

The Academic Librarian: Dinosaur or Phoenix? die or fly in library change management. Chinese University of Hong Kong Library System.

# CHANGE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3....8?



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# Overview



- Kotter's eight step model as a process for successful change
- Two academic library organisational change processes
  - Australia
  - Hong Kong
- A word about organizational change models



# Eight Reasons for Change Failure

- 1 Allowing Too Much Complacency
- 2 Failing to Create a Sufficiently Powerful Guiding Coalition
- 3 Underestimating the Power of Vision
- 4 Undercommunicating the Vision by a Factor of 10 (or 100 or Even 1,000)
- 5 Permitting Obstacles to Block the New Vision
- 6 Failing to Create Short-Term Wins
- 7 Declaring Victory Too Soon
- 8 Neglecting to Anchor Changes Firmly in the Corporate Culture

Kotter, J., *Leading Change*, Boston, Harvard Business School Press, 1996.

# Kotter's Rules for Success



- These are reverse actions to the 8 failures
- They are sequential but often several steps will be undertaken concurrently
- They are divided into 3 broad categories:

➤ Preparation (1-4)

➤ Action (5-7)

➤ Grounding (8)



# Two Academic Libraries: Two Change Processes



## *Australia*

- Transformational
- Integrating Library, IT and Educational Support into 1 department.
- Several hundred staff affected.
- Cultural change.
- 1996 (the era of Kotter).

## *Hong Kong*

- Technical Services Department.
- Workflow/practice changes.
- Several dozen people.
- 2005 (post Kotter).



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# Preparation (Steps 1-4)

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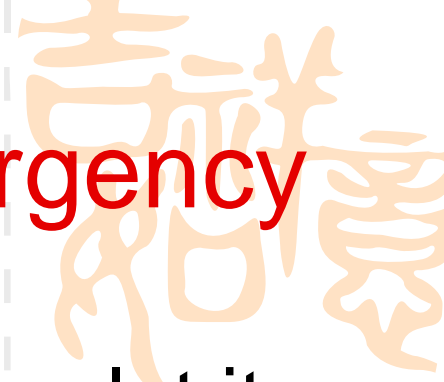
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# 1 Establishing a Sense of Urgency

- Create a crisis, or if one is looming, let it be known
- Set higher targets (outputs, customer satisfaction etc)
- Highlight unsatisfied customers' concerns



# 1 Urgency



## *Australia*

- Flexible delivery support.
- Dictated by Vice-Chancellor – must be done.



## *Hong Kong*

- Financial imperative.
- Voluntary Departure Scheme hitting TS.
- No choice but to change practices.



# 2 Creating the Guiding Coalition



- A team approach is needed
- Usually consisting of senior staff, managers etc
- Coalition must have power:
  - Titles
  - Information & expertise
  - Reputation/credibility
  - Leadership (essential) and management (less essential) qualities



## 2 The Guiding Coalition

### *Australia*

- Director, IT; Director, Centre for Advanced University Teaching; Librarian.

### *Hong Kong*

- Libraries' Senior Management Team (Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Administrative Librarian) plus consultant.

In both libraries the “coalition” initiated and drove the change process, developed visions, strategies and plans. Subsequent coalitions were established to implement these.

# 3 Developing a Vision and Strategy

- Vision can:
  - Clarify the general direction for change
  - Motivate people to act in the right direction
  - Coordinate the actions of different people
- Vision must be:
  - Imaginable
  - Desirable
  - Feasible
  - Focused
  - Flexible
  - Communicable

# 3 Developing a Vision and Strategy



- Strategy provides the outline for how the vision is to be achieved
- Strategy is detailed in plans which provide specific steps and timetables to implement the strategy



# 3 Vision and Strategy



## *Australia*

- Coalition developed extensive report.
- Rationale, strategy and plans.
- “an *integrated* approach to developing goals and plans for the delivery of flexible learning, information and technology services”.
- Workshops to develop mission, goals and a new structure.

## *Hong Kong*

- Consultant worked with staff through interviews and workshops.
- Developed top 3 priorities for TS.
- Action plan for moving these 3 forward.



# 4 Communicating the Change Vision

- Understanding a “vision” can be intellectually challenging and emotional
- Employees need to be informed of (i) the need for change as well as (ii) how the change will be achieved.
- People who don't want to change will choose not to accept the communication
- Most leaders/managers underestimate the need for extensive communication during change

# 4 Communicating the Change Vision



- Keep the communication simple
- Use metaphor, analogy and example
- Multiple forums
- Repeat, repeat, repeat
- Walk the talk
- Explain (or better still remove) inconsistencies
- Listen and talk



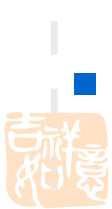
# 4 Communicating the Change Vision

## *Australia*

- Workshops
- “State of the Division” forums
- New executive team.

