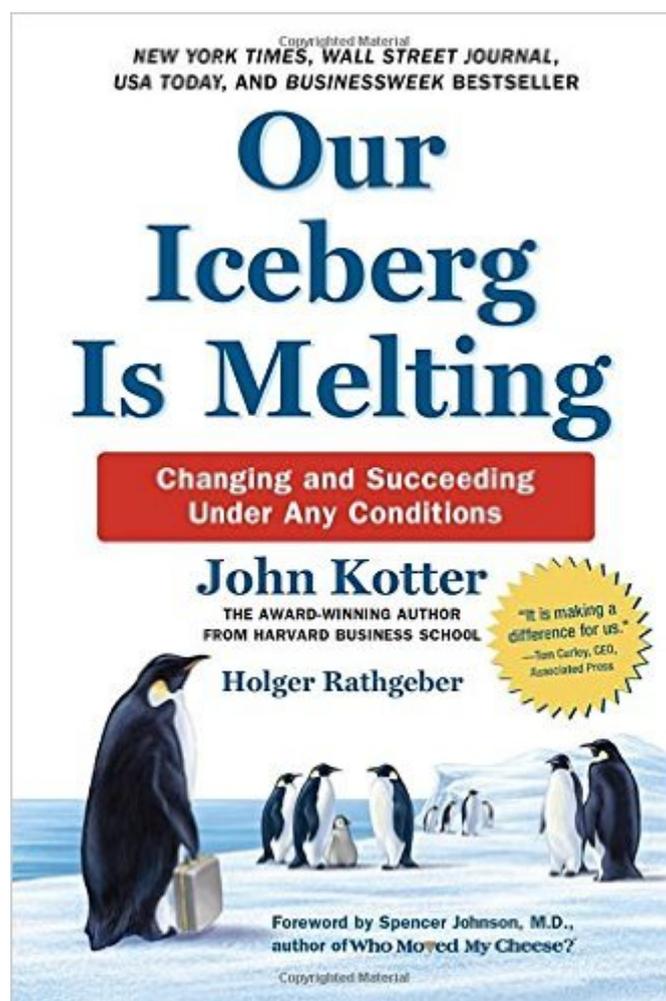


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# Our Iceberg Is Melting: Changing And Succeeding Under Any Conditions (Kotter, Our Iceberg Is Melting)



## Synopsis

A new edition of the classic business parable that has sold more than a million copies since 2006. *Our Iceberg Is Melting* is a simple fable about doing well in an ever-changing world. Based on the award-winning work of Harvard's John Kotter, it is a story that has been used to help thousands of people and organizations. The fable is about a penguin colony in Antarctica. A group of beautiful emperor penguins live as they have for many years. Then one curious bird discovers a potentially devastating problem threatening their home—and pretty much no one listens to him. The characters in the story, Fred, Alice, Louis, Buddy, the Professor, and NoNo, are like people we recognize—even ourselves. Their tale is one of resistance to change and heroic action, seemingly intractable obstacles and the most clever tactics for dealing with those obstacles. It's a story that is occurring in different forms all around us today—but the penguins handle the very real challenges a great deal better than most of us. *Our Iceberg Is Melting* is based on pioneering work that shows how Eight Steps produce needed change in any sort of group. It's a story that can be enjoyed by anyone while at the same time providing invaluable guidance for a world that just keeps moving faster and faster.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *Our Iceberg Is Melting*, Harvard professor John Kotter and co-author Holger Rathgeber tell the story of a colony of penguins who are facing change. The story is written in fable format similar to

Who Moved My Cheese by Spencer Johnson. An astute penguin named Fred observes that the iceberg the colony lives on is melting and that they will face potential disaster if it breaks apart in the middle of winter. He proceeds to present his findings to Alice, a member of the leadership council. Once the need for action is realized, there is no small amount of squabbling amongst the council as to next steps. They eventually determine to let the rest of the colony know of the great risks and solicit ideas for solutions. After arriving at a creative solution through interactions with a seagull, they implement a migratory initiative to seek out new icebergs. The change is not without detractors who question the findings and argue for maintaining the status quo without addressing the risks of the melting iceberg. However, through strong leadership of the head penguin and a small action team, the penguins drove efforts to eventually relocate to a safer home. The story has multiple examples of personalities seen commonly in organizations. There are those who are interested in arguing for the sake of arguing, the cautious, the hard driving but consensus building leaders, the creative but sometimes ignored penguins, the naysayers, those being academic in mindset but who ask tough questions, and those who just want everyone to be happy, among others. Kotter and Rathgeber use the story to demonstrate an eight step process of successful change which includes: 1. Create a Sense of Urgency 2. Pull Together a Guiding Team 3.

Although fables have been written and shared for many centuries dating back at least to Aesop (said to have lived as a slave in Samos around 550 B.C.), it has been only in recent years that the business narrative in the form of a fable has become popular, notably with the publication of *Who Moved My Cheese?* By Spencer Johnson who wrote the Foreword to this volume, co-authored by John Kotter and Holger Rathgeber. I was amused when noting its subtitle, "Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions," having seen the Luc Jacquet's documentary film *March of the Penguins*, co-produced by Bonne Pioche and the National Geographic Society, in which the Emperor Penguins and those who filmed them endured (and most of the penguins survived) temperatures around the French scientific base of Dumont d'Urville in Antarctica that fell to -80° Fahrenheit. How many human enterprises could function under such conditions? Kotter and Rathgeber offer a fable in which the central character, an Emperor Penguin named Fred, struggles without much success to convince his colony's Leadership Council that his research statistics indicate "the shrinking of the size of their home, the canals, the caves filled with water, the number of fissures, causing by [their iceberg's] melting." If they do not relocate to another iceberg soon.... What happens next is best revealed by Kotter and Rathgeber within their narrative. They are brilliant storytellers who first introduce their lead characters, and create a situation, then identify

conflicts that build tension as the plot develops, until its conclusion (sort of). As with George Orwell in *Animal Farm*, their primary purpose, however, is not to entertain but to instruct.

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