitment from these key people.
- Work on team building within your change coalition.
- Check your team for weak areas and ensure that you have a good mix of people from different departments and different levels within your company.

Step 3: Create a Vision for Change

When you first start thinking about change, there will probably be many great ideas and solutions floating around. Link these concepts to an overall vision that people can grasp easily and remember.

A clear vision can help everyone understand why you're asking them to do something. When people see for themselves what you're trying to achieve, then the directives they're given tend to make more sense.

What you can do:
- Determine the values that are central to the change.
- Develop a short summary (one or two sentences) that captures what you "see" as the future of your organization.
- Create a strategy to execute that vision.
- Ensure that your change coalition can describe the vision in five minutes or less.
- Practice your "vision speech" often.

Step 4: Communicate for buy-in

What you do with your vision after you create it will determine your success. Your message will probably have strong competition from other day-to-day communications within the company, so you need to communicate it frequently and powerfully, and embed it within everything that you do.

Don't just call special meetings to communicate your vision. Instead, talk about it every chance you get. Use the vision daily to make decisions and solve problems. When you keep it fresh on everyone's minds, they'll remember it and respond to it.

It's also important to "walk the talk." What you do is far more important – and believable – than what you say. Demonstrate the kind of behaviour that you want from others.

What you can do:
- Talk often about your change vision.
- Openly and honestly address peoples' concerns and anxieties.
- Apply your vision to all aspects of operations – from training to performance reviews. Tie everything back to the vision.
- Lead by example.

Step 5: Remove Obstacles and Empower

If you follow these steps and reach this point in the change process, you've been talking about your vision and building buy-in from all levels of the organization. Hopefully, your staff wants to get busy and achieve the benefits that you've been promoting.

But is anyone resisting the change? And are there processes or structures that are getting in its way?

Put in place the structure for change, and continually check for barriers to it. Removing obstacles can empower the people you need to execute your vision, and it can help the change move forward.

What you can do:
- Identify, or hire, change leaders whose main roles are to deliver the change.
- Look at your organizational structure, job descriptions, and performance and compensation systems to ensure they're in line with your vision.
- Recognize and reward people for making change happen.
- Identify people who are resisting the change and help them see what's needed.
- Take action to quickly remove barriers (human or otherwise).

Step 6: Plan for and create short-term wins

Nothing motivates more than success. Give your company a taste of victory early in the change process. Within a short time, frame (this could be a month or a year, depending on the type of change), you'll want to have results that your staff can see. Without this, critics and negative thinkers might hurt your progress.

Create short-term targets – not just one long-term goal. You want each smaller target to be achievable, with little room for failure. Your change team may have to work very hard to come up with these targets, but each "win" that you produce can further motivate the entire staff.

What you can do:
- Look for sure-fire projects that you can implement without help from any strong critics of the change.
- Don't choose early targets that are expensive. You want to be able to justify the investment in each project.
- Thoroughly analyse the potential pros and cons of your targets. If you don't succeed with an early goal, it can hurt your entire change initiative.
- Reward the people who help you meet the targets.

Step 7: Build on the Change

Kotter argues that many change projects fail because victory is declared too early. Real change runs deep. Quick wins are only the beginning of what needs to be done to achieve long-term change.

Launching one new product using a new system is great. But if you can launch 10 products, that means the new system is working. To reach that 10th success, you need to keep looking for improvements.

Each success provides an opportunity to build on what went right and identify what you can improve.

What you can do:
- After every win, analyse what went right and what needs improving.
- Set goals to continue building on the momentum you've achieved.
- Learn about kaizen, the idea of continuous improvement.
- Keep ideas fresh by bringing in new change agents and leaders for your change coalition.

Step 8: Anchor the Changes

Finally, to make any change stick, it should become part of the core of your organization. Your corporate culture often determines what gets done, so the values behind your vision must show in day-to-day work.

Make continuous efforts to ensure that the change is seen in every aspect of your organization. This will help give that change a solid place in your organization's culture.

It's also important that your company's leaders continue to support the change. This includes existing staff and new leaders who are brought in. If you lose the support of these people, you might end up back where you started.

What you can do:
- Talk about progress every chance you get. Tell success stories about the change process and repeat other stories that you hear.
- Include the change ideals and values when hiring and training new staff.
- Publicly recognize key members of your original change coalition, and make sure the rest of the staff – new and old – remembers their contributions.
- Create plans to replace key leaders of change as they move on. This will help ensure that their legacy is not lost or forgotten.

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