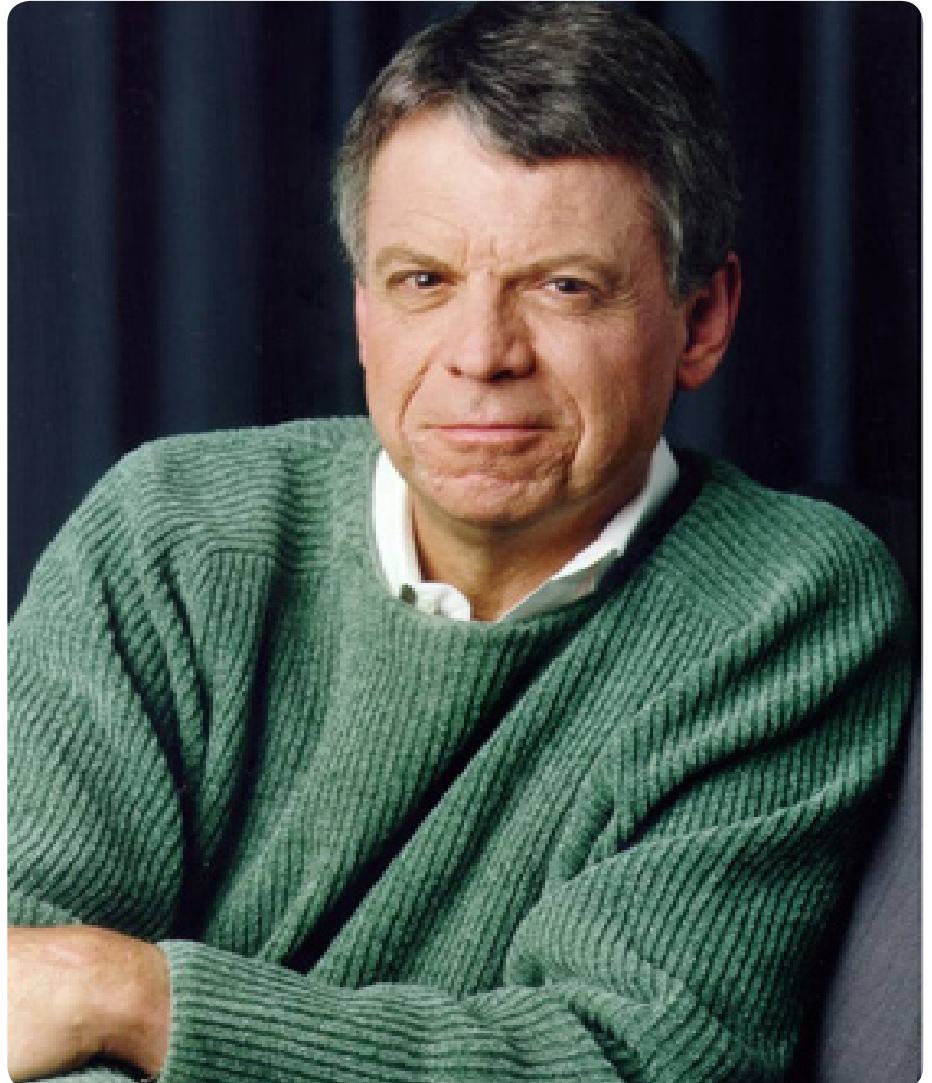


# Interview

## John Kotter

John P. Kotter, Professor of Leadership, Emeritus at Harvard Business School, is widely regarded as the world's foremost authority on leadership and change. His is the premier voice on how the best organizations actually "do" change.



# John Kotter Interview

## In the actual economic situation what makes the real difference between achieving organizational success or survive?

We can spend one hour discussion this question. Even in the middle of a crises situation a leader can face a lot of complacency. So they need to create a sense of urgency to help their organization. This is the difference between having energetic leaders, because they have that type of energy their organizations seem to have people with a real sense of urgency.

Urgency is what people feel they have to do every single day, has small has it can seem, to deal with opportunities outside the company and not only inside. It's not driven by panic. They have a clear vision of what could help them

see is important to prioritize decisions, to have time to deal, delegate and making things happen.

Panic is different. Because it makes people so stressful that they won't be in control all the time.

