

DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

The “Crossing Boundaries” Program

Adrian Wolfberg, Ph.D.

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Introduction to Crossing Boundaries

Why was it created in 2006?

- Director read results of and comments in DIA's 2005 Human Capital Survey
 - Employees said they had no ability to push ideas for improvement up the chain
 - Director saw this as evidence of poor morale; wanted to make improvements
- In addition, the DIA Knowledge Lab wanted a forum to instill cross-boundary problem-solving, a lessons learned from internal 2004 study of analytic performance

What was the value to DIA leadership by 2009?

- Encouraged and empowered employees to take the initiative
- Helped employees live the experience and value of collaboration
- Created valuable changes at DIA that might not otherwise be implemented
- Established a venue for DIA leaders to directly hear from and interact with the DIA workforce
- Director set the example for other senior leaders to follow



Introduction to Crossing Boundaries

How was Crossing Boundaries presented?

- Started as a monthly session in an auditorium and later expanded to include VTC with ~20 sites
- Idea submitters in audience used microphones to speak to Director who sits in front of the auditorium; and reported back their success in same venue
- As success in the program grew, confidence in the program grew and online submission also grew in popularity
- Various means of communication were used to announce sessions and keep employees informed

Why did Crossing Boundaries work?

- Director made commitment to attend every session and kept ideas alive
- Dedicated, funded program office coached idea submitters and tracked progress
- Idea submitters empowered; owned their solutions; actively participation on their part; made it happen with help of Crossing Boundaries staff
- Results were made visible but more important, results actually happened



Introduction to Crossing Boundaries

What were the goals, assumptions and strategies?

- To improve employee engagement and collaboration were the #1 goal. The #2 goal was the establishment of a culture of improvement.
- The program was not a “complaint session.”
- Cognitive diversity was valued and required.
- Employees did not have to ask permission to propose a solution or devote reasonable time to managing their solution.
- Solutions were prioritized in a “knowledge marketplace” – if no one cared or got involved with a solution, it withered away. This strategy was adopted to create inclusivity.



Examples: “The Deployment Process”

“Customizing Deployment Processing by Country” –

- Single process did not address needs that vary by country. DIA now tailors processing to specific needs.

“Improving the Validation of Deployers and the Orders Process” –

- Processing delays were impacting DIA’s support to the warfighter. DIA has built new efficiencies into the process.

