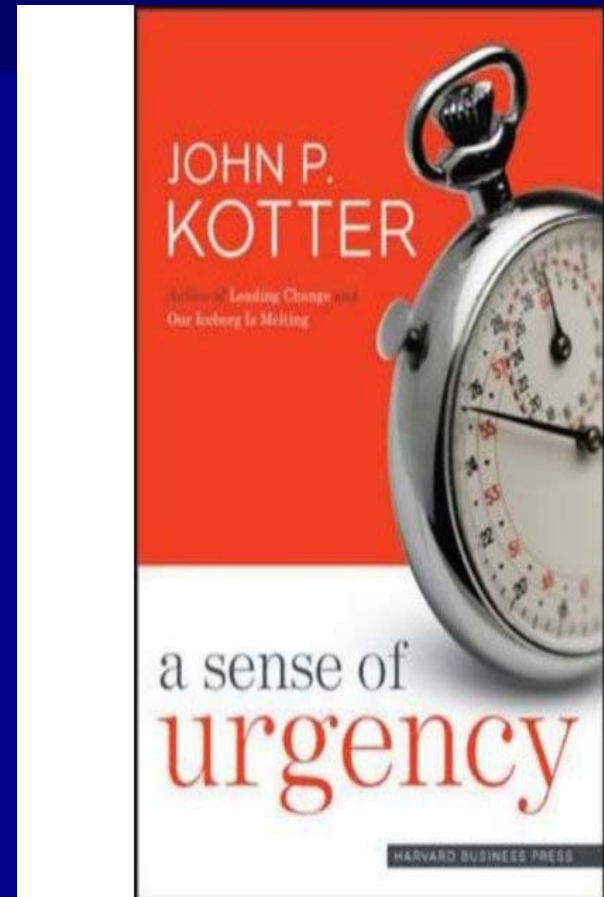


A SENSE OF URGENCY

by
John P. Kotter

Book Review Session

By
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About the Author

- John Kotter is the Konosuke Matsushita Professor of Leadership, Emeritus, at Harvard Business School
- Notable works include *Leading Change* and *Our Iceberg is Melting*

Background

- 11 years ago, author discovered planned changes were not fully launched, failed, achieved over budget or implemented with great frustration in over 70% of situations analysed.
- In cases where changes are successfully implemented, a common formula was used.

Background (cont'd)

Question :

“ What is the **single biggest error** people make when they try to change”

Answer:

They did not create a high enough sense of urgency among enough people.

Why Urgency is Important

6 reasons:

1. **Change is difficult** if no urgency
2. **Success breeds complacency**
3. **False sense of urgency** is prevalent
4. **Mistaking** false urgency for real urgency
5. False urgency and complacency can be **transformed** to true sense of urgency
6. **Change is continuous**

Complacency

- Complacency is “ **feeling of self-satisfaction**”
- Complacency stems from **unconscious emotion** that leads to us behaving in certain ways
- Complacency is a **product of success**, real or perceived.

Complacency

How do the **complacent think?**

- **Never think they are complacent.**
- **Contend with the status quo.**

How do the **complacent behave?**

- **Do not look for opportunities or hazards**
- **Inward focused**

False Sense of Urgency

- Driven by **anger** and **anxiety**
- Anger due to failed attempts to change or when they think they are **blamed** for the current difficulties
- Anxiety because people **worry** for their **jobs** and **career**, family etc

Useful questions

1. Are **critical issues** delegated to consultants?
2. Do people have **trouble scheduling meetings** on important initiatives?
3. Do **meetings** end **with no decisions** about what must happen immediately?
4. Are discussions **too internally-focused**?
5. Do people **spend long hours** developing presentations, run between meetings and get exhausted?

Useful questions (cont'd)

6. Do people **regularly blame others** for problems instead of taking responsibility?
7. Does **passive aggression** exist ie "Oh was that due today? I wasn't told"
8. Specific assignments **not completed** on time and/or with quality?

Help Others
(Including Bosses)
to See the Problem

1 Strategy & 4 Tactics

- Heart-Head Strategy
- 4 tactics:-
 1. Bring the **OUTSIDE REALITY-IN**
 2. Act with **URGENCY EVERY DAY**
 3. Find **OPPORTUNITIES** in **CRISES**
 4. Deal with the **NoNos**

Heart-Head Strategy

- **Most often**, planned changes preceded by **intellectual buy-in**.
- The problem is **all head and no heart**

Aim for the heart

5 key characteristics

- Thoughtfully created **human experiences**
- Work on **all senses**
- Information presented by someone with **confidence**, credibility, passion and **conviction**
- Situation **speaks for itself**
- Experience to **bridge** the gap between what exists and what you want

Tactic 1

Bring Outside-In

- To address inward-focus organisation
- 8 measures
 1. Listen to customer-interfacing employees
 2. Use video
 3. Don't shield people from troubling data

Tactic 1

Bring Outside-In

4. Redecorate
5. Send people out
6. Bring people in
7. Bring data "in", the right way
8. Don't create false sense of urgency

Tactic 2

Act with urgency everyday

- **Demonstrate** urgency in attitude, speech and actions
- **Delegate** well
- **Avoid** activities that no longer adds value
- **Avoid crowded** appointment **diary**
- **Management** by **walking around**
- **Urgent** **patience**

Tactic 3

Find Opportunity In Crises

- Some see crises as bad, some view them as opportunities
- Opportunities because of “burning platform”
- Use crisis to create urgency
- Beware of **4 dangerous mistakes**

4 mistakes

Mistake 1

- **Assuming** crisis will create sense of urgency

Mistake 2

- People feel **manipulated**

Mistake 3

- **Waiting** for a crisis to happen

Mistake 4

- Crises can bring **disaster** if not correctly managed

Tactic 4

Dealing with NoNos

- Nonos are **highly skilled agency killers**
- Every organisation has NoNos
- NoNos are **not sceptics**
- **Never ignore** the NoNos
- **3 ways** to deal with NoNos
 - Distraction
 - Get rid of them
 - Expose them

Conclusion

- Act with **urgency everyday**
- Avoid **false sense of urgency**
- Adopt **heart-head strategy**

THANK YOU

The image features the words "THANK YOU" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is filled with a different color from a rainbow spectrum: 'T' is pink, 'H' is red, 'A' is orange, 'N' is yellow, 'K' is light green, 'Y' is teal, 'O' is blue, and 'U' is purple. The letters have a white outline and cast a soft, white shadow to the left and slightly forward, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The background is a solid, dark blue color.