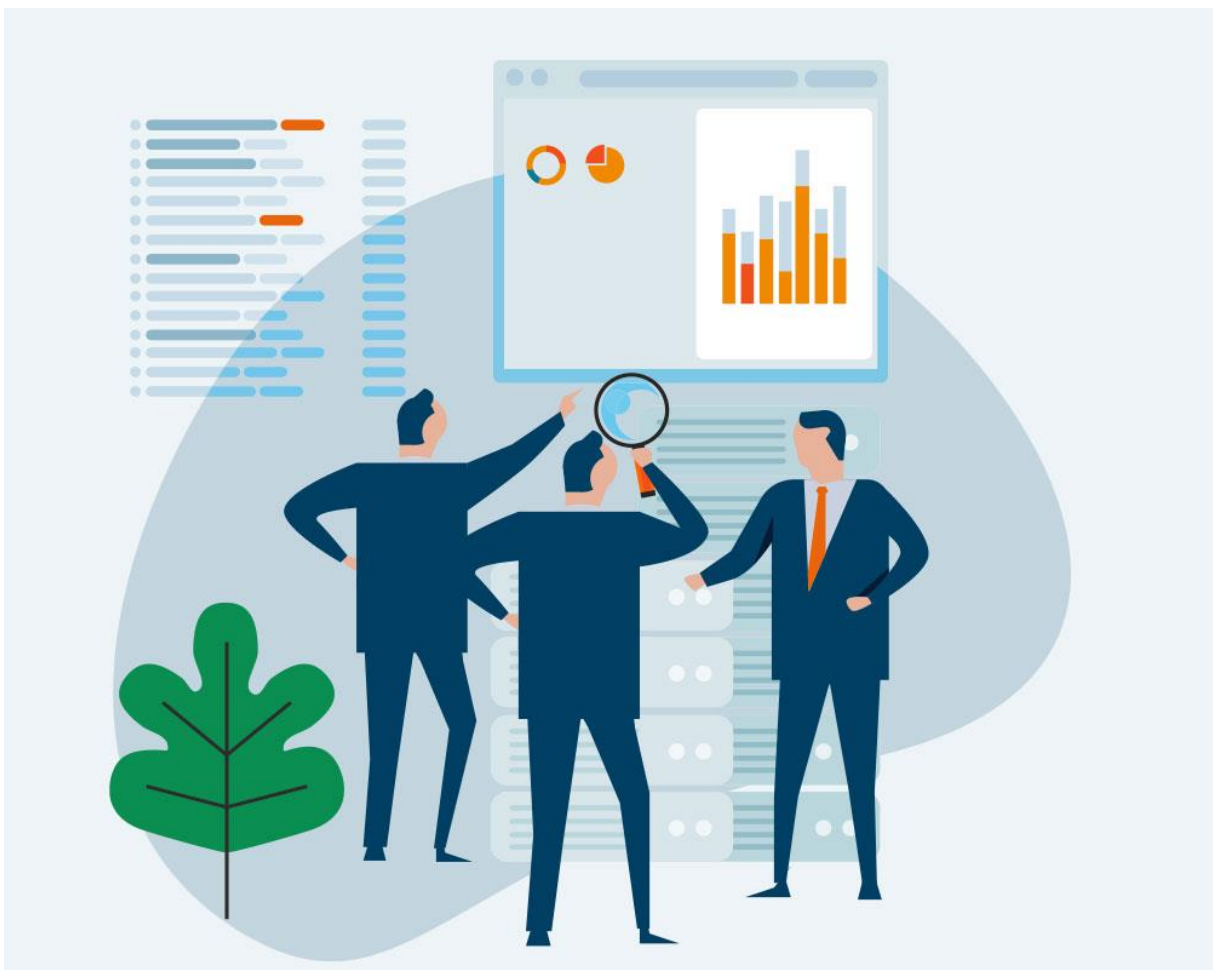


Do you have ENOUGH SENSE of URGENCY in your company?