**Leaders, sometimes, have so much energy, that people in their organizations, seems to have an effective sense of urgency. What is not truth!**

## Companies are not investing. What do you thing? Because in this way crises will be continue for sure?

Panic driven activities tend to miss opportunities that in crises situations always appear, tend to hurt national economy. We have to get people out of this mood. It can

## Leadership Program

### Leadership Keys to Excellence

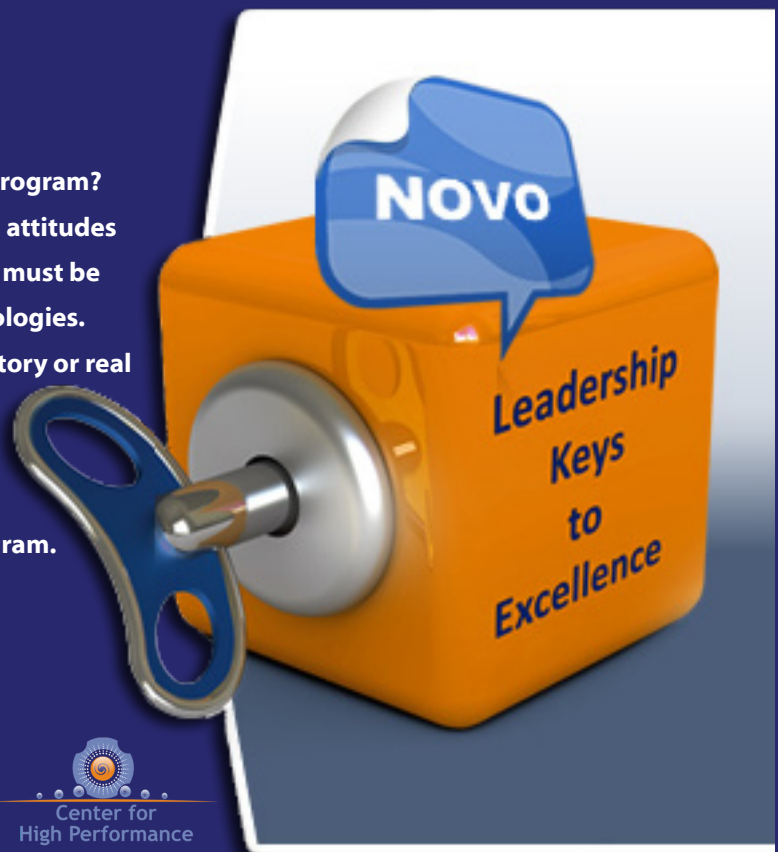
What can you expect from this program?  
We don't develop behaviors and attitudes trough words and models. They must be trained by experiential methodologies. Trough good examples, telling story or real examples and coaching.

You can find this in a single program.

Contact us:

Website: [www.highplay.pt](http://www.highplay.pt)

Email: [info@highplay.pt](mailto:info@highplay.pt)



be done by CEO's; it can be done by first level leaders and key people in the organization. We really need more people doing that. If real sense of urgency goes up, you get a different behavior from your colleagues and companies and the world economy will do a lot better.

**A new age where things change so quickly. How can you describe that? It will be faster in the future?**

Technology and globalization alone are making things more turbulent. That is the change. This is happening only a few decades from now, and will continue to go up in the actual future. A future that relates to an organization capacity of handling a changing world and leadership, because what real leaders do is a lot associated with handling and helping their people face this change in the actual world. It's different to managers who keep complicated systems running. So we need more organizations changing competences and people who do something with leadership, and not only with the top of the organizations but up and down.

That is the future. With more change confidence, organizations encouragement and developing more people to play the leaders roles or they will eventually die.

**"This it will be the future. With more trust in the changing actions and with organizations encouraging or developing people that have a role as leaders. Or they will die! .**

**Do you think that the top leaders of the future will be specialized in managing change?**

Leadership is expected to be practice by the 27 years old engineer in a task development force or CEO's and Prime Ministers. We need a lot more people in leadership roles. That makes all the difference and all the sense of urgency on making things easier. Organizations need that.

**In your opinion what kind of changes top executives are not doing with themselves, their teams and their organizations?**

A lot! Some organizations are like bunkers, praying that the crisis vanishes. If nothing changes in next 3 or 4 years a lot of people will suffer. People have to move right now in an



intelligent way. If the people enter a defensive mood trying to hold on to what they have, they will build up conditions to enter a panic state too.

**Some organizations are similar to bunkers, they stay steel, praying and waiting that crisis goes away. If nothing changes in the next 3 or 4 years many people will suffer!**

**In 2011 after this crisis, what kind of big lessons can people who work on management learn?**

We have a tendency to learn some lessons, and 10 or 12 years later forget them. Business cycles tend to be inevitable. Things go up, things go down. Like, in the stock market. The only good thing we are able to do is modified the swings. The top don't need to go so high and the bottom doesn't need to go so low.

What leaders do? Always in difficult situations they step forward, to the public, tell things to people explaining to them the current situation and remind them that they can survive in the context avoiding complacency and reminding them they are very good, saying that everything will be all right in a few months. They are very good avoiding a panic situation, but not so good finding ways to help.

