



Benchmarking Booster

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Learning Outcomes

*After completing this training,
participants will be able to:*

- ❑ Identify critical elements of effective benchmarking
- ❑ Apply principles of benchmarking
- ❑ Create a customized benchmarking grid

A Booster?

boost·er *n.*

1. One that boosts, as:

a. A device for increasing power or effectiveness.

b. An enthusiastic promoter, as of a sports team or school.

c. Electronics. A radio-frequency amplifier.

d. The primary stage of a multistage rocket that provides the main thrust for launch, liftoff, and initial flight.

2. A booster shot.

3. Slang. One who steals goods on display in a store.

Definition

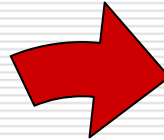
- Benchmarking is a “continuous, systematic process for evaluating the products, services, and work processes of organizations that are recognized as representing *best practices* for the purposes of organizational improvement.”

Benefits of Good Benchmarking

- Improve quality
- Develop strategic plans
- Formulate policy
- Aid in making decisions

5 Step Benchmarking Process

1. Determine what to benchmark



2. Decide on individual or team effort



3. Identify benchmark partners



4. Collect and analyze benchmarking information



5. Take action



Step



Determine What to Benchmark

What does your department need to learn more about? What is critical to your ability to serve students?

- A new program
- A different way of implementing an existing program or process
- Assessment criteria and/or outcomes achieved by others

Step

2

Decide on Individual or Team Effort

□ Benefits of *Individual* Efforts:

- Know what you want, move quickly, able to ask very specific follow-up questions

□ Benefits of *Team* Efforts:

- Gain diverse perspectives, share the work, enhances collaboration

Essential Team Credentials

□ Ability

- Functional expertise
- Communications skills
- Team spirit (listening, consensus-building ability, respect for differing opinions)

□ Motivation

- Find people interested and willing to participate

Step



Identify Benchmark Partners

“. . . a benchmark partner is any person or organization that supplies you with information related to your benchmarking investigation.”

- Create your network:
 - Find reliable, valid and accessible information,
 - Recognize it takes time to establish and will be dynamic,
 - Define a network that is helpful in the present & in the future,
 - Partners must represent what you hope to achieve (best practices vs. just something different)

Benchmark Partners -- WHO

Identify area to be benchmarked



Identify potential sources for locating benchmark partners



Conduct search to identify potential partners



Share findings & discuss potential partners (any in common?)

Benchmark Partners - HOW

- Locate Benchmark Partners/Best Practices through:
 - Special awards/citations
 - Media attention
 - Professional associations
 - Independent reports
 - Word of mouth
 - Consultants
 - Others?

Other Sources of Information

- Government sources
- Subject matter experts
- Special interest groups
- Media
- Employees, customers
- Recommendations from industry leaders

Step

4

Collect and Analyze Information

*Prepare a grid with these
ESSENTIAL elements:*

- Institution
- Contact information
- Website
- Elements to be benchmarked
 - Program components
 - Budget
 - Staff
 - Outcomes
 - Etc.

Data Collection Protocol

- Plan ahead; schedule realistically
- Prepare a briefing package
- Ease your way in
- Use a top-down contact strategy
- Stick to your outline
- Limit size of the site visit team

Collect Information

- Sources of data may include:
 - Telephone interviews
 - Personal meetings/site visits
 - Surveys
 - Publications/media
 - Archival research
 - Web search
- Selected data sources are influenced by level of detail, quantity and quality of information desired

Collect Information, con't.

- Review data as it is collected so you can refine your questions as you proceed.

e.g. If you discover that 3 institutions have exceptional outcomes in a particular area, you may wish to probe further to identify how they achieve those results.

Collect, Summarize & Analyze

- ❑ Double check your data for anything that doesn't make sense
- ❑ Look for patterns and data that may be missing or out-of-place
- ❑ Make conclusions
- ❑ Work in stages, going back for further information when needed

Step

5

Take Action

- Prepare comprehensive summary including:
 - elements involved
 - analysis of the process
 - recommended improvements for further benchmarking
- Determine which findings are applicable
- Establish a timeline for implementation

Recommendations from Benchmarking Experts

- ❑ Seek change and be action oriented
- ❑ Be open to new ideas
- ❑ Know yourself before you attempt to know others
- ❑ Plan project carefully
- ❑ Focus on the improvement of practices

Now what? Practice!

- In your groups, review the sample project and determine the following:
 - What elements would you benchmark and why?
 - Who's on your benchmarking team?
 - Who are your potential benchmarking partners?
 - How would you collect & analyze the information?
 - What more will you need to know before you take action?

2 Minute Evaluation

- What is the most valuable lesson that you learned so far today?
- What is one question that you still have?
- What is the next step that your department needs to take to fully integrate benchmarking into your routine?
- Is there anything that might assist you in learning more effectively next time? (e.g. training method, snacks, environment, personal preparation, etc.)



Thank you!

References

- Spendolini, M. (1992). *The Benchmarking Book*. New York: AMACOM Books. Retrieved July 17, 2006 from <http://www.netlibrary.com/Reader/>
- Upcraft, M.L., & Schuh, J.H. (1996). *Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.