A Sense of Urgency is the sense that immediate Action is Required. It is the idea that something **MUST** be done as soon as possible, or a potentially positive outcome may be missed or turned into a negative outcome. In some instances, it can mean preventing a negative outcome from getting even worse.

I'm in my sixth business turnaround over my last 25 years, urgency has never been so important and urgent than today. I have observed many times, that companies and teams do not see the requested level of urgency and make companies struggling. You as a leader need to make sure you rise and drive the urgency level to the required level and your teams work towards immediate actions.

Here a few Situations of Urgency you will need to ACT in daily life:

- Act as if your house would be on fire and you still could get it under control
- Act as if you knew you would have a serious disease yourself or one of your family members
- Act like a flood, thunderstorm, tornado would be on the way and would be in your region in a few hours
- Your company has lost market share in just a couple of months and you are losing your top 3 customers next month
- Your company is running out of money and you can't pay the upcoming salaries or your key supplier stops deliveries
- I'm sure you have enough examples you could add

My brother died in a hospital due to a lack of urgency after he woke up from a surgery! This is sad, because everything was there: a good hospital, equipment, medication, but on a critical moment at night, the requested people and urgency were missing and the consequences were fatal.

Now there are companies with a false urgency, everybody working like hell (or at least looking busy) but things getting worse from month to month! I very much like John Kotter and I learned a lot from him; I wanted to share a few thoughts from Kotter.

How to Recognize False Urgency?

- Do people have trouble scheduling meetings on important initiatives
- Because they are too busy?
- Are critical issues delegated without the involvement of key people?
- Do people spend long hours developing power points on almost anything?
- Do people regularly blame others for problems instead of taking responsibility?
- Are failures of the past discussed not to learn, but to stall new initiatives?
- Are assignments around critical issues regularly not completed on time or with sufficient quality?
- Are highly selective facts used to shoot down data that suggests there is a big hazard or opportunity?
- Do meetings on key issues end with no decisions about what must happen immediately (except the scheduling of the next meeting)?
- Does passive aggression exist around big issues?
- Do people say, "we must act now," but then don't act?
- Do cynical jokes undermine important discussions?

- Do people run from meeting to meeting exhausting themselves and rarely focusing on the most critical hazards or opportunities?

How to Recognize Urgent Behavior?

- A „want-to“ or „will achieve“ attitude
- A full determination to move, and win, NOW (not tomorrow)
- People are alert and proactive, constantly looking for information relevant to success and survival
- When faced with a problem, people search for effective ways to get the information to the right individual, NOW (not tomorrow)
- People come to work each day ready to cooperate energetically

True urgency is not the product of historical successes or current failures but the result of people who provide the leadership needed to create it. A real sense of urgency is rare, much rarer than most people seem to think, yet it is invaluable in a world that will not stand still.

Here are the Steps to Increasing a True Sense of Urgency

- Behave with urgency every day, and what needs to be done today, will be done today. We will not go home before!
- Create actions that are exceptionally alert
- Externally oriented (market, customers and competitions)
- Making some progress each and every day
- Constantly purging low value-added activities
- Be on the lookout for compelling data, people, video, Web sites and other messages from outside the company
- Demonstrate your own sense of urgency always in meetings, interactions, memos and e-mail and do so as visibly as possible to as many people as possible
- Find opportunities in crisis
- Always be alert to see if crises can be a friend, not just an enemy, in order to destroy complacency
- Remove or neutralize all the relentless urgency-killers, people who are not skeptics but are determined to keep a group complacent or to create destructive urgency
- Build the best team who understands the urgency of today

Wrap up – Enough Sense of Urgency in Your Company?

The business world has never moved faster than right now, and we can expect the pressure only to increase. **Speed, agility, and proactivity are necessary requirements for survival and success.**

So make sure you have enough sense of urgency in your company, this will be a good basis for your successful change process. If not enough, you as a leader need to create it, or it will be too late! By the way, make sure you have the right people on board, your communication is very clear, and it is supporting the actions. Wish you all the best.

Any thoughts?

Can we coach you in reviewing the urgency level in your company?

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