



COER NEWS

A newsletter to inform you of COER's research findings and initiatives in organisational excellence, benchmarking and performance improvement

Issue No. 4

November 2003

Welcome to the 4th Issue of COER NEWS – the free Newsletter produced by the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research, Massey University, New Zealand.

Table with 2 columns: Item number and Description. Includes items like 'Editorial', 'Best practices in strategy deployment', 'Starting the business excellence (BE) journey', etc.

Editorial

By Nigel Grigg

The last few months have been a busy time for the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER), as doubtless it has been for everyone reading this. Besides our normal processes of running the New Zealand Benchmarking Club, updating, maintaining and promoting the www.BPIR.com, and undertaking / disseminating best practice research nationally and internationally, COER staff have been involved in a number of additional activities.

In March, COER's team held a number of benchmarking events throughout New Zealand. These events, supported by the Ministry of Economic Development, were held in Christchurch, Nelson, Dunedin, Wellington, Palmerston North, Napier, Tauranga, Hamilton and Auckland. They provided a great opportunity for organisations to learn more about

- benchmarking
best practices in areas such as Leadership and Customer and Market Focus
the New Zealand Benchmarking Club
the BPIR.com
COER's research findings on how key business drivers interact and impact on the bottom-line.

In April, COER presented at the NZBEF Knowledge Hours in Wellington (15th), Christchurch (15th), and Auckland (16th).

In May, Centre staff and research students led a number of sessions at the New Zealand Organisation for Quality's (NZOQ) annual conference, which this year focused on Values Driven Organisations. These sessions included presentations by research students Jo Innes, Erica Holtsbaum, Max Saunders and

Bronwen Bartley; and a workshop led by COER research facilitator (and recent recruit to COER and NZ) Nigel Grigg, and Centre Director Dr Robin Mann.

In June we turned our in-house developed self-assessment tool the Benchmarking and Performance Excellence Self-Assessment (BPES) on ourselves and undertook our own self-assessment. This process was led by COER benchmarking consultant Neil Bleasdale. As with all organisations, we discovered that there is room for improvement, and identified the priority areas on which to focus. The exercise has given us an objective and informed baseline against which to improve our own operations and practices.

During August and September we developed a substantial funding proposal for the NZ Tertiary Education Commission for over \$3m worth of funding, phased over four years, to support and develop our various activities and our core and support processes. With this funding we would seek to extensively promote a culture of benchmarking within New Zealand, and continue to engage in world-class research into best practices. The decision will be announced by TEC in December.

Currently, we are putting the finishing touches on the proposed programme for **Australasia's Inaugural Benchmarking for Best Practices Conference**, which is being organised by the Centre, and will take place at the **Waipuna Hotel in Auckland on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March 2004**.

The Conference will focus on how to apply benchmarking, and provide examples of practical tools that can be used to fast-track the benchmarking process. Many examples of best practices, identified from benchmarking studies will be given, including best practices in leadership, human resources, strategic planning and customer focus.

One of the highlights of the conference will be the address given by Dr Robert Camp from the United States. Dr Camp is largely responsible for putting benchmarking at the forefront of management techniques through his work with Rank Xerox in the 1970's/80's and the publication of his best selling business books on benchmarking (including the first-ever book on benchmarking). Dr Camp will be staying on after the conference to deliver a two-day benchmarking workshop (18 and 19 March 2004) that all delegates are welcome to attend.

Further details of many of the above items can be found in this edition of COER news. We hope you find it of interest and value.

## **1. BEST PRACTICES IN STRATEGY DEPLOYMENT**

**By Max Saunders, COER PhD Researcher**

Does your organisation effectively deploy its strategic initiatives? The New Zealand Benchmarking Club's *Strategy Deployment Best Practice Report* provides a unique and valuable insight into how a number of organisations are successfully doing this. It identifies the key features of strategy deployment, and offers a practical guide to effectively deploying strategic initiatives.

The Report marks the second release of a *Best Practice Report* by COER. This on-going series examines business practices that are of critical importance to many organisations. Authored by New Zealand Benchmarking Club (NZBC) Workgroups, consisting of real business people and academic researchers, these reports aim to be a leading source of informative and practical knowledge of best practices available in New Zealand and the world.

