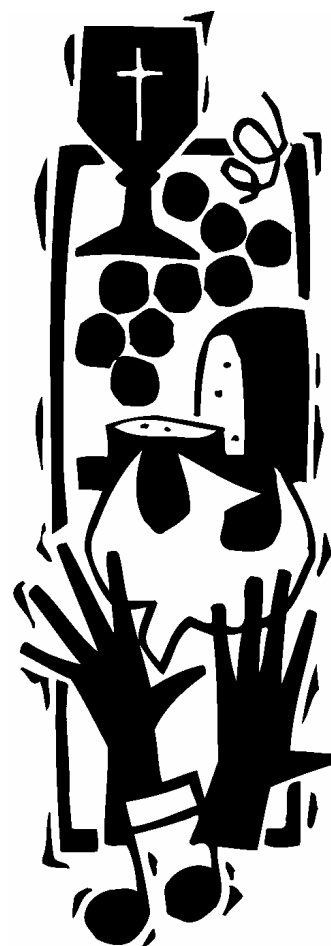


# Grow Your Church Week



*Leading Change in  
Churches*

**Office of Congregational Development**  
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# Why Change at All?

Why does your church need to change anything?

Why does your church resist making needed changes?

## Change Styles

Learn your change style at [www.link2lead.com](http://www.link2lead.com).

### 1. Derailing

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When a feeling of panic and a reactive behavioral style converge, a person may actively work to derail or disrupt change efforts in an organization.

*"I generally like things the way they are and often find myself working to keep them that way. If you want to start changing things, I'm not afraid to challenge you."*

### 2. Blocking

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When change efforts cause a feeling of fear and a general tendency to be resistant, a person may exhibit a blocking style. Such blocking does not necessarily derail the change effort, but neither does it allow the effort to proceed smoothly.

*"While I do not set out to derail change efforts, I'm not the one leading the charge nor will you often find me cheering on those who are trying to change things. Sometimes, I think my role is to keep things from changing too much or too fast."*

### 3. Tentative

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A tentative style can be the result of a feeling of uncertainty combined with a cautious behavioral approach when dealing with the demands of change. While this style does not actively oppose change initiatives, neither does it embrace them.

*"When things start to change, I find myself feeling uncertain. I'm not really against the changes, but often they make me feel uneasy. I worry about what things will be like after the change. I don't cause trouble, but I don't lead the charge either."*

### 4. Engaged

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A person who engages change efforts feels energized by the possibilities of change and tends to proactively move toward it. In general, an engaging style is the most effective in dealing with change and is essential to leading a change effort.

*"While I'm not necessarily excited by change for change's sake, I believe there is opportunity in change and I try to be proactive in engaging the challenges of a changing environment."*

### 5. Reckless

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It is possible for a person to be so excited by the possibilities of change that instead of effectively leading, they simply create problems. They may push too hard, be insensitive in leading others forward or fail to create enough space for others so that change can root and unfold.

*"I think change itself is a great thing. It keeps things interesting. Other people should be more open to seeing how things could be done differently."*

**What do you think is your change style?**

# Leading Change

Process of intentional change from *Leading Change* by John P. Kotter.

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## **Step 1: Establish a sense of urgency.**

In order for people to willingly engage in changes, they need to feel a sense of anxiety and dissatisfaction with their current realities. By casting a vision of a better future, a change agent can sow productive seeds of discontent. As anxiety about the current situation builds, a sense of urgency for change will grow. Change agents need to carefully assess the capacity for discomfort in their systems and their selves.

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## **Step 2: Create a guiding coalition.**

Change can't happen without a team. A coalition for change will include innovators and early adopters with a passion for change, but it should also include people with power, credibility and expertise. Key influencers and opinion leaders should be brought into the coalition early in order to keep the change process going. The team will need to engage those people most affected by the proposed changes and secure permission from institutional gatekeepers. An outside resource person might provide helpful perspective and coaching for the team.

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## **Step 3: Develop a strategy.**

A strategic plan for implementing a change helps people envision the entire change process and the practical implications of the proposed change. A good strategic plan we help you:

- Articulate your core values
  - Clarify God's vision for your future
  - Focus your mission on God's vision
  - Design your ministry systems
  - Determine ministry outcomes and benchmarks
  - Set and prioritize goals
  - Devise action plans to meet goals
  - Assign responsibility and timeline Provide ongoing evaluation and feedback
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## **Step 4: Communicate a change vision.**

Anxiety helps people decide that they need to move from their present situation, but a compelling vision will inspire them to move in a specific direction. Vision is more than an articulation of group consensus, but is God's dream of a life-changing, world-altering ministry. Vision challenges people to move from the present into a more preferred future.

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## **Step 5: Empower broad-based action.**

System-wide changes need system-wide participation. Empowering people through removing barriers to participation and by sharing information will increase the speed and decrease the conflict in any change process. A change team needs to plan to include and empower as many people as possible in the change process.

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## **Step 6: Generate short-term wins.**

Generating enthusiasm and momentum through quick successes will empower the longer-term change. These wins will be most effective if they are visible to many, unambiguous, and directly related to the overall change process. These wins will also broaden support for the overall change.

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## Step 7: Consolidate gains and produce more change.

As change begins to happen, anxiety will be reduced throughout the organization and the urgency for change will decrease. Continued articulation of the compelling vision and producing new challenges from that vision through regular evaluation will help the organization to move forward. Transferring resources and attention to new ministries will help support and consolidate the changes already made.

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## Step 8: Anchor new approaches in the culture.

Changes to the culture happen as a result of changes in behavior. Because culture is rooted in the unreflected mores of an organization, it is difficult to change. Changes in culture will require a lot of talk and reflection, may require a change in some leaders, and is often dependant on the ongoing presence of a change agent.

## Discussion

What obstacles and assets do you have to lead change?  
How can you use these steps to lead a specific change in your ministry?

## Resources on Leading Change

- Building Church Leaders resource pages at [www.christianitytoday.com/bcl](http://www.christianitytoday.com/bcl)
- *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation* box set from [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)
- *Leading Change* by John P. Kotter
- *Effective Church Finances* by Kennon Callahan
- *Transforming Church Board into Communities of Spiritual Leaders* by Charles Olsen
- *Sacred Cows Make Gourmet Burgers* by William Easum
- [www.easumbandy.com](http://www.easumbandy.com) - free resource section articles
- [www.coachnet.net](http://www.coachnet.net) - subscription service of church leadership resources
- *The 3 Colors of Love* by Christian Schwarz
- *Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior* by Arthur Paul Boers
- *Behavior Covenants in Congregations* by Gil Rendle
- [www.peace.mennolink.org/resources/conflictstyle](http://www.peace.mennolink.org/resources/conflictstyle) - free conflict style inventory

## Other Helpful Resources

### For Small and Transitioning Churches:

- "Process Guide on Study of Future Viability for a Local Church" – [curtis@neumc.org](mailto:curtis@neumc.org)
- *Can our Church Live? Redeveloping Congregations in Decline* by Alice Mann
- *The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations* by Alice Mann

### For New and Growing Churches:

- *Church Planter's Toolkit* by Bob Logan and Steve Ogne
- *NextChurch.Now* by Craig Miller

### Annual Training Events:

- New England School of Congregational Development – annual Fall training event
- National School of Congregational Development – annual Summer training event

### Other Helpful Websites:

- [www.neumcMINISTRY.info](http://www.neumcMINISTRY.info) - Conference Ministry Information Center
- [www.congregationalresources.org](http://www.congregationalresources.org) - online guide to resources for churches
- [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org) - Alban Institute's congregational development & consulting resources