

LEADING *rapid* CHANGE

ACCELERATION GUIDE

Our environment today is characterized by some of the most profound and high impact changes, coming at us faster and faster than ever before. This combination of the velocity of change and the impact of the changes sets up a unique condition that most change leaders have never worked through.

APPLYING THE KOTTER CHANGE ADAPTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The Change Adaptability Model is an easy-reference guide to understand how individuals are impacted by change.

1. We become accustomed to doing things a certain way.
2. The environment around us gradually changes, and –
3. we adapt – often unconsciously and subconsciously...
4. Until the changes we experience outpace our ability to adapt!

TACTICS FOR LEADING RAPID CHANGE

predictability —

- Be a leader. Provide information. Negate anxiety and fear.
- Run the business – or declare what will be different. Indecision is fatal. Manage it.
- Celebrate progress. When something is accomplished, notice and acknowledge it.

control —

- Take control of what you can control.
- Invite participation: the doctors and the nurses model.
- Make changes fast: the Domino's Pizza level of responsiveness to change.

aspiration —

- What are you doing this for? What is the end game?
- To mobilize massive action on a grand scale, you need a grand ambition.
- Lead your team. What drives you? What drives others?

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THE FORMIDABLE CHANGE POWER

Networks are the most under leveraged asset during any change. The potential of networks to dramatically change how work is done is frequently ignored. This is a tragedy, as it squanders a natural asset that could be a powerful accelerator for change.

Do you know what your Change Sentiment is?

Are you close enough to the people who really do know?

Amplify the impact of your change by taking advantage of the network effect.

$$x = \frac{n(n - 1)}{2}$$

STACK THE IMPACTS

- Demonstrate confident and positive leadership
- Introduce predictability and control
- Leverage your network
- Layer on the Ikea Effect
- Collectively build your aspiration
- Go and make change happen

you don't have to do it alone

At Kotter, change is what we do.

WE CAN HELP

With Kotter at your side, you can mobilize your people to achieve unimaginable results at unprecedented speed. Continue the conversation with us at: info@kotterinc.com

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THE FAQ'S TO LEADING RAPID CHANGE

POST LEADING RAPID CHANGE WEBINAR | Q+A

We extend our sincerest thanks to the participants who posed such terrific questions during our webinar. Below are our compiled our responses and, as always, look forward to continuing the conversation.

What do you think about employee involvement in leading rapid change? by Monhesea

Employee involvement is essential to leading rapid change. It's the network that powers a change effort over time. Without many people demonstrating new behaviors, contributing ideas, and working toward the same objective, many change efforts never fully get off the ground.

How do you achieve positive engagement without people feeling intimidated by your enthusiasm? by Natasha

Authenticity is key. Unrelenting enthusiasm can sound hollow or out-of-touch if you fail to acknowledge the real barriers that exist. Having a common "North Star" to point to, even in times of real challenge, helps frame positivity to a focus on possibility.

Organization restructuring is what a lot of companies are going through. How can we create a positive feeling from such a hard change? by Shaima

We've written about topic a number of times – [here](#) and [here](#) are two of the resources written by our experts.

What first action will you recommend to a school principal who is wondering how to lead in the current pandemic environment? by Mohammed

We endlessly empathize with you as parents of students in both virtual and live environments. You and your colleagues in education are experiencing a masterclass level of rapid change leadership skill-building. Step 1 of John Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change is to Create a Sense of Urgency. It's fair to say that urgency already exists for you in this moment in time. Yet what may be driving behaviors is false urgency: when everything (and thus nothing) is important and attention is splintered across countless priorities. What can result is a lot of activity – and not necessarily results. You can help to quiet the noise by making explicit what matters most right now: what are people to be most urgent about? Be specific. This will help to calm the frenetic pace that accompanies false urgency and channel a truer, more sustainable sense of urgency that empowers people to drive impact right where it matters most.

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Do you have some experiences of rapid change in the governments? by Helle

Kotter has had a number of clients over the years in the public sector. One such example is described [here](#).

Measuring change is challenging. What would you recommend as a qualitative metric to capture change? by Zoe

Change can indeed be a nebulous thing to measure. Within the Kotter consulting practice we have a Culture Change Index tool that we use with clients to benchmark change readiness at the onset of a transformation effort, as well as progress further along in the journey. We also look to Step 6 of Dr. Kotter's 8-Step Process for Leading Change – generate short-term wins. Tracking the wins that are shared and celebrated, particularly in aggregate, provides a dashboard-type of view of all that has been accomplished within a change effort: behaviors that have changed, innovations that have scaled from one site to many, new ways of working that are being demonstrated. How these wins are collected and shared varies from organization to organization, but they become proof points of progress. In turn, they help continue to fuel momentum and build the belief that change is taking shape in this work we're doing. They help motivate people to press on.

