



UniSA

# From heartbreak to happy endings: what to do when your iceberg starts to melt

## The Service Improvement project at UniSA

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## Today's presentation

- Introduction
  - Service Improvement: What is it? Why do we need to change? What do icebergs have to do with this?*
- Kotter's eight steps
- Tangible outcomes
- The happy ending?
- Questions

### *Once upon a time...*



1. simple plot
2. morality (good vs. bad, good is rewarded and bad is exposed)
3. identifiable characters
4. protagonist leaves home (change)
5. usually teach a lesson or demonstrate values important to the culture
6. happy ending (order is restored in the end)
7. do NOT need to include fairies.

## Our iceberg is melting!

# Our Iceberg is Melting

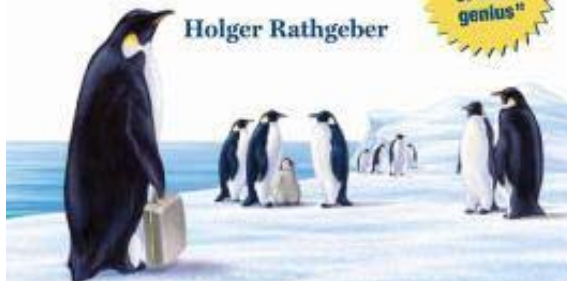
Changing and Succeeding  
Under Any Conditions

**John Kotter**

THE AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR  
FROM HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

Holger Rathgeber

"...a stroke  
of sheer  
genius"



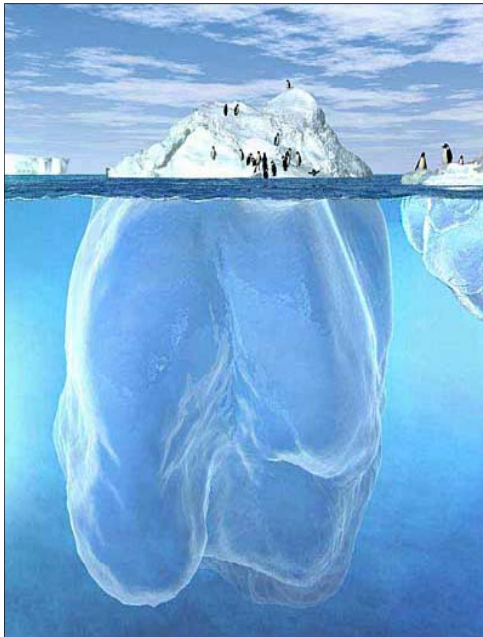
Foreword by Spencer Johnson, M.D., author of *Who Moved My Cheese?*

- A simple fable about doing well in an ever-changing world.
- A group of beautiful emperor penguins live as they have for many years.
- Then, one curious bird (Fred) discovers that their iceberg is melting
- The iceberg the colony has lived on comfortably for generations is disappearing
- Potential for catastrophe
- Fred brings it to the notice of a daring no-nonsense leader Alice who, in turn takes this to the leadership council and then to all the penguins in the group. There are penguins who accept, others who are sceptical, and others who write off the whole discovery as rubbish.
- The fable deals with how a leadership council of five penguins with varied skill sets is able to convince the group of the necessity to change and achieve the change that they envision in spite of all the hindrances.