“Deployer Reintegration and Reassignment” –

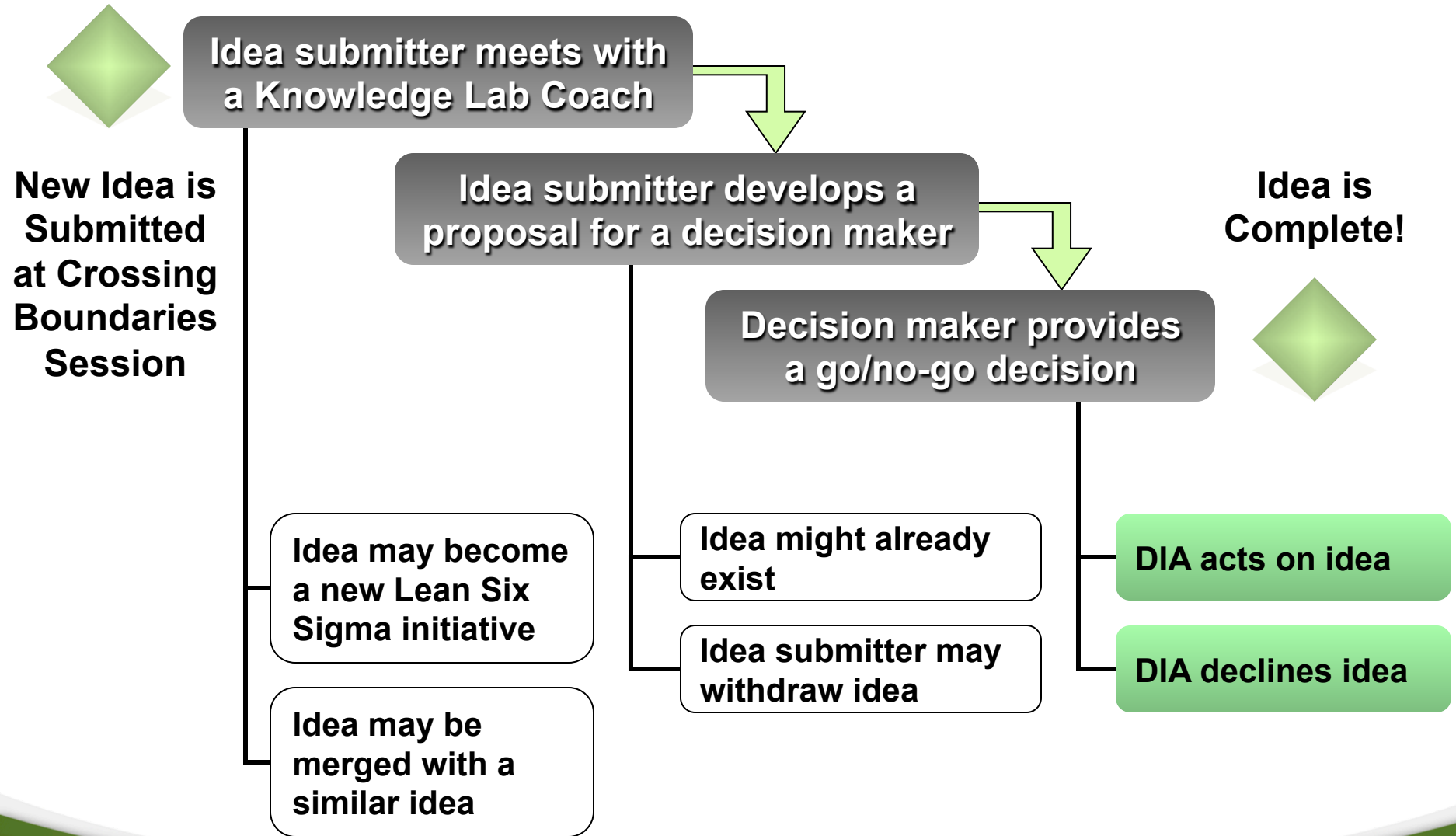
- Vacancies impact offices when employees deploy; and returning employees often want to use their skills in new positions. Lou Anne and Carolyn developed a process for reintegrating deployers.

“Create a Repatriation Center” –

- Strive to maintain medical and psychological wellness of deployers upon their return. DIA mission success is dependent on the human ability to overcome physical, emotional and psychological stressors. Done.



