

Kotter's 8-Step Change Model

Kotter's 8-Step Change Model was developed by Professor John Kotter of Harvard Business School, first published in his 1995 book 'Leading Change'. Unlike ADKAR, which focuses on individual change, Kotter's model addresses change at the organisational level. It provides leaders and mentors with a step-by-step roadmap to make change stick - moving from early urgency through to embedding new ways of working into culture.

The 8 steps are:

1. **Create Urgency:** Show people why the change is needed now, not later.
2. **Build a Guiding Coalition:** Form a strong team of supporters to lead the change.
3. **Develop Vision and Strategy:** Paint a clear picture of the future and how to get there.
4. **Communicate the Vision:** Share the message often and in ways people can relate to.
5. **Empower Action:** Remove obstacles and give people the freedom to act.
6. **Generate Quick Wins:** Deliver early successes to build momentum and confidence.
7. **Consolidate Gains:** Keep going, using progress as a springboard for more change.
8. **Anchor Change in Culture:** Make the new way part of everyday habits and values.

For mentors, Kotter's model is useful because it helps mentees think systematically about change. It prompts them to consider not only the technical side of adoption (e.g. introducing AI tools), but also the people side - building urgency, winning support, removing barriers, and embedding changes into everyday culture.

Example: Leila, who runs a small chain of independent gyms, introduced a mobile app for members to book classes and track workouts. By following Kotter's 8 Steps - creating urgency around competition, forming a coalition with trusted staff, developing and communicating a vision, empowering staff to try the app, celebrating early wins, and finally embedding the app into how new members join - she didn't just launch technology, she embedded a cultural shift in how her gyms operate.