**Leaders are very good on the coming out from panic situations, but not so good, on finding the ways that help them!**

Leadership, strategy, excellence, innovation, teamwork are common messages in companies in times like these. Do you think that we need to pass those messages again or other key messages have to be remembered?

It is impossible to continue doing business the way we are doing it now. The changes have to be made in an intelligent way and not driven by panic, so we need to provide more people has intelligent leaders to make those changes and the more people can remember or can find or can learn how to grab opportunities in difficult situations.

If we panic we'll make stupid decisions, no investment, lay off people. We always miss opportunities doing things like these. It doesn't help anyone, and blaming doesn't help anyone either and is really common in situations like these. There are so many people that can't be blame!

In companies we have always people in their comfort zones? What can we tell them or what strategies do we need to implement?

If they are in a comfort zone you need to help them and tell them the bad news. Instead make things more

realistic. Show the facts. Comfort zone is complacency, so you need to help them feel that what they are currently doing is not going work if they just keep on doing it. You have to demonstrate with your own acts, showing useful information.

In Teams we have egos and probably some fights between egos. How can leadership deal with this issue?

Egos are always the same. Try to work in different directions. So the only way is to put them working in the same direction and put egos buying a single vision about the future. Egos are dangerous people in some situations so leadership must step away. If leadership build a sense of urgency the probability of developing a team performance grows with a single vision of the future, and the probability of egos not communicating in work with each other disappears.

Companies provide lack of information to people. They manage secrets, some meetings with no visible goals, projects that only a few people know. Do you agree that crises have to be managed this way?

Well. The more people know what's going on, especially in

# Teambuilding

## Your team are thinking more in the Crises or how to exceed?

High Play has created an Teambuilding activity – Good to Great. That is dedicated to teams that felt the need of exceed in a crisis environment.

During one day, with the facilitation of High Performance teams specialists, this positive and motivator exercise will lead the participants to an inspirational and winning attitude.

**Low investment! High Return!**

.....  
Contact us:

Website: [www.highplay.pt](http://www.highplay.pt)  
Email: [info@highplay.pt](mailto:info@highplay.pt)



difficult conditions, more they can think about the worst scenarios. They don't have to imagine it, because this is even worst for both sides. If they have information it makes them more cooperative. If people in the top hide information, it's because they think they are about to lay off thousands of people and they don't want to show it before the best opportunity appears. This happens when the vision is not a particular good one. Instead of hiding information, we need a management team sensible, which drive an organization in a good direction. Of course you want to do the opposite, and not hide. You want help people understudied and buy in to. If you have news that will hurt your people and if you hide it until the right moment you through up them out the door that is not an effective organization dealing with difficult times.

**If we have some news that we decide to hide from the others, for don't hurt them, until comes the right moment to truth it way, this is not the best version of a management leading with times of crisis.**

### About John Kotter

John P. Kotter, Professor of Leadership, Emeritus at Harvard Business School, is widely regarded as the world's foremost authority on leadership and change. His is the premier voice on how the best organizations actually "do" change.

John Kotter's international bestseller, *Leading Change*—which outlines an actionable, 8-step process for implementing successful transformations—has become the change bible for managers around the world. In October 2001, *Business Week* magazine rated Kotter the #1 "leadership guru" in America based on a survey they conducted of 504 enterprises.

His newest work, the New York Times bestselling *Our Iceberg Is Melting*, puts the 8-step process within an allegory, making it accessible to the broad range of people needed to affect major organizational transformations.

John Kotter's articles in *The Harvard Business Review* over the past twenty years have sold more reprints than any of the hundreds of distinguished authors who have written for that publication during the same time period. He has published 16 books, 12 of which have been business best-sellers and 6 of which have won awards or honors. His books are in the top 1% of sales from Amazon.com and have been printed in over ninety foreign language editions, with total sales exceeding two million copies.

Dr. Kotter is a graduate of MIT and Harvard. He joined the Harvard Business School faculty in 1972. In 1980, at the age of 33, he was given tenure and a full professorship.

Professor Kotter's honors include an Exxon Award for Innovation in Graduate Business School Curriculum Design, and a Johnson, Smith & Knisely Award for New Perspectives in Business Leadership. In 1996, Professor Kotter's *Leading Change* was named the #1 management book of the year by *Management General*. In 1998, his *Matsushita Leadership* won first place in the Financial Times, Booz-Allen Global Business Book Competition for biography/autobiography. In 2003, a video version of a story from his book, *The Heart of Change*, won a Telly Award (an "Oscar" for short video). In 2006, he received the prestigious McFeely Award for "outstanding contributions to leadership and management development."

In 2007, his video "Succeeding in a Changing World" was named Best Video Training Product of the year.



HighPlay, Consultores - 2009 © Todos os direitos reservados