The Crossing Boundaries Process – in a nutshell

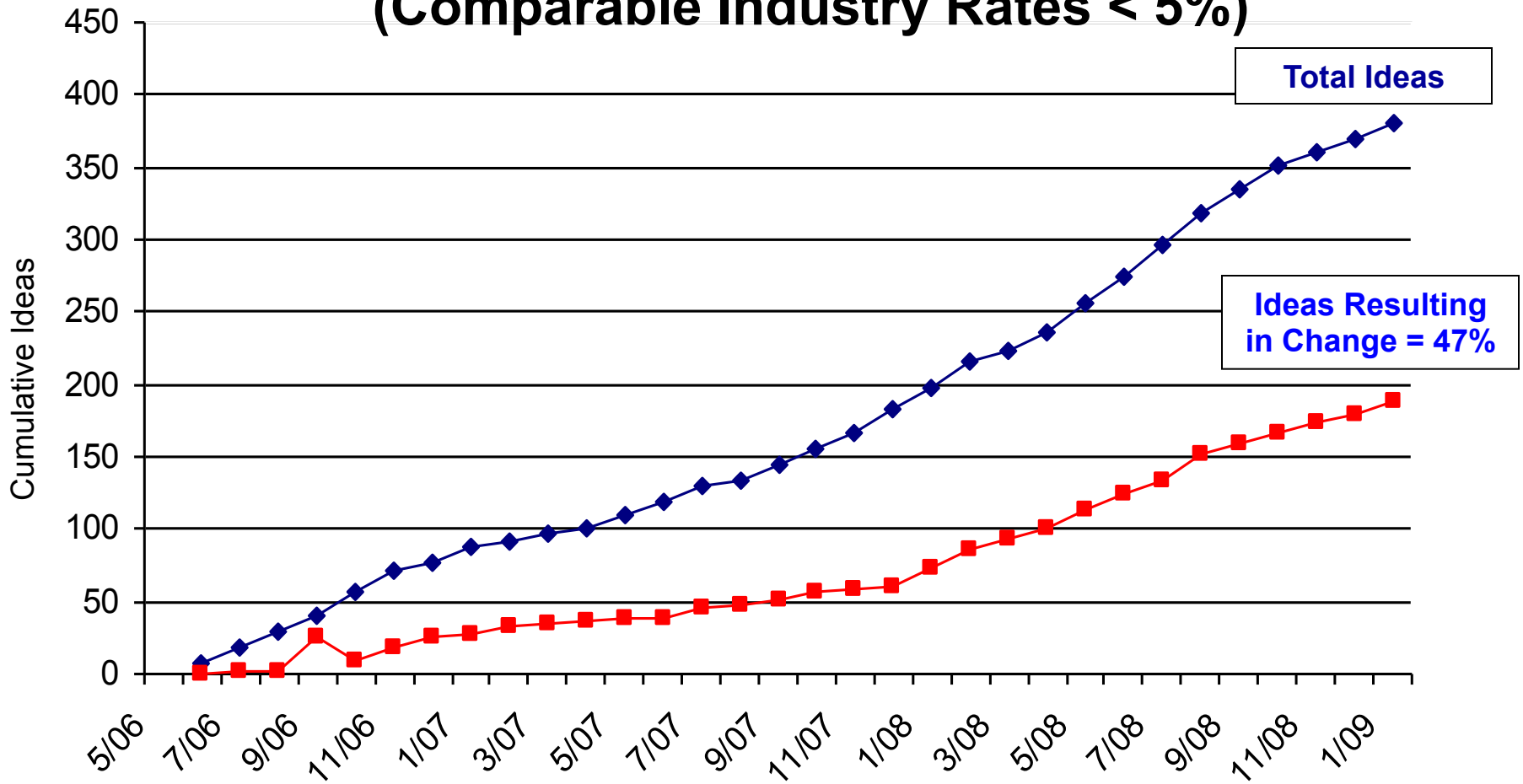




Success Rate: Implementation of Solutions

May 06 to Jan 09

Program Success Rate > 47% (> 52% by 2010)
(Comparable Industry Rates < 5%)