The following is an abridged version of the executive summary for this report:

### **Background**

The study reported here had the aim of determining best practices for implementing strategic initiatives.

### **Methodology**

An initial literature review was used to identify theories, concepts, and best practices in strategy deployment. The key features of deployment were determined from an analysis and discussion of the literature findings and elements of the Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE) framework (otherwise known as the Malcolm Baldrige Model).

The Workgroup distinguished between *strategic initiatives* and *projects*. A strategic initiative is broad and may be long-term, and signals important changes in the organisation. It may mean moving into a new area of activity, and will affect operational activities as the initiative is deployed (a change to day-to-day routines). In contrast a project is a unique one-off activity with a specific, clearly stated outcome, and has well defined boundaries including a specific start and finish date.

Seven case studies were conducted on NZBC organisations. The unit of analysis for the case studies was a strategic initiative that the organisation had recently deployed, or was in the process of deploying. Three of the case studies concerned the formation of strategic alliances, three were concerned with aspects of deploying a strategic framework, and one concerned an initiative to enter new markets off-shore. Site visits and interviews were used to collect the data.

The applications of eight Australian CPE award-winning organisations were also evaluated to identify good/best practices in strategy deployment.

### Findings: A Framework for Implementing Strategic Initiatives

The Workgroup identified seven key features for the deployment of strategic initiatives. In total fifty-five good-to-best practices were identified across the seven features. The resultant framework is shown on the following pages.

**Table 1. Best Practice Framework for Deploying Strategic Initiatives**

Feature	Purpose	Practices
Make communication a priority	To sell the challenge and fizz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document and communicate expectations</li> <li>▪ Clearly identify the roles of those involved</li> <li>▪ Devise tailored communication strategies for all stakeholders (internal and external)</li> <li>▪ Encourage two way communication with all employees</li> <li>▪ Have small group briefings wherever possible</li> <li>▪ Use mixed communication forms (formal and informal)</li> <li>▪ Ensure good communication of the business drivers</li> </ul>
Aim to achieve buy-in	To obtain acceptance and adoption of the initiative by stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a consultative environment that encourages participation and increases ownership</li> <li>▪ Consult with key stakeholders at the planning and implementation phases to increase buy-in.</li> <li>▪ Identify and address cultural and organisational elements that may affect deployment</li> <li>▪ Explain how individuals may be affected</li> <li>▪ Obtain the commitment of senior management</li> <li>▪ Ensure senior management visibly demonstrate their commitment</li> <li>▪ Use a formal process to convert strategic objectives into action plans. Action plans help staff to apply the strategy.</li> <li>▪ Link strategy to departmental and operational goals.</li> <li>▪ Consider how HR policies including compensation packages, incentives, employee relation processes, and training can support the implementation of strategy.</li> <li>▪ Communicate effectively</li> </ul>

