



A Sense of Urgency

By John P. Kotter

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Most organizational change initiatives fail spectacularly (at worst) or deliver lukewarm results (at best). In his international bestseller *Leading Change*, John Kotter revealed why change is so hard, and provided an actionable, eight-step process for implementing successful transformations. The book became the change bible for managers worldwide.

Now, in *A Sense of Urgency*, Kotter shines the spotlight on the crucial first step in his framework: creating a sense of urgency by getting people to actually see and feel the need for change.

Why focus on urgency? Without it, any change effort is doomed. Kotter reveals the insidious nature of complacency in all its forms and guises.

In this exciting new book, Kotter explains:

- How to go beyond "the business case" for change to overcome the fear and anger that can suppress urgency
- Ways to ensure that your actions and behaviors -- not just your words -- communicate the need for change
- How to keep fanning the flames of urgency even after your transformation effort has scored some early successes

Written in Kotter's signature no-nonsense style, this concise and authoritative guide helps you set the stage for leading a successful transformation in your company.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Author and international business consultant Kotter (Leading Change, Our Iceberg is Melting) returns with an engaging look at companies that need to overcome a lack of urgency-or a surfeit of complacency-with a proactive agenda. Kotter dissects well his seemingly simple premise, using his professional experiences to examine the inner workings of real companies. Kotter defines his terms with clear language and bullet lists, convincingly asserting that urgency "is not driven by a belief that... everything is a mess but, instead, that the world contains great opportunities and great hazards"; it is, in fact, "a compulsive determination to move, and win, now." Among suggested tactics: bring the outside world into overly insular work teams; make your deeds consistent with your words; view crises as potential opportunities; and disseminate data that "feels interesting, surprising, or dramatic," as opposed to "information so antiseptic that it flows in and out of short-term memory with great speed." Great examples illustrate real-life frustrations and successes, and a special section on dealing with the nay-sayers is full of practical ploys to overcome dissent and kill complacency. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Change can strike fear in the hearts and minds of businesspeople, whether frontline employee or C-suite executive. Harvard Business School professor Kotter is the master of change, hammering home his eight principles straightforwardly (Leading Change, 1996) and via fable (Our Iceberg Is Melting, 2006). Now Kotter identifies the single biggest factor to successful change, which also happens to be his number-one principle: creating a true sense of urgency. In a way that will resonate with those charged with carrying out new corporate strategies or implementing transformation, he details one streamlined strategy—appeal to the head and the heart—with four supporting tactics: bring the outside reality in, behave with true urgency every day, selectively look for upside possibilities in crises, and effectively confront what he calls the no-no's. Stories accompany all; unfortunately, a number are repeats from The Heart of Change (2002) and stripped of detail for confidentiality. Charts and chapter summaries help connect theory to the practical question: How do we move people to act? An easy, quick read that provides good elucidation of what makes change work. --Barbara Jacobs

Review

But now a distinguished author says that what so many of us really lack is a sense of urgency. Is this guy for real? He is. John Kotter, emeritus professor at Harvard Business School, has a clear and simple message...This succinct book has a gentle, unhurried tone, but its message is insistent, relentless and urgent. --The Financial Times, September 24, 2008

Instilling urgency in employees is critical to getting organizations to switch directions--it's just that arguing the business case using facts alone won't create that urgency, says Kotter. Rather, you have to tug at people's heartstrings. Instead of showing them your case on PowerPoint, for instance, tell a story. That's one of many on-target suggestions on how to make people truly want change in the latest from this author of several books about leadership. --Entrepreneur.com, September 2008

Kotter's new book, A Sense of Urgency, is excellent. It is stimulating, a thoughtful extension of his work, filled with actionable and practical tools for creating the kind of productive urgency that contributes to successful change. --Fast Company, September 11, 2008

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ruth Walker:

The book A Sense of Urgency give you a sense of feeling enjoy for your spare time. You can use to make your capable more increase. Book can for being your best friend when you getting stress or having big problem with the subject. If you can make reading through a book A Sense of Urgency for being your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your capable, increase your knowledge about a few or all subjects. You can know everything if you like open up and read a reserve A Sense of Urgency. Kinds of book are several. It means that, science guide or encyclopedia or other folks. So , how do you think about this reserve?

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