

Change Management Theories and Models – John P Kotter

Various schools of thought are accepted about the nature of organisational change and how to most effectively achieve and sustain change. Consider the four change management models set out in each of the sample fact sheets.

John P Kotter's eight steps in leading change

Kotter views a holistic change process as more likely to result in it being completed and the organisation more likely to successfully adapt to continuous change. His eight steps are:

1. Create a sense of urgency about the need for change

Successful engagement of management to support the change being essential, he recommends promoting a sense of urgency for change to occur through the use of strategic planning tools and testing the results with authoritative sources and stakeholders.

2. Form a guiding coalition

Kotter emphasises strong and visible leadership creating the momentum for change rather than reliance on management alone. The leadership generates an energy and sense of emotion of being part of the change.

3. Develop a vision and strategy

The end change has to be presented in short powerful statements in such a way that those impacted can see the future vision clearly and easily and leaders are fluent in these statements and the developments to achieve the described end-state.

4. Communicate the vision

Kotter urges for leaders to use all media and opportunities to communicate the new vision and key strategies to support the change but especially frequent and informal contact in person. Email is viewed as having a limited contribution other than where prior contact has occurred. Leader availability and accessibility is stressed, particularly to communicate and address the emotional dimension of fears and concerns.

5. Enable action and removal of obstacles

Leaders in this stage support moves to act on the change, averting blockages to the change and assisting those apparently resistive to undertake the needed adaptation.

6. Generate short-term wins

Early evidence of the end stage change counteracts negative or resistant influences. Leaders need to include opportunities for short wins in plans and recognise those providing the early change.

7. Hold the gains and build on change

Consolidate early change signs by increasing activity and continuously reviewing the changes: removing potentially non-productive elements and bringing in new resources where appropriate to continue to build and refine the change process.

8. Anchor changes in the culture

Kotter observes change must become embedded in accepted local culture and practice to be sustained. He recommends leaders providing progress reports and linking these to successes as frequently and visibly as possible.