

## Best Practice Benchmarking

Making improvements within your organisation involves adopting different processes and practices. It is often quite difficult to be sufficiently innovative to identify different ways of doing things – we are often very ‘caught up’ in the way we currently do things! One of the techniques available to improvement teams (and to individuals seeking continuous personal development) is simply to ask other people ‘how do you do this?’ In its formal sense this is known as ‘best practice or process benchmarking’ and is one of the most popular organisational tools throughout the world.

Best practice benchmarking can be defined as:

**“A continuous, systematic process for evaluating the work practices of organisations, which are recognised as representing best practices, for the purposes of organisational improvement”<sup>1</sup>.**

We need to carry out benchmarking, because:

- We all have too much to do and not enough time in which to do it
- We need to focus on the outside world
- None of us can keep up with everything.

The tool of or best practice *benchmarking* - an improvement planning tool - should be separated from the important measurement tool of *performance benchmarking*.

Best practice benchmarking should involve the following steps:

- a. Identify the subject of benchmarking (e.g. one of the improvement projects)**
- b. Establish a project team**
- c. Clarify the subject to be benchmarked**
- d. Find suitable benchmarking partners, through industry media, professional bodies, regional groups, industry networks, personal contact or consultants**
- e. Make contact and establish the partnership**
- f. Agree protocol, including confidentiality**
- g. Meet, discuss, listen carefully, observe ‘their ways’ and collect the information**
- h. Plan and carry out improvements**
- i. Review progress.**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: M. Spendolini