## *Hong Kong*

- Consultant’s report
- Librarians forums





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## Action (Steps 5-7)

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# 5 Empowering Employees for Broad-Based Action

- Empower:
  - To invest with power, especially legal power or official authority. To equip or supply with an ability; to enable.
- Removing obstacles that disable workers:
  - Organisational structures
  - People, especially supervisors and others with “power”
- Some people see empowerment as added responsibility
- Provide needed training and development opportunities

# 5 Empowering Employees

## *Australia*

- Virtual teams led by faculty librarians
- New IT/Library structures
- New library “obstacles” (IR vs CS)
- Changing sides
- Spill and fill – removed human barriers

## *Hong Kong*

- New management structure for TS
- New management team – the new guiding coalition

# 6 Generating Short-Term Wins

- These are milestones in the change plan
- They provide evidence of success
  - Confirmation of direction for leaders/believers
  - Conversion for doubters
- Plan for them to occur and make sure they happen
- Celebrate them and reward those involved

# 6 Generating Short-Term Wins

## *Australia*

- Faculty librarians
- IT certificates for support staff
- Service charter
- Integrated Library/IT service points

## *Hong Kong*

- New structure
- Cataloguing quality control testing success

# 7 Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change



- Do not declare the change process as “finished”
- Do not over celebrate gains/successes – this can result in complacency
- Use the short term wins to give impetus for other, bigger changes



# 7 More Change



## *Australia*

- Fine tuning continued
- More staff movements
- University-wide overhaul announced

## *Hong Kong*

- Not needed



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# Grounding (Step 8)

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# 8 Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture



- The final step
- “Culturally” anchored only after proven to be superior to past practices
- Anchored when the changes become “the way we do things around here” not sooner.



# 8 Anchoring



## *Australia*

- Original process halted with new change process to affect “all university staff”.



## *Hong Kong*

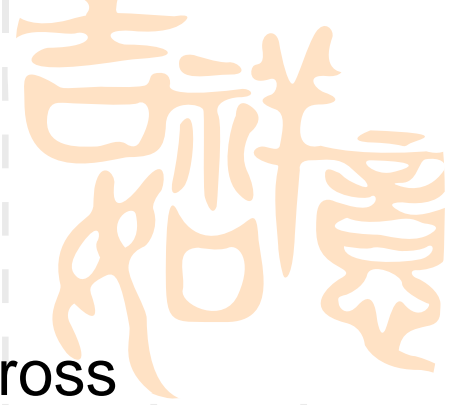
- Anchored.

# Degrees of Success

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# Australia



- better planning for library and technology across campus and the linking of budgets to plans;
- skills enrichment schemes that led to IT training for library staff and saw several staff changing professional direction;
- an improved focus on service culture with customer service training, service charters for all services and improved feedback mechanisms;
- integrated library and IT help service points in all libraries;
- despite shrinking budgets and staffing, the Library was able to maintain services with university wide surveys showing no decline, in fact improvements, and;
- the University's Composite Student Questionnaire (CSQ) showed significant improvements in IT services following the formation of the Division.



# Australia



- Success limited by:
  - urgency dictated by CEO – few saw the connection between the change and the desired outcome
  - vastly different cultures stronger than thought
  - the IT dept were change-weary
  - short term wins offset by highly visible failures
  - changes insufficiently grounded.



# Hong Kong



- long serving, capable staff relieved of having their work thoroughly checked leading to a boost in confidence;
- the first year saw a 122% increase in the number of titles catalogued this included a 485% increase in e-resources and a 42% increase in copy cataloguing;
- other major projects were subsequently initiated and completed including a major reclassification of our CJK collection, item creation for all bound journals and OPAC hyperlinks for some 60,000 print volumes recently digitized as part of the China-America Digital Academic Library (CADAL) project, and;
- in 2005/06 the Library became the number 1 largest contributor of titles in the world to OCLC's WorldCat with almost 76,000 titles.



# Hong Kong



- Success boosted by:
  - *urgency* created by the soon to depart cataloguers was very real to all staff
  - a good degree of change–readiness was apparent
  - the restructure was significantly less complex.



# Kotter and Other Change Models

- Not all steps applicable to all scenarios
- Existence of many similar “models”
- No one-size-fits-all solution

➤ “an organization’s preferred approach to change stems from its culture and thus cannot easily be amended or replaced”  
(Burnes, 1996)

- Difficult to contextualise a model
- Changes often fail due to adherence to such models.



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Thank you