## Introduction

***“If our workplace is performing very well,  
then why do we need to change?”***

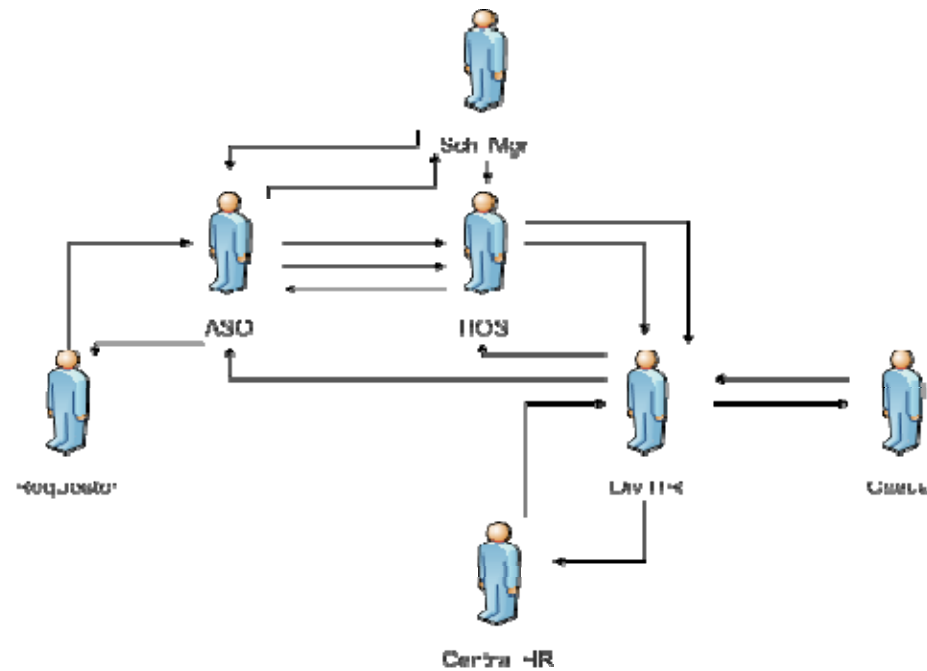


## *Why now? Why ever?*

- Growth in and diversity of students and their expectations
- Changes in the way we work
- Changes in the way we teach
- Technology transcending time and space
- Complexity of tertiary sector (global market, regulatory environment, stakeholders etc)

**The only constant is change.**

## Double handling, mutation and adaptation



- 28 separate steps
- 13 decisions
- 7 hand-offs

## Service Improvement project, processes and outcomes



### **The Service Improvement project**

#### **Service Improvement is...**

- A University-wide initiative
- A strategic and well considered redesign of our administrative processes & practices
- A significant investment of resources
- In the short-term, about building the right service foundations
- In the long-term, about continuously improving our business practices and service levels



## Service Improvement project, processes and outcomes

### Guiding principles

Administrative and professional service delivery structures should be designed to enable:

- efficient and effective delivery of primary process objectives
- clear levels of accountability for service delivery
- responsiveness to the needs of the organisational levels primarily responsible for teaching and research outcomes
- issues of sustainability, complexity, specialisation, and commonality to be balanced with responsiveness to the lowest organisational level, subject to the demands of good governance
- consistency of delivery structures and processes across the University as far as practical

## Service Improvement project, processes and outcomes

### Guiding principles

With respect to administrative activities and professional services the purpose of our organisational levels:

Functions that support academic and research staff in the direct delivery of teaching and research should reside in Schools and research concentrations.

The Divisions (faculties) are responsible for common service delivery in line with University-wide strategic priorities.

The Portfolios/Central Units are corporate service providers who manage and maintain infrastructure and develop, oversee and deliver University-wide operations, policies and standards.

## Service Improvement project, processes and outcomes



### Scope of the Service Improvement project

All four academic divisions and all central units with distributed support activities:

- Academic and student support
- Research administration
- Business development
- Finance
- Marketing
- International
- Human Resources



