Best Practices in Community Development & Recreation

RTM 300

Key Questions

• What are best practices?
• How are they determined?
• What are the implications for recreation organizations?
• What are the implications for community development and recreation?
Best Practices


- Benchmarking is a management tool that involves the pursuit of best practice examples

Benchmarking

- Historic practice
- Business practice
  - Xerox Story
  - 1979
  - Competition’s machines
Benchmarking Definition


Benchmarking

- "Benchmarking is the process of identifying, understanding, and adapting outstanding practices from organizations anywhere in the world to help your organization improve its performance."
- Benchmarking is a process of thinking, evaluation, and planning.
### Benchmarking Survey

Jarrar & Zairi (2001) - global survey of 227 organizations in 32 countries

- **worldwide use:**
  - across various community sectors/ gov/ ed/ industry

- **significant benefits:**
  - improving quality
  - increasing speed of service
  - improving processes
  - understanding customer requirements
  - setting internal standards
  - influencing strategic decision-making process
  - managing & deploying resources more effectively
  - improving personnel management
  - changing leadership style within the organization.

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### Benchmarking involves Others

- **Internal versus competitive benchmarking**
- Who performs the program service very well and has process practices that are adaptable to your own organization?
- Who is the most compatible for you to benchmark with?
- Will they be inside or outside your field?
A Challenge of Benchmarking
Community orientation versus Competition

• Sharing of information because of the sensitivity of proprietary information (Camp, 1989; Spendolini, 1992).

• Non-controversial issues such as facility management, human resource practices, and industrial policy issues are often benchmarked.

• Common goals and professional support

Information Gathering

• A comprehensive benchmark study or an informal information gathering expedition?
Informal Systems
What do you think?

- Professional conferences?
- Professional networks?
- Email List Serve?
- Web site postings?
- Phone call?
- Site tours?
- Books and articles?

Formal Information Gathering Steps
Deming Cycle / Edward Deming

- Four steps
  - Plan
  - Do
  - Check
  - Act
  - The model is presented in a circle, which means that benchmarking is a continuous process.
- Rigor of evaluation instruments and tools
Recreation Agencies
A few examples

- Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department conducted a comprehensive evaluation study of the Oklahoma state parks system from 2003 to 2004
- Washington D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation: a benchmarking analysis of urban park districts is one of the major components of its 2005 Master Plan

Benchmark Report

- California Recreation and Parks Society
Discussion Topic

• What system would you put into your professional development plan?
• What are the benefits of the more formal benchmarking or best practices study?

Other references

• Reference:
  ♦ Yating Liang Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at Missouri State University - article CPRS.