Create the deployment infrastructure	Organising the people to deploy the strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clearly identify the roles of those involved e.g. the champion; mentor/sponsor; one of a team</li> <li>▪ Aim for champions at several levels</li> <li>▪ Tailor the deployment approach. A single change agent or 'champion' may be appropriate in some circumstances, and a team approach in others.</li> <li>▪ Use a consultative approach to deployment through setting up project teams or task forces. Teams may be cross-functional or within business units.</li> <li>▪ Use teams to identify drivers for objectives and develop action plans.</li> <li>▪ Consider an intervention approach. This is where co-ordination and authority remain with the change agent, but aspects of deployment are delegated.</li> <li>▪ Consider a participative approach to deployment (such as project teams) for incremental change and a more directive approach for transformational change.</li> <li>▪ Communicate effectively</li> </ul>
Align implementation throughout the organization	To ensure that actions are aligned to the strategic direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refer to the organisation's values when deploying strategy to ensure alignment.</li> <li>▪ Use action-planning workshops across all levels of management to promote alignment.</li> <li>▪ Link project plans to formally documented aims (in other words: identify how individual initiatives/projects align with the strategy)</li> <li>▪ Link strategic changes to operational changes through developing detailed action plans and key tasks and control processes.</li> <li>▪ Use joint/shared action plans</li> <li>▪ Align compensation and recognition systems with the strategy</li> <li>▪ Consider changing behaviour and routines through task alignment rather than through solely trying to convince people by logic and persuasion.</li> <li>▪ Bring champions/key players together for any major mid-flight changes</li> <li>▪ Develop a suggestion process (especially for those not in the leading group)</li> </ul>
Understand the drivers behind the initiative	To appreciate the relevance/importance of the initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Check that the business drivers are the main business reasons for undertaking a strategic initiative</li> <li>▪ Identify the drivers for each objective.</li> <li>▪ Ensure action plans relate back to the business drivers</li> <li>▪ Build in a research phase to understand the drivers behind the initiative. For example, spend time on background research and talk to the task setters.</li> <li>▪ Ensure good communication of the drivers. For example, have an expert on the team; use workshops and share discoveries</li> <li>▪ Involve wider teams in an ongoing assessment of achievement against drivers, For example, through KPI monitoring; midway reviews against objectives</li> </ul>
Identify implementation options	To make the best decision at each stage of deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify different deployment options</li> <li>▪ Formally consider each alternative</li> <li>▪ Assess the risks associated with each alternative using proven decision tools</li> <li>▪ Refer to the organisation's values when considering each option.</li> <li>▪ Use an options analysis process. For example for project selection and scheduling</li> <li>▪ Identify potential complications and resolutions. For example, if the strategic initiative is to be deployed through a series of projects then ensure that the scheduled flow of projects is achievable within the time frame.</li> <li>▪ Use a decision framework for terminating unsuccessful projects. The role of the Board in these decisions needs to be clear.</li> </ul>
Learning through continuous evaluation and adaptation	For continuous improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regularly review progress towards objectives (selection of appropriate KPIs is important)</li> <li>▪ Have formal post project reviews and ongoing monitoring post implementation</li> <li>▪ Select the KPIs carefully as these determine the activities management will focus on during deployment, and therefore the learning that will take place.</li> <li>▪ Consider using the balanced scorecard (BSC) as a means of assisting strategy deployment. The 'Learning and Growth' perspective of the BSC promotes strategic learning.</li> <li>▪ Be sensitive to external environmental signals.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that strategic initiatives are continually evaluated and adapted as events unfold during the process of deployment.</li> <li>▪ Implement an evaluation and oversight role for the Board in strategy deployment.</li> <li>▪ Encourage the Board to check that there is a steady flow of on-line initiatives and projects to achieve the strategic objectives.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

The framework provides a guide to assist organisations in developing an effective strategy deployment process. The framework is expected to evolve with use, as further good-to-best practices are added from other NZBC benchmarking projects. The Workgroup concluded that for an organisation to successfully deploy a strategic initiative, good-to-best practices from all seven features of the framework should be in place.

*For more details and an order form for the full best practice report, please contact: Centre Director Dr Robin Mann.*

## 2. STARTING THE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE (BE) JOURNEY

**By Jo Innes, COER PhD Researcher**

International evidence indicates that when implemented effectively, Business Excellence (BE) can guide an organisation to achieve business improvement. BE organisations significantly outperform 'control' organisations. When discussing implementation with New Zealand organisations, executives identified the greatest challenge as "getting started". This led the researcher to focus on how organisations start their BE journey and how they influence their rate of improvement.

This article presents initial findings from research carried out with seven high performing New Zealand service organisations. All these organisations apply the Criteria for Performance Excellence (Baldrige) as the framework to guide improvement. A range of individuals and groups were interviewed to develop an understanding of how the organisations had started the BE journey. Particular attention was given to the drivers for business improvement, the events and strategies perceived as enabling or constraining rate of improvement and perceptions of what had changed.

### Summary of initial findings

The **decision to start** an improvement strategy was typically made in response to an external driver such as competition, stakeholder and customer demand. BE was selected for a range of reasons, for example:

- Desire to be world class,
- Internationally proven to work,
- External credibility, external measure,
- A guide for improvement and
- To assist or co-ordinate improvement initiatives.