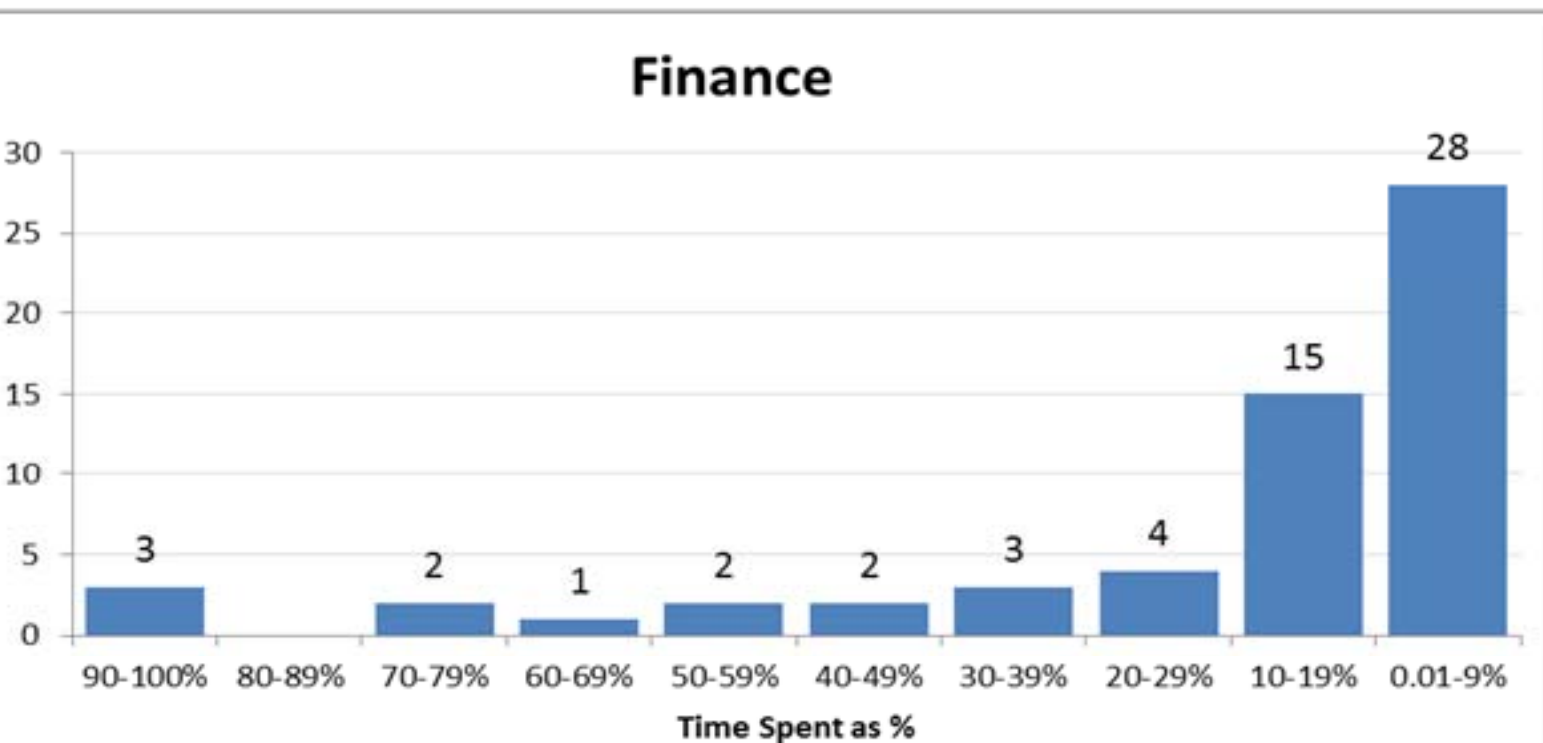
Kotter's eight steps

## Kotter's 8 steps

### **Step 1: Create a sense of urgency**

- Examine the market and competitive realities
- Identify and discuss opportunities
- Help others see the need for change and importance of immediate action

## Kotter's 8 steps





## Kotter's 8 steps

### **Step 2: Pull together the guiding team**

Assemble a group to lead the change effort:

- Leadership skills
- Credibility
- Authority
- Analytical skills
- Communications ability

*Effective leaders help others to understand the necessity of change and to accept a common vision of the desired outcome. (John Kotter)*