How do you create a network - organic or prescriptive? Is it static and used for multiple projects? by Amber

We have seen network-building take several forms in our consulting practice. Variation is often driven by the size of the organization or the change population, the numbers of languages and cultures represented across those populations, organizational norms to date, and the like. The constants are that the network include a diagonal slice of the organization. This means that it represents individuals across all levels of the hierarchy and functional areas to represent as many voices as possible –including those representing parts of the organization that are sometimes underseen.

What are some creative ways to lead in a virtual environment? by Amy

We've written about this very timely topic [here](#).

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How does the leadership approach "It starts with WHY" help enable leading rapid change? by Bob

Starting with "why" or developing a Big Opportunity, as we call it, underscores all that happens next. If we have one clear articulation of what we aspire to achieve together – and we hold that up when making decisions about strategic priorities or how time gets spent or... – we're more likely to be rowing in the same direction. It's very easy for priorities to compete and cannibalize one another when the reason we're urgent to change isn't clear and explicit in every single mind. The work we do to help drive that change will of course vary given our departments, rolls and responsibilities, but the Big Opportunity that's before us – what we have the opportunity to pursue right now – should be clear and consistent.

What do think about the leadership of every individual? by Helle

Dr. Kotter has long said that the world needs to see more leadership from more people. It's individual acts of leadership, executed by many, many people, that aggregate to momentum-fueled networks that keep change moving forward. Moreover, it's also individual leadership actions that help the new ways of working and changed behaviors stick. Over time, the change becomes institutionalized into the organization's culture.

Someone said using the word change is not a good idea. What do you think? Is there another word we can use for change, or do we need to say change? by Perry

Know your organization. For some organizations we've worked in, change has been almost a taboo word, carrying a lot of baggage of previous failed efforts and under-delivered results. In still other organizations it's the word transformation that's problematic. We know this: words matter. Use the term that you believe carries the least negative connotation within your context. As Dr. Kotter wrote about in *Our Iceberg is Melting*, there will always be No-No characters who resist whatever is set forth, on principle. Your work is less to change their minds, but to bring a critical mass of people along.

Many business leaders refer to "managing change". Based on your experience, how would you define "leading change" as different than managing change? by Bob

We have a Forbes blog and video about this topic [here](#).

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I'm critical of the idea that managers are a primary driving force. You mention the insights of employees. Wouldn't these also be vital to create changes in a company? by Joakim

Absolutely agreed. However employees – whose voices are so important and who have insights from customers and potentially competitors – will never have their voices heard if their managers do not invite them into the conversation. From our experience, we have found that it isn't the lack of insights that precludes organizations from making progress; rather it is the degree to which managers invite and involve employees in the discussion. Where this does happen there is much more openness, sharing of ideas and innovation.

Don't we need a sense of necessity also to adapt to change? by Oscar

This is an interesting discussion and I think it is important to define "necessity". I would suggest that human endeavor has been driven partly owing to need (necessity) and partly owing to a desire to have an impact in the world that is greater than any need. For instance, no-one "needed" to explore the atmosphere beyond the earth, however it is our desire to advance that sent a person to the moon. We did not "need" Facebook, but the desire and opportunity to connect the world drove us to adopt new technology that has fundamentally influenced human relationships. There is much to be said about the reactive nature of change – i.e. we respond to impacts around us because we have to, like Covid-19, but it is arguably harder (but equally gratifying and rewarding) to lead ourselves and others through change in the absence of a necessity. Also be careful not to associate necessity with a "negative" or "burning platform".

How does the Leading Rapid Change framework and 8-Steps model match? Are they to be used together, or is one taking over the other? by Eckhard

The 8-Step foundation remains key to our framework for leading and managing change. The approach discussed during the Leading Rapid Change webinar is an approach that should be layered together with the 8-Step foundation. For instance, the notion of creating more certainty (as we discussed during the session) is something that can be done with a strong and compelling change vision, then anchored in specific actions that are then taken. Ultimately we would suggest focusing on the explicit outcomes we emphasized in the Leading Rapid Change framework, and executing these against the 8-Step Process for Leading Change.

