

Kotter's Eight-Stage Model of Leading Change

A Worksheet

Kotter's model of change provides a path forward for leaders at any level who want to implement change. It can also be used to jump start a stalled change process or assess the progress of a project. The model is based on Kotter's extensive research on effective change. Credible, research-based studies substantiate it as a highly regarded model. Its eight stages can be grouped into three phases.

Warm-up Phase

Stage 1: Establishing a Sense of Urgency

- What problem do you need to solve?
- Who needs to know about the problem you're facing?
- Approximately what percentage of the impacted unit knows about the problem and believes it needs attention?
- What is your timeline for action?

Stage 2: Creating the Guiding Coalition

- Who needs to be on your team? Remember your team needs to have people who have credibility, can influence people, and know the work.

Stage 3: Developing a Vision and Strategy

- Is there a vision to guide the change? "A vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future" (Kotter, 1996, p. 68).
- What specific strategies, plans and/or steps are needed to achieve the vision? Review your timeline.
- What data or information do you and your team have access to in order to frame the problem? Do you need to generate additional information?

Stage 4: Communicating the Change Vision

- How will you communicate the change? Usually, this involves multiple strategies, not just one.

Introducing New Practices Phase

Stage 5: Empowering Broad-Based Action

- What are the barriers to change and how can you deal with them?

Stage 6: Generating Short-Term Wins

- Kotter defines short-term wins as visible, unambiguous, and clearly related to the change effort (p. 121). What kind of short-term wins do you hope to achieve?

Stage 7: Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change

- Describe the series of small changes or wins that will lead to major change.
- What strategies will your team use to maintain momentum?
- How will you handle complacency or resistance within the team and/or outside of the team?

Grounding Phase

Stage 8: Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture

- How will you ensure this new approach is anchored in the culture?

For specific tips related to data sources and readings, other frameworks, activities, consultants, tools and technology, see “Appendix C: Summary of Resources Used across Change Stories” in [Leading Change in Academic Libraries](#) (Boff and Cardwell, pp. 297-311).

Boff, Colleen. & Cardwell, Catherine, eds. *Leading Change in Academic Libraries*. Chicago, IL: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2020.

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 1996.