

## Planning and Managing for Successful Change

The world is in flux. Change is continually occurring and it is occurring at a faster pace. People resist change with a vengeance. “People resist it on every level in all sorts of ways and leaders can be the most change resistant of all,” states John Kotter, Change Guru. Change is a tough management challenge so knowing how to plan and manage change is critical to a successful business. Successfully implementing a customer centric business culture just like implementing a Customer Relationship Management new system involves the changing of human behaviors. Gaining an understanding of your company’s customer-facing presence involves placing yourself in the ‘customer shoes’. Obtaining successful user adoption of a CRM system involves planning for the changes and communicating what’s in it for them. The following white paper outlines the planning and managing of change so that the planned results are obtained.

### Eight Steps to Successful Change

by Change Guru, John Kotter, Harvard Business School Professor. From June 2007 issue of Selling Power Magazine

#### Set the Stage

1. **Create a sense of urgency.** Help others see the need for change and why it’s important to act immediately. For example, showing employees a video tape or recorded message of an angry customer will create more urgency than a two page memo of stats. “Complacent people resist change,” says Kotter. “As long as they believe things are fine, they won’t move.”
2. **Pull together a guiding team.** “Make sure the right mix of people is guiding the team,” says Kotter. “You need some people who have enough position power to actually make some decisions, some people with good reputations within the large community, and people who are well connected with employees throughout the organization. A large, diverse mix with different skills works better than a like-minded executive group.”

## Decide What to Do

3. **Develop the change vision and strategy.** Clarify how the future will be different from the past and how you can make this happen. “It’s important to convince people within the organization that you have a clear idea of what you’re doing and that you have the right people leading the change,” says Kotter. “Otherwise they’ll never buy in.”

## Make It Happen

4. **Communicate for understanding.** This is the point where you tell a story, communicating a vision that can be articulated in one minute or written up in one page. “The human brain likes simple, compelling stories,” say Kotter. “You have to communicate to people exactly how the change will occur and how it will affect their position within the company.”
5. **Empower others to act.** This comes down to one thing - removing barriers. Otherwise, even if everyone understands and accepts the vision, they’ll be unable to make it happen. “You can’t just give this idea lip service,” say Kotter. “Otherwise the workers know that the change isn’t for real and they’ll resist. The leaders can’t just be puppy dogs. They must have the power to really get obstacles out of the way. When you’re trying to empower an entire work force there are often lots of obstacles. Some are six feet of granite, some are small trees. Leaders should go after the trees first so that the people watching them begin to believe that this is really going to happen.”
6. **Produce short-term wins.** Nothing convinces people that the change is really going to happen like a quick victory. Kotter recommends focusing on four goals instead of 50 and making sure no new initiatives are added until one of these first four goals is achieved and celebrated.
7. **Don’t let up.** Don’t back off or ease up after this first success. Complacency is just behind you. This is the time to press harder, introducing one change after another until the entire vision is a reality.

## Make It Stick

8. **Create a new culture.** Hold on to the new ways of behaving and make sure they succeed until they become strong enough to replace old traditions. “Tradition dies a hard death,” says Kotter. “It takes a while for new behaviors to sink in. Continue to reward the new behaviors until they become as habitual as the old behaviors.”

## **Eight Steps to Painless Change by Garrison Wynn, keynote speaker and authority on change. From June 2007 issue of Selling Power Magazine**

**In order to keep your sales team calm, focused, and optimistic during a change, remember these eight principles.**

1. **Smart small.** “One of the most critical mistakes that managers make is coming in with the big sweeping jester”. Look at it this way. You have to assume that your current sales force has some attachment to the old way, or a least, they’ve become competent at dealing with it. No one likes going through the beginner stages – to some degree we all want to coast on our power and authority – and this resistance is strongest in long term employees. “... In a changing situation many believe that their knowledge and expertise suddenly won’t carry as much value. In order to overcome this fear, you must reassure them that their experience still counts.” In other words....
2. **Don’t trash the old way.** Stress that the change isn’t as big or a different as it looks. Identify what is similar and then outline some ways it is better. “Make the connection between the old way and the new way first, then show the difference.” This allows them to see the old way is the foundation for the new way. Once they understand that the change means getting better results to the old way, and that their experience still has value, they’ll be more likely to spread that positive change throughout the organization.
3. **Show them that the new way has advantages- for them, that is.** Most employees perk up only when they see how it specifically will make their jobs easier, faster, or more lucrative. Talk about the advantages specific to that individual employee and stress the short-term advantages. People respond to tight, close deadlines.
4. **Collect feedback and create open communications.** “Face-to-face communications is the best method to explaining change and email is the worst. It’s better to have a meeting, explain and outline the concept, and then, if it’s really complicated, send a follow-up email reviewing the details.”
5. **Obtain support from all levels.** Executive involvement is critical for successful change, but you can’t stop there. At every level, in every division, there’s at least one person whose job has an impact on the masses. If these people don’t like the change they will spread poison to no end. Managers must identify these people who have the ear of the masses, sit down with them, and make sure they understand the advantages of changes.
6. **Accept the fact that everyone won’t accept the facts.** “Some people are more flexible than others. Based on their personalities, how they were raised, or their life experiences, some people will never be able to adjust to change. Do the best you can, but accept that you can’t wait for a 100 percent positive response.”

7. **Give them some time to get used to the idea.** “Prepare them as much as you can in advance. If training is needed, be sure to allow the time to get them training.”
  
8. **Your change team should be composed of people who have good relationships with your sales staff.** “The people on the team should have a deep enough reservoir of goodwill that their employees are willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. Changes, even successful ones, are rarely accomplished without periods of pain and confusion, and during these periods even the most devoted employees tend to blame their managers. If the relationship between management and the staff is strong enough, they can survive the blame that almost invariably accompanies change.”

**“Change is an emotional process.** “You need a team who can not only explain the similarities between the old way and the new way and who can explain the benefits of change, but also people who will reassure the employees that even though the system may be changing, they’re still valuable.”

For more information on Garrison Wynn visit [www.wynnsolutions.com](http://www.wynnsolutions.com)