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Why do you think that many companies are having a problem achieving the accepted success with Scrum or SAFe? What are your 3 best tips to make scrum work within a team? by Helle

For years, the central (and well documented) impediments to successfully scaling agile practices or methods such as SAFe have been change, culture and leadership. Ultimately, an organization can't expect to implement these new ways of working with speed, fidelity or efficacy without paying equal attention to adoption, culture, behaviors, the way leaders lead and the overall system in which new ways of working have now become an expectation. Three tips are: 1) Focus less on process, rituals and terminology and more on ensuring the work of the team is deeply anchored in the organization's strategy, 2) define success by MVPs and outcomes for the business (e.g., speed to market) vs. activities that can be executed in compressed timeframes and 3) ensure that there's clear executive sponsorship in place to help remove institutional barriers.

What is your take on SAFe? by Helle

SAFe like other agile methods is underpinned by a set of agile principles (think: the Agile Manifesto) that are vitally important to executing work in new and more agile ways (e.g., iterative development, allowing time for innovation, cross-functional alignment and planning, parallel process, user-centered design, etc.). However, we often find that there's a significant divide between IT and the business regarding the vision for the future and how progress against that vision should be measured. Additionally, we see many practitioners over indexing on SAFe processes and verbiage at the expense/exclusion of the business.

How can the framework be linked to an Agile way of working? by Oscar

Agile is about adopting a more responsive, iterative and faster approach to arriving at an end solution, contrasted by the end-to-end, sequential execution of tasks. Three elements that differentiate an agile approach are: structure (relies on a network of people, task/subject experts, who come together at a certain point, for a defined period, to collaborate together vs. a hierarchical project team who, often in parallel, execute their work), responsibility and accountability (leverages distinct strengths from content experts and process experts who come together to deliver the result vs. a singular project manager who leads the content and the timeline) and communication (requires frequent communication in the broadest possible terms – the more people who know where things stand, the faster the team can modify their tasks to keep the effort on track. Our framework is about emphasizing all of these attributes. From the power of the network (vs. only a few people) and using a non-hierarchical approach, to building the responsibility and accountability channels and broadly communicating to share and celebrate not only the progress, but also the accomplishments and learnings from risks taken and potential failures experienced.

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the formula explained

$$x = \frac{n(n - 1)}{2}$$

What is X and what is N in this formula? by Caroline

X is the maximum number of potential connections between individuals in your network/organization/team; N is the number of people in the network/organization/team.

Is a higher number better or a lower number? by Gregg

Generally a higher number implies that more people are connected to one another and this correlates to greater (and potentially faster) information flow, the flow of ideas, the development of relationships, etc. A higher number also (generally) means that there are more points of connection than occur in a hierarchy. For a company/organization/team to respond to changes in the environment around them, you generally want more people who are connected to one another to be in a position where they can spot threats and opportunities, react fast with/amongst one another and can collaborate together to solve or address or take advantage of the situation. Generally you only want a smaller number when you don't want to share an idea, or when you want to keep something a secret!

Can you share more about the formula? by Helle

An interesting article can be found [here](#) and thorough, and detailed technical discussion Network Science can be found [here](#).

Can you share an example? by Mary

Let's say you have 100 people in your organization/team. In a typical hierarchy, there are few defined relationships - the manager may have seven supervisors/direct reports, and in turn each direct report has 12-13 people reporting to them. You can map this out fairly easily and see that there are a number of 1:1 relationships. Being generous, there may be 13 relationships for each supervisor and each supervisor has a relationship with the manager. The supervisors will also likely have relationships between themselves. However you'll probably find that you max out at around 120 connection points. However, if everyone in the network were connected to everyone else, you would have a total of 4,950 relationships - i.e. $(100 * 99)/2$. This is a massive (4,000%) increase in the number of relationships - and this is what is so powerful about the network.

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POST LEADING RAPID CHANGE WEBINAR | LINKS FOR FURTHER READING

<https://www.kotterinc.com/research-and-perspectives/restructure-your-organization/>

<https://chiefexecutive.net/a-better-way-to-lead-in-a-downturn/>

<https://www.kotterinc.com/client-story/u-s-military/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2020/03/24/how-to-lead-virtually-in-a-time-of-pandemic/#1edd665f3376>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2011/07/12/change-management-vs-change-leadership-whats-the-difference/#196275484cc6>

<https://www.the-vital-edge.com/what-is-network-density/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Network_science#Size