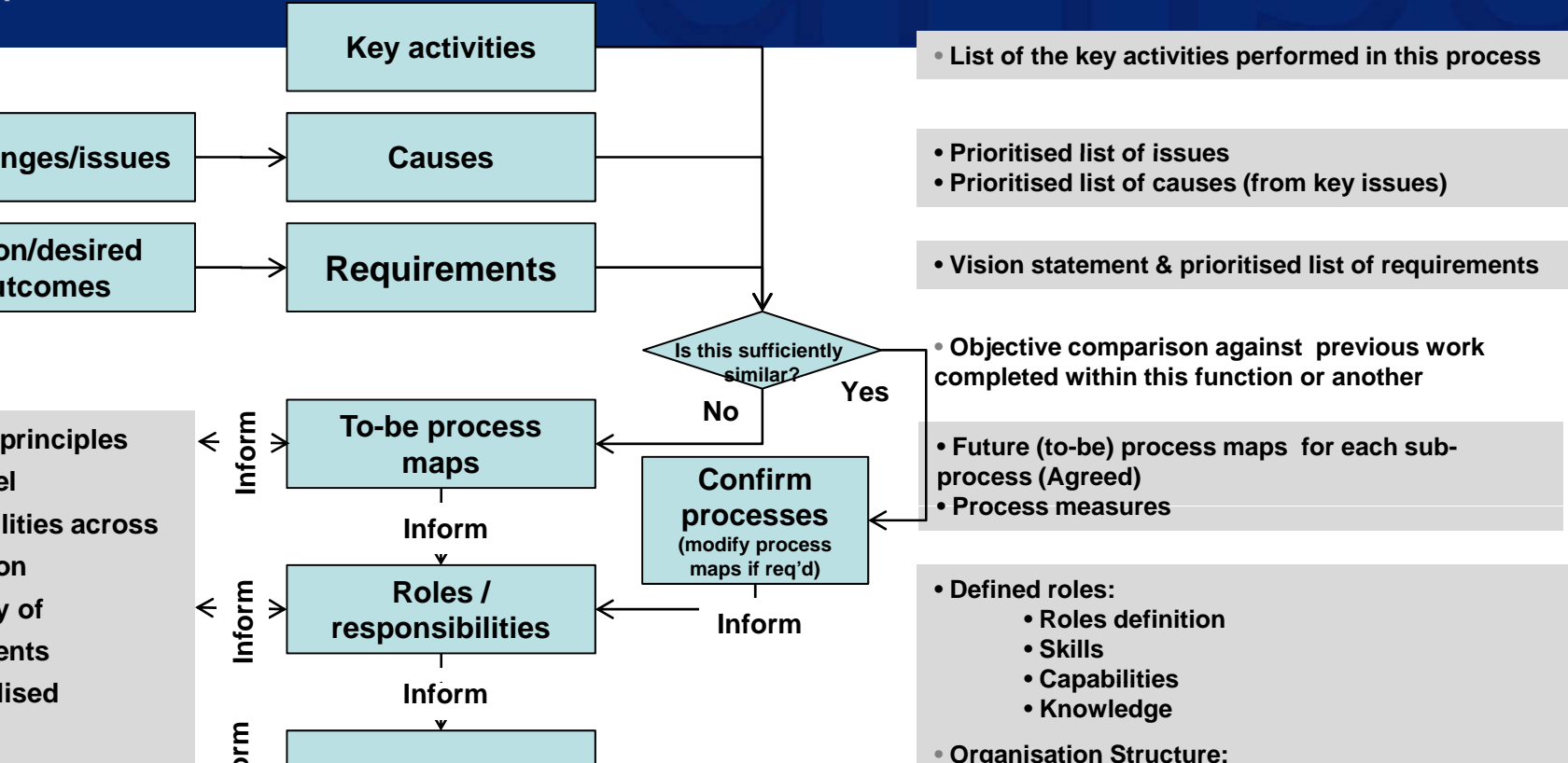


## Kotter's 8 steps

### **Step 3: Developing the change vision and strategy**

- Create a vision to help direct the change effort
- Develop strategies for achieving that vision
- Clarify how the future will be different from the past, with clear steps for making that future a reality