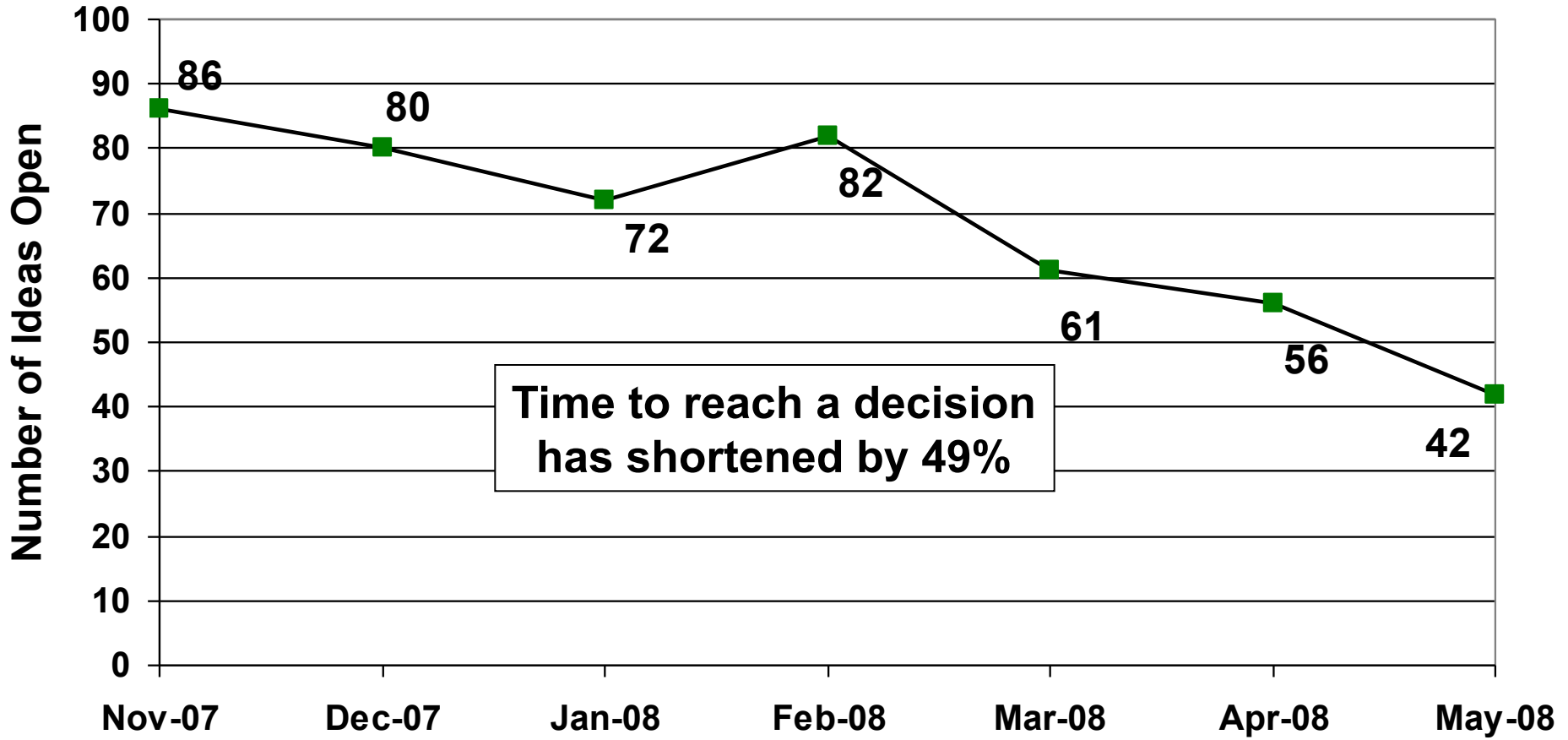


Other ideas in progress (15%), merged (15%) or withdrawn (16%)
Only 6.5% of ideas declined



Reducing the Time from Idea Submission to Implementation of Idea

Nov 07 to May 08





Evolution of Crossing Boundaries

Themes Introduced:
*Focused Attention on
Your Concerns*

**February
2007**

**May
2006**

Everyone is Invited to Share Ideas:
All Ideas Welcome

**September
2007**

**September
2008**

Deputy Directors Present Mission Challenges:
Invite Your Solutions to Critical Issues



Lessons We Learned

Commitment of Senior Sponsor (i.e., the Director) was essential

- Sets and maintains tone
- Set expectations that other senior leaders participate/facilitate

Dedicated, full-time Staff to Implement

- Be the face of the program; work the logistics pre-, during- and post-sessions
- Coach, network, and mentor idea owners
- Actively reach out to organization

Execution by the full-time Staff Must be Flawless

- Thoughtful pre-work on themes
- Preparation of senior sponsor
- Strategic communications plan
- Continuously do self-assessment on program

Flexibility was the Key

- Crossing Boundaries was modified throughout its 3-year existence to be more responsive and successful
- Director gave Knowledge Lab broad leverage to sense and adapt as necessary