

TES

TEAM Engagement Strategy

Unleashing the Power of Adaptive Teams

A brief excerpt

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INTRODUCTION

You get called into a meeting. The senior executives have decided to make a course correction in their strategy. You are asked to bring down cost, increase efficiency, and improve quality. You will not have increased financial resources, a data analyst, or new hires. You have heard of multiple change management methodologies such as Six Sigma, Lean, Emergent and Agile but they seem a bit too complicated and perhaps more than you really need for the task at hand.

What do you do?

You read this book. We think we can help! More specifically, we think TES can help. TES takes elements from the most effective change management and organizational design theories of the modern era and simplifies them while adding a few new ideas. The result is a streamlined, efficient tool that teams can use without any prior training, additional resources or for that matter, C-suite involvement. Over and over again we saw our teams rise to the occasion and deliver results that had escaped them in the past, sometimes for years. And then *continue to improve!* We describe one such success story in excruciating detail in this book with the idea that it will answer any question that might arise when you implement TES with your team.

So, what's in the recipe? Here are some of the key ingredients, with a more detailed discussion for interested readers in chapter 1.

From several theories we borrow the idea of sourcing the solutions from the front line staff. We add the concept, however, that the leader of the process does not challenge the team's collective wisdom with data. That is, we make no effort to test the team's assumptions. From Agile we borrow the idea of empowering the team to prioritize which solutions to implement, as well as the idea of placing the leader in a support role rather than a directive one. From the constant quality process improvement models, we adapt the idea of the team iterating their solutions until they achieve their goal, although we tweak that idea quite a bit because we feel the original model can lead to "change fatigue". To these elements we add several new ideas of which two are key concepts. The first is that rather than being reactive to failure, the team must be proactive. We ask the team to ensure that members are reminded of the protocol changes they

have chosen to implement before they happen. The idea is that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The second is that we do not gather any process data. None. Ever. No weekly reports. No punitive charts. No collection of fundamentally inaccurate and statistically irrelevant data. That's about it.

So far so good. But if that's all there was, we might not have bothered with writing a book about TES. What is really interesting is what happens as a result of using TES in the workplace. Over time, the methodology itself fosters a mindset that enables a team to learn how to optimize sub-optimal processes on their own with little direction. The teams literally learn to adapt to their changing environment, a concept previously applied to organizations that can respond nimbly and effectively to changing markets. We term this ability of a team to self-improve "adaptive capacity". The outcome of using TES is a workforce that is engaged and sees itself as a team that acts to constantly optimize how it does what it does.

That's worth writing about. We hope you agree.

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"In the struggle for survival, the fittest win out at the expense of their rivals because they succeed in adapting themselves best to the environment."

-- attributed to Charles Darwin

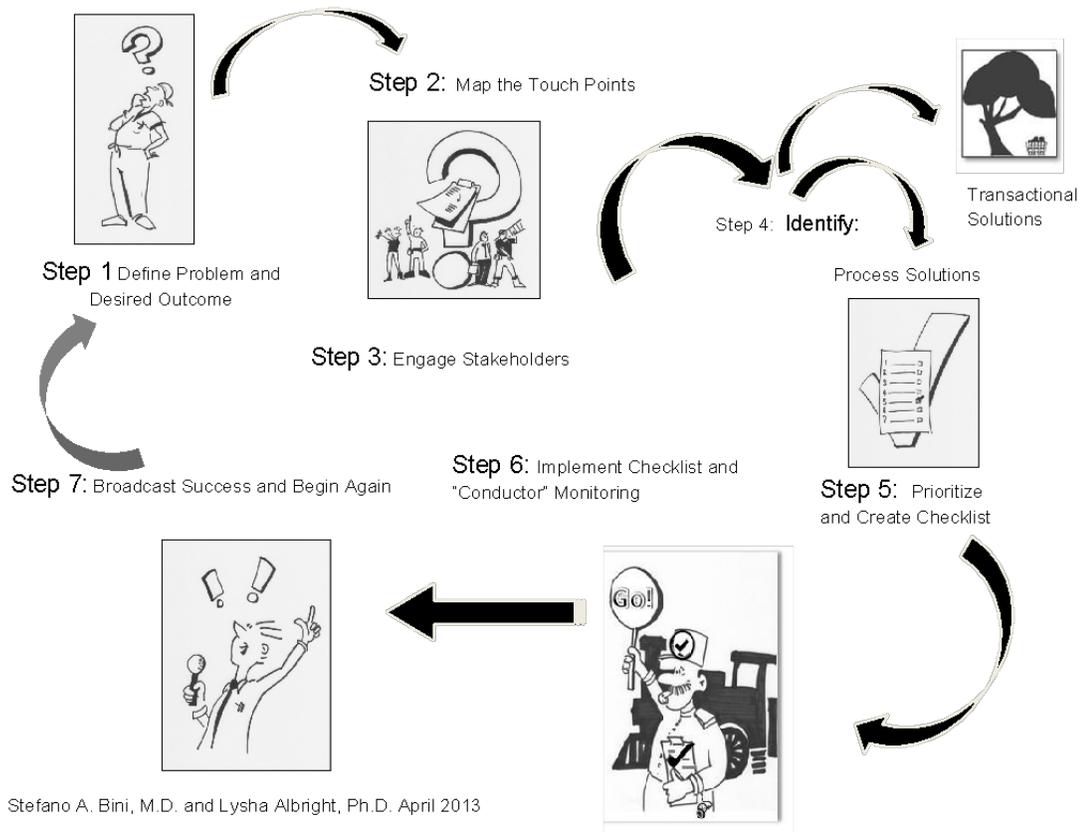


Figure 1. The Seven Steps of TES