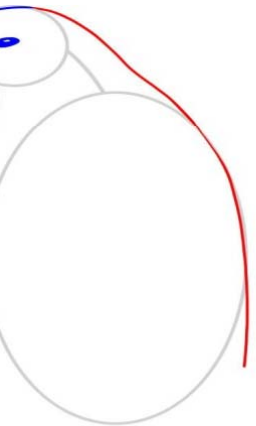
# Methodology: key steps & deliverables



## Kotter's 8 steps

### **Step 4: Communicate for understanding and buy-in**

- Broad understanding and acceptance of the strategy



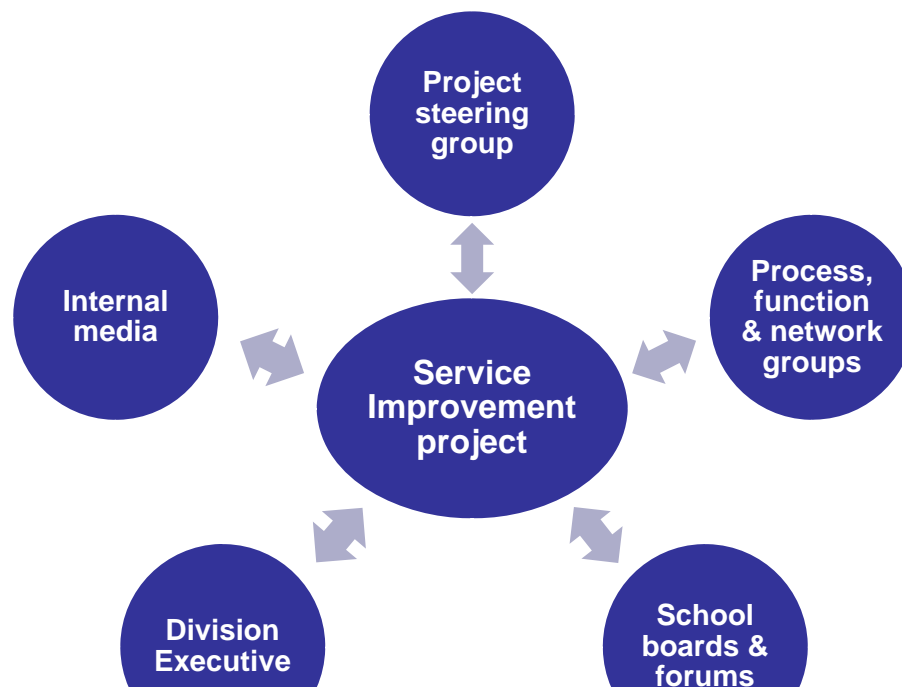
## Kotter's 8 steps

*Every day for a week, 20 penguins came up with new slogans and put them on iceposters scattered around the iceberg. When the birds could find no more places for the posters, Alice suggested they put them underwater next to the most popular and productive fishing grounds. Sounds a little odd, but (1) penguins can see very clearly underwater, (2) there were no posters there yet, (3) when penguins look for fish, they cannot close their eyes, even if they are annoyed. (Kotter)*



# Service Improvement project, processes and outcomes

## Governance, consultation and engagement



## Service Improvement project, processes and outcomes

### **Change readiness**

Purposeful Action Cycle workshops

### **Formal change process (2 week consultation)**

- Forums hosted by the PVC for professional and academic staff with the release of the managing change discussion paper (part of Enterprise Agreement)

### **Support**

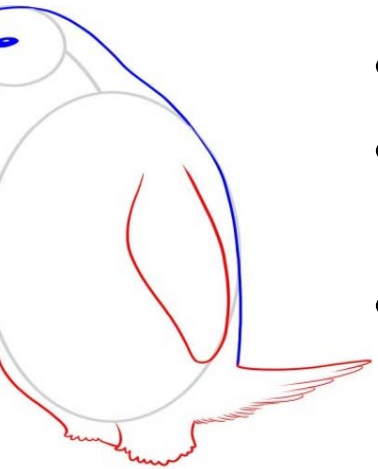
- Workshops for Division Executive and Managers
- Employee Assistance Program
- CV writing and interview skills workshops
- Financial advice and superannuation forums
- Met with all professional staff workplaces in the Division



## Kotter's 8 steps

### Step 5: Empower others to act

- Remove obstacles to change
- Change systems or structures that undermine the vision
- Consult and encourage feedback



