

How a Sense of Urgency differs from Urgency

“The trouble is you think you have time.” -Buddha

Urgency means something is urgent, it conveys that a matter needs immediate attention, must be dealt with as soon as possible. And **Sense of urgency** means you tend to see things and address them as urgent. This may mean that you **respect time**, you have always a deadline or goal in mind.

This also may mean that you are **proactive** and NOT reactive.

This also means you understand the goals which are set as important, and you know the **consequence if this goal is not achieved**.

Urgency is a combination of thoughts, feelings, and actual behavior. The thoughts are, there are great opportunities out there, great hazards. The feelings are a gut-level determination that we're going to do something now, we're going to do something to win. And the behavior is this hyper-alertness to what's going on. Kotter argues that urgency is needed in the change process, because without it, people often won't give the needed extra push of hard work.

*Establishing a sense of urgency helps ... leaders of change to fight against complacency. **Complacency** is often seen in ... phrases such as 'well, we've always done it this way' or 'why make a change, the old way still works.' Urgency is the opposite of complacency. Urgency helps ... change to take place. -JOHN KOTTER*

So how should I or my organization develop the sense of urgency?

You must take action now that will move you towards your goals. Develop a sense of urgency in your life.

-H Jackson Brown Jr

From Kotter on Change Management in Companies and Organizations- While the language below is clearly grounded in business, it is valuable for change management in congregations and other organizations as well.

Number 1 → Commitment

Without the commitment from the top management, the vision and changes cannot cascade everywhere. People often look at the leaders of their organization to follow. Top management need to establish a sense of urgency.

John Kotter says — Establishing a sense of urgency means you're trying to change the status quo, to push employees to no longer be complacent and to help employees see that it is critical to move forward sooner rather than later.

Number 2 → Challenge

Everyone in the organization need to understand that we all work for creating value for customer. Creating solution which is useful and fulfilling the needs of the customer should be the topmost priority. **Empower your team to challenge the management and question their leaders on why we are doing this.**

In complex product development, especially which is just not an enhancement but development from the scratch, a sense of urgency is very much needed. In today's fast changing world, if there is no sense of urgency then there is a high possibility that customer will leave you soon.

Number 3 → Measure

It is important for you and your team to constantly measure your performance and we should ask back if we are improving and align with the change which is happening in the market today. **Look for these:**

- What slows down the progress?
- What skill set(s) are we lacking and what can we do about it?
- What are end users saying about the product/services?
- What production issues are presenting and what can do to reduce the occurrences?
- Is the application easy to use? If not, what can we do about it?

Call for action and set deadline and ensure each of the team members understand why we are measuring these.

Number 4 → Culture of transparency

When the organization grows then it can become difficult to understand what the organization is doing to sustain the business. Make the business goals transparent to everyone and explain it in a way which is understandable to everyone (from top leaders to freshers in the organization)

Create a plan to ensure everyone is aligned with the goal and constantly look for feedback from your employees.

Number 5 → Hire Leaders and not managers

Organization is built with people and when forming the team, it is essential to keep a check on who you are hiring. Enlist people who can inspire others, give feedback, can take feedback, are action oriented, align with company (organizational) values and finally, keep creating a sense of urgency.

The right people can take your company to next level

“When you are a leader, your job is to have all the questions. You must be incredibly comfortable looking like the dumbest person in the room. Every conversation you have about a decision, a proposal, or a piece of market information has to be filled with you saying, “What if?” and “Why not?” and “How come?”

— **Jack Welch, Winning**

Conclusion:

Continuous feedback and continuous improvement are the way to build the sense of urgency. Keep learning and remain engaged. Remember, we need to keep a deadline(s) for change initiatives otherwise, they will just be a dream.