

# Business Sculptors

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## Learning Byte 248 Leading Change - Why Transformation Efforts Fail



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# Why Transformation Efforts Fail

***Leaders who successfully transform businesses do eight things right and they do them in the right order***

Most transformation efforts fail because businessmen do not follow these eight important steps. They are:

## 1. Establish a Sense of Urgency

- Examine market and competitive realities
- Identify and discuss crises, potential crises, or major opportunities
- Creating a new system, always demands leadership
- Do not be afraid of pushing people out of their comfort zones

## 2. Form a Powerful Guiding Coalition

- Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort
- Encourage teamwork
- A successful guiding team may consist of three to five people in smaller companies and could range from twenty to fifty in a big company

## 3. Create a Vision

- Create a vision to direct the change effort
- Without a sensible vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve and take the organization in the wrong direction or nowhere at all
- A vision should always go beyond the numbers that are typically found in five-year plans
- Develop strategies for achieving the vision

## 4. Communicate the Vision

- Use all vehicles possible to communicate that vision and strategies
- Teach new behaviours by example of the guiding coalition

## 5. Empower Others to Act on the Vision

- Get rid of obstacles to change
- Change systems or structures undermining the vision
- Encourage risk-taking and non-traditional ideas, activities and actions

## 6. Plan for and Create Short-Term Wins

- Plan for visible performance improvements
- Create those improvements
- Recognize and reward employees involved in improvements



## 7. Consolidate Improvements and Produce Still More Change

- Use increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't fit the vision
- Allow changes to sink deeply into a company's culture, a process that can take five to ten years. Up to this time new approaches are fragile and subject to regression
- Hire, promote and develop employees who can implement the vision
- Reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and change agents

## 8. Institute New Approaches

- New behaviors need to be rooted in social norms and shared values. If not, they are subject to degradation as soon as the pressure for change is removed.
- Articulate connections between new behaviours and corporate success
- Develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession

This is a précis of an article written by now retired, John P. Kotter who was the Konosuke Matsushita Professor of Leadership at Harvard Business School in Boston - Harvard Business Review - January 2007

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