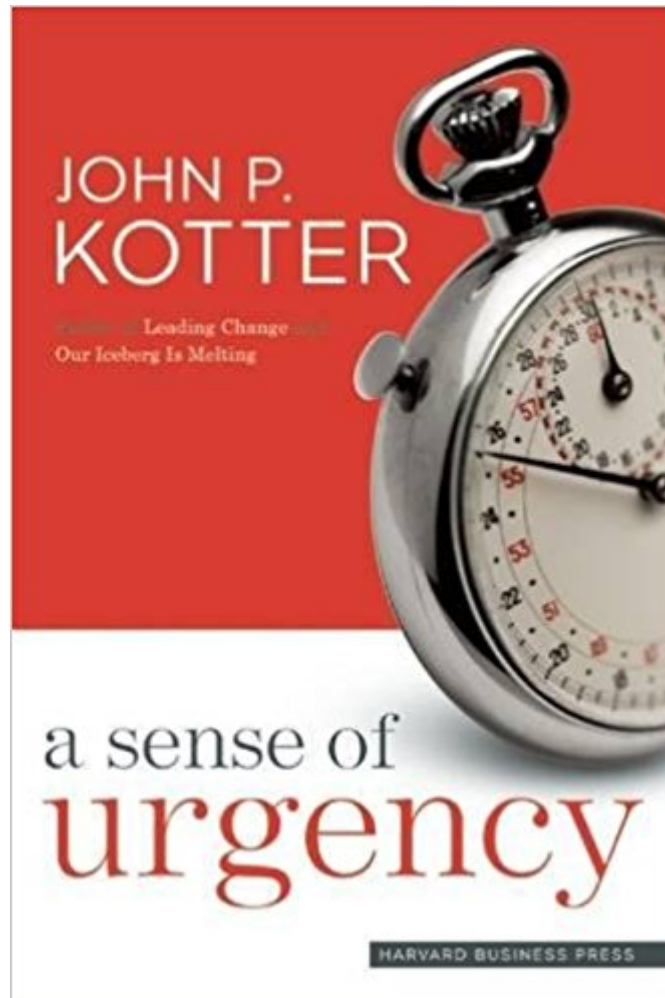




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A Sense Of Urgency



Synopsis

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:Â How to go beyond "the business case" for change to overcome the fear and anger that can suppress urgencyÂ Ways to ensure that your actions and behaviors -- not just your words -- communicate the need for changeÂ 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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Customer Reviews

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.

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 a 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 a good elucidation of what makes change work. --Barbara Jacobs

John Kotter does an excellent job expounding on the most important and critical first component of initiating change: instilling a sense of true urgency in your actions and those around you. Building on his previous books, Our Iceberg is Melting, Leading Change, and The Heart of Change, Kotter distinguishes true urgency from its insidious opposite, complacency, and its evil twin, false urgency. With a clear-eyed resolve to acknowledge and address problems, initiate actions that call to people's hearts and minds (not their minds alone), and to address NoNos and other obstacles to change (and urgency killers), you can use Kotter's strategy and 4 tactics to instill a sense of urgency in your organization. A quick read that you can apply in your daily life immediately, it's a great book

for those seeking to do more.

John Kotter is author of the now classic business book, *Leading Change*, published in 1996 and still a bestseller. In that previous book he suggested eight steps in leading change. The first of these was to develop a sense of urgency. As a follow-up Kotter has written *A Sense of Urgency*. In this 2008 book he clearly makes his point in the six page preface and the first three chapters that take up 61 of the 196 total pages of primary text. That is all you need to read to benefit from his VIP's [short for very important points]. Here are some of the VIP's: *The single biggest error people make when they try to craft change is they do not "create a high enough sense of urgency among enough people to set the stage for making a challenging leap into some new direction." [viii] *Our biggest challenge is complacency. "We underestimate its power and its prevalence." [4] *Our second biggest challenge is a false sense of urgency. "A false sense of urgency is pervasive and insidious because people mistake activity for productivity." [9] *To increase a true sense of urgency, "create action that is exceptionally alert, externally oriented, relentlessly aimed at winning, making some progress each and every day, and constantly purging low value-added activities--all by always focusing on the heart and not just the mind. [60] To create a real sense of urgency I entreat you to go forward and do likewise. What is your first step to create a real sense of urgency in your congregation or other ministry setting? [...]

Critical to change management and change initiation is the need to both intellectually as well as emotionally inspire change in an organization. John Kotter captures the essence of that critical challenge in this easy to read and useful little management tome. In approximately 200 pages, Kotter takes the reader through both theory and practice (or strategy and tactics) on how and what to do to instill, promote and maintain a sense of urgency in an organization. Focusing on changing an organization's perspective outward, instilling and behaving with urgency at all times, finding opportunity in crisis and dealing with the negative nellys in any organization, Kotter takes the reader through a fairly well written and well organized set of approaches to combat complacency and instill urgency. His approaches range from light psychology to outright firing people, and after reading the book, you will be presented with a fairly large if not well discussed tool set for managing complacency and instilling urgency in an organization. If you are a manager, you need to at least be aware of the elements of psychology that Kotter discusses in the book - particularity being able to separate skeptics from naysayers and overcoming organizational inertia in our self and others. Worth the quick read.

I found this deep dive into the "create a sense of urgency" step of the 8 step framework to be useful. It was a good mix of practical instructions and real world examples. It definitely reinforces the need to find-the-feeling and not just focus on the rational argument for change.

What a great book to highlight some of the very simple issues we face in a business regarding urgency. If you are a start-up's, fast growing organisations, large businesses or government sector time wastage and a lack of urgency is one of the single biggest killers of great strategy and when reading this book you will feel both liberated with knowledge and angry (or disappointed) at the number of times you have fallen for the traps of time wasters. An easy read that should be part of every employees induction process to ensure they know what is really expected of them. Read, absorb and then clean out your organisation of time sinks!"The best part is that Kotter provides 4 core tactics for creating urgency in your organisation. Each tactic is supported by anecdotes and detailed tools which makes the book a real 'how to' guide. The essence of the book can be distilled into:- Bring the outside in- Behave with urgency every day- Find opportunity in crisis- Deal with NoNo's! I have noticed some reviews that indicated this does not add value, and yes...there have been other books that cover similar topics. Yes...time management has been around since time itself...but Kotter brings a new dimension to the challenges of organisations and one that if implemented will add significant value to employees, leaders and businesses. Give it a try and you will be surprised!

This book is one of the finest I have read in a long time about how to lead your teams to higher productivity levels. I have made it a must read for all my managers as there is some great advice on how to get your teams focused on delivering results. Chapter 5 which talks about "tactic two" - behave with urgency every day is alone worth the price of the entire book and more. Kotter offers some great insights on how delegating and more importantly not allowing your team members to delegate to you, moving with speed, being visibly urgent can be great drivers in reducing the level of complacency in your teams.

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