# Organizational Change: Key Principles from John Kotter and Stephen Covey

## Bringing Kotter and Covey Together

John Kotter provides a step-by-step roadmap for organizational change. Stephen Covey emphasizes the character, habits, and interpersonal skills leaders need to guide people through that such and effort.

As part of the TAC QM grant (and in collaboration with CSAVR and GWU), John Walsh and Ron Vessell developed a PPT guide for a workshop of VR staff, combining instruction and small group discussion of the steps for change.

Below you will find John and Ron’s PPT tools for workshops on Organizational Change.

## John Kotter’s 8-Step Change Model

John Kotter outlines an actionable, sequential framework for successfully leading organizational change. His model emphasizes leadership, strategic planning, and continuous reinforcement of change.

### 1. Create a Sense of Urgency

Help people see the need for change through data, customer feedback, and staff surveys. Address complacency and inspire action by explaining risks of not changing.

### 2. Build a Guiding Coalition

Assemble a diverse and credible team of influential leaders and employees. Ensure this group works with trust and shared commitment to lead the change effort.

### 3. Develop a Vision and Strategy

Clearly define what the change seeks to achieve and how the organization will get there. Create a strategy that aligns with the organization’s mission and values.

### 4. Communicate the Change Vision

Use every available channel to communicate the vision and strategy. Model the desired change in leadership behavior and reinforce the message consistently.

### 5. Empower Broad-Based Action

Remove obstacles such as inefficient processes or resistant attitudes. Encourage risk-taking and empower employees to take initiative.

### 6. Generate Short-Term Wins

Plan for and celebrate early successes to build momentum. Publicize these wins to reward contributors and validate the change effort.

### 7. Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change

Use credibility from early wins to drive additional change. Reinforce the vision by adjusting systems, structures, and policies.

### 8. Anchor New Approaches in the Culture

Ensure that change becomes part of the organization’s core culture. Develop leadership and succession plans that reinforce the new ways of working.

## Stephen Covey’s Principles for Leading Change

Stephen Covey emphasizes internal leadership and character as the foundation for sustainable change. His principles complement Kotter's process by cultivating the mindset and behavior needed for successful change leadership.

### 1. Be Proactive (Habit 1)

Change starts with taking responsibility rather than reacting to circumstances. Leaders anticipate challenges and act with initiative.

### 2. Begin with the End in Mind (Habit 2)

Define the vision and purpose of the change clearly. Align actions and strategies with long-term organizational goals.

### 3. Put First Things First (Habit 3)

Prioritize critical change tasks over urgent but less important activities. Focus efforts on high-impact change initiatives.

### 4. Think Win-Win (Habit 4)

Approach *Change* as a collaborative effort, seeking solutions that benefit all stakeholders. Build trust through mutual respect and shared goals.

### 5. Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood (Habit 5)

Listen to employee concerns and feedback during the change process. Communicate empathetically to gain buy-in and reduce resistance.

### 6. Synergize (Habit 6)

Leverage diverse perspectives and talents to create innovative solutions. Encourage cross-functional teamwork during change initiatives.

### 7. Sharpen the Saw (Habit 7)

Continuously renew and develop leadership and employee capacity. Promote training, reflection, and wellness during times of change.

**Resources**

**CSVR Seattle Presentation** <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

**North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation Leadership Training** <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

**Leading Change : Role of Teams and Leaders -Arkansas DSB**  <https://www.csavr.org/resources>

Books:

Leading Change, John P. Kotter, Harvard Business Press

The Seven Habits of Highly Successful People, Stephen R Covey, Simon and Schuster.