

A SENSE OF URGENCY

JOHN KOTTER

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MAIN IDEA

Urgency is a gut level determination to move and win – to make the right things happen today. Until and unless an organization creates a high enough sense of urgency amongst a large enough group of people, it will flounder. When that sense of urgency exists, even organizations which are facing formidable obstacles can and will produce solid results.

To achieve more, raise the level of urgency which exists inside your organization. You do this by winning the hearts and the hearts of your people. Bulk up and enhance your urgency level and all kinds of good things will result.

“Creating a high enough sense of urgency among a large enough group of people is an issue I have come to believe is of overriding importance in a fast-moving, turbulent era. When the urgency challenge is not handled well, even very capable people and resource-rich organizations can suffer greatly. When the challenge is handled well, even those who face formidable obstacles can produce results we all want for our careers, employers and nations. Put simply, a strong sense of urgency is moving from an essential element in big change programs to an essential asset in general.”

– John Kotter

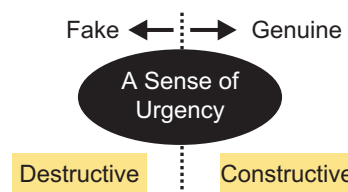
1. Why urgency is so important Page 2

Unless your organization has a true sense of urgency, no changes will ever get made. That can have fatal consequences in a business environment that’s changing all the time. Everything starts with a sense of urgency. It lies at the heart of every change an organization attempts to make.



2. Genuine urgency vs. Fake urgency Page 3

Complacency and false urgency are the opposite of a true sense of urgency. These are highly destructive in nature. Be very clear about your need to differentiate when a true and genuine sense of urgency is required and act accordingly.

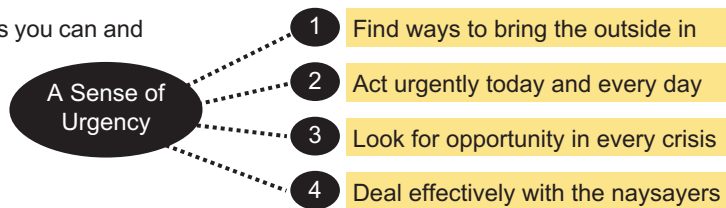


3. One strategy and four tactics for increasing urgency Pages 4 - 7

To create a genuine sense of urgency within your organization, aim at winning your people’s minds and hearts. That is, give them the facts but also communicate stories that will win over their emotions. If you give stretch goals that excite and arouse determination, you’ll appeal to their hearts as well as their minds.

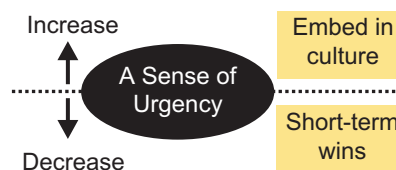


To make this strategy work, there are four tactics you can and should use.



4. Sustaining a sense of urgency Page 8

Whenever you have a short-term success, everyone relaxes a little. It becomes harder to keep your urgency levels high. To offset that, anticipate this is going to happen and prepare. Work to embed a keen sense of urgency into the fabric of your organization’s culture and DNA. Create a culture where urgency is the norm and not the exception.



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