

# The Kotter theory of change management

## Kotter's eight-step model

- 1. Create urgency**

Examine the current market opportunities and threats and analyse the organisation's competitive position. This will highlight impending crises or potential opportunities. People are more willing to embrace change when they see it as a response to an existing or future problem or possibility.
- 2. Form a powerful coalition**

Establish a team of people to act as facilitators. They should have the relevant authority, recognition and respect within the organisation.
- 3. Create a vision for change**

Provide employees with a clear, shared sense of direction that will allow them to achieve a common objective. Without a vision, there can be no cooperation and commitment, which makes adopting change almost impossible.
- 4. Communicate the vision**

Share the vision with people who will be affected by the change. Use a wide variety of communication channels to make sure the message is transmitted to as great an audience as possible. Regardless of the form of communication used, the groundwork must be laid and the advantage of the change explained before people will go along with the change. Communicating the vision builds cohesion between employees and helps dispel fear of the unknown (a common cause for resistance to change).
- 5. Remove obstacles**

Recognise that personal involvement through participation tends to defuse both rational and irrational fears about change. People who have the opportunity to be actively involved in the change process generally develop a sense of ownership. Training and development may be necessary if new skills and competencies are required.
- 6. Create short-term wins**

Recognise that most employees want to feel that their contributions have been worth the effort and are recognised and appreciated. Recognition and reward should be given throughout the change process to encourage further risk taking and reinforce the positive aspects of embracing change.
- 7. Build on the change**

As the change process proceeds, assemble the benefits into the organisation's operating procedures and systems. Modify existing policies and procedures that no longer match the changed systems. Once this is accomplished, the new structure becomes a solid base upon which more change may be made – the process of continuous improvement.
- 8. Anchor the change in corporate culture**

As the final stage in the change process, make a clear statement to show the connections between the new procedures and the success of the organisation. This closes the loop of the change process and provides a positive experience from which further changes can be initiated.