## Kotter's 8 steps

### **Step 6: Produce short-term wins**

- Plan for visible improvements and create visible successes

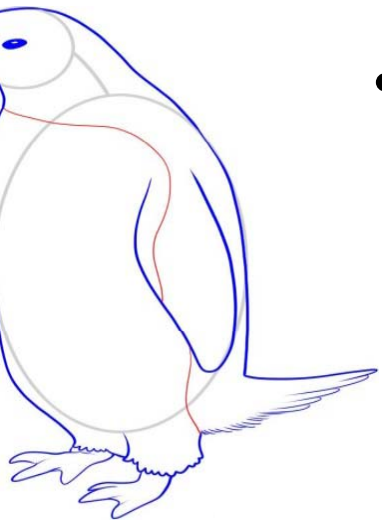




## Kotter's 8 steps

### Step 7: Don't Let Up

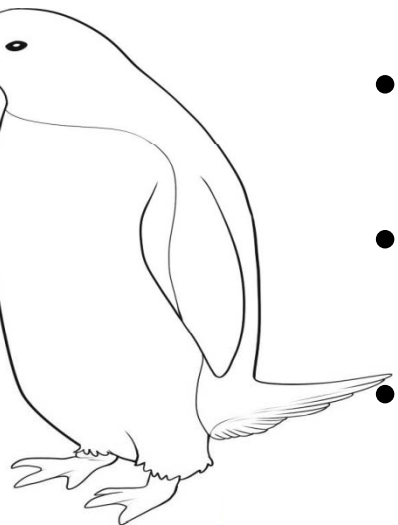
- Initiate changes until the vision is a reality



## Kotter's 8 steps

### Step 8: Make Change Stick

- Articulate the connections between the new behaviours and organisational success
- Develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession
- Hold on to the new ways of behaving and make sure they succeed, until they become strong enough to replace old traditions.





Tangible improvements

## Tangible improvements

### **The proposed new structure involves...**

- Common leadership structure
- Focusing service arrangements on the core business of teaching, learning and research
- Consolidating services and function specialists
- Consistency across the structure with a standard suite of position descriptions; clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Staffing levels informed by metrics that include student load, research activity, program and course



## Tangible improvements

Consistent practice and monitoring performance:

- Development of an online Service Guide which details how administrative activities are performed and by whom
- A “Service reporting tool” tracks service performance against agreed service standards, reviewed monthly

A centralised “travel team” - a dedicated contact point for all travel requirements; 83% reduction in slippage of purchases not done via preferred suppliers; a great success despite initial concerns about the loss of local people doing this

Reduction in the number of credit/ RPL applications requiring academic approval because precedent decisions are now applied

## Tangible improvements

The provision of monthly reports to researchers detailing all upcoming research and consultancy milestones which can be used to inform resource allocation

University-wide process for managing visitors

Online referral tool tracks student enquiries

Tracking of marketing events and the value of these

Casual contract request process provides calculations on cost based on specific components of the contract

Improved financial management support to assist HOS/ research leaders in financial decision making

Closed ~100 cost centres: generally tidying up and reducing



The happy ending?

## The happy ending?

### The human element

*“Make no mistake, I had to make a HUGE jump out of my comfort zone.”*

*“The one thing that came out of Service Improvement that I didn’t like personally was the stigma of being redeployed when I knew that I had a good work ethic, I was damn good at my job, I was efficient, and the stigma of not making it ... that hurt.”*

*“It was a huge challenge, but I came out of it.”*

*“Finally I have been given the opportunity to do something that I can really*



## The happy ending?

### The human element

*“This won’t be the last managing change process here, so you might as well accept it as an opportunity... this is something that will become embedded in the organisation and will be continuous.”*

*“I now realise the amount of unnecessary stress I was placed under in my previous role simply because I wasn’t sure of the parameters of the work I was supposed to be doing, so the change in job ended up taking a real weight off my shoulders.”*

*“I don’t view workplace changes as a threat – I see them as an opportunity.”*

*“I think this will make us feel more like one university rather than all these*

## The happy ending?



*“We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”*

Albert Einstein

**AND**

## The happy ending?



*“For someone who has overseen several deliberate change initiatives... it forces you to remember how much common sense is involved and how predictable some of the process steps are – but that relationships, patience, and **COMMUNICATION** should never be underestimated, and that change is emotional.”*  
(John Kotter)

And over to you ...

Questions and comments are welcome