**Events and strategies** perceived to have influenced the start of the BE journey can be grouped as: external focus, organisation wide focus, BE focus and people focus. The following lists some of the key events and strategies identified:

- External enablers: Governors increase expectations for accountability and results, governance and organisational priorities align, governance and executive roles are distinct
- External constraints: industry challenges, key stakeholders change
- Organisation wide enablers: A strategic plan is in place and has a customer and results focus, focus is on improvement not BE Awards, there is a 'one organisation' focus, support processes are strong (IT, HR, financial), there is capability in project work, staff see improvement initiatives actioned
- Organisation wide constraints: restructuring, conflict between urgent work and improvement work, managers do not address poor performance
- BE enablers: BE is adopted as a long term improvement strategy, BE is integrated with business planning, BE self-assessment identifies priorities for improvement, key people are Award evaluators, the organisation wins a BE Award
- BE constraints: BE expectations and consequences are not clear, improvement projects are not completed
- People enablers: CEO sponsors BE, CEO is supported by a BE implementer, executives are actively involved in BE initiatives, key people experience 'world class' eg study visit to Award winning organisations
- People constraints: Dysfunctional executive, poor recruitment of people to key roles

The people interviewed were asked to identify **significant changes** in the organisation since the start of the journey. These people perceived that BE had contributed to improvement in the following aspects of organisation life:

- Business results
- Clarity of direction
- Stakeholder and customer relationships
- Organisation wide capacity
- Expertise in business management
- Confidence and trust in the organisation
- Energy and interest in improvement
- Voluntary involvement in improvement initiatives

#### *Future research*

It is planned to build on these initial findings by surveying a larger group of BE organisations. The findings will be integrated with the initial work to develop a framework and associated guidelines to assist service organisations start their BE journey.

Jo Innes is a PhD researcher with COER, Massey University. For further information please email [jo@stratum.co.nz](mailto:jo@stratum.co.nz)

### **3. BEST PRACTICES IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**By Neil Bleasdale, COER Benchmarking Consultant**

In August, New Zealand Benchmarking Club (NZBC) members attended a meeting to hear the main findings from the project management workgroup, and to identify the next key workgroup project to be tackled in the area of process management.

The workgroup that researched “best practice in creating and sustaining a project management environment” presented their findings. After refreshing all on the projects aim, scope and objectives, the workgroup members outlined the project methodology, which included a reminder on the previously published survey results. Juan Pellegrino, The Workgroup Facilitator from COER, Massey University then went on to outline major findings from the site visits, while the Workgroup Leader, summarised the recommended practices, which are:

- Project governance does matter. Of particular note was the almost universal use of a phase-gate tool to assist in decision-making.
- Project governance is tailored depending upon, amongst others, structure, recent changes in senior personnel and organisational culture.
- Project success is, in some cases, now being defined by the value that the project brings to the organisation (rather than the traditional on time, under budget and in spec).
- Project review by senior management is becoming more frequent and is done against a previously decided framework of ‘benefits realisation’.
- The four practices that enable project delivery are:
  - The customisation of a project methodology
  - The selection of project managers more for cultural fit
  - Project managers are now given more administrative support to free them up to manage
  - Lessons from the project are being learnt en route.

#### **Guest presentation on project management**

A highlight of the day was a guest presentation by Enzo Frigenti from Programme Project Management NZ Ltd. Enzo focused on benefits realisation from projects, or as he termed it, benefits management. Enzo mentioned in the presentation that project outcomes are either:

- **M**aintaining something
- **E**liminating something
- **D**ecreasing something
- **I**ncreasing something, or
- **C**reating something

The presentation integrated the practice of 'value mapping', a visual technique that helps to explicitly define the outcomes expected to derive from a particular projects, and the financial and intangible value associated with those outcomes.

**Process Management**

Whilst much of the day focussed on the findings of the workgroup, the rest of the day worked through issues of concern in process management.

The definition of Process Management that is given in the Criteria for Performance Excellence ([www.quality.nist.gov](http://www.quality.nist.gov)) is:

*Process Management concerns how your organisation determines, creates and maintains key product, service and business processes that create customer and organisational value, and your key support processes.*

The output from the day was the identification of the next benchmarking project. The project selected was: "To identify best practice in achieving employee buy-in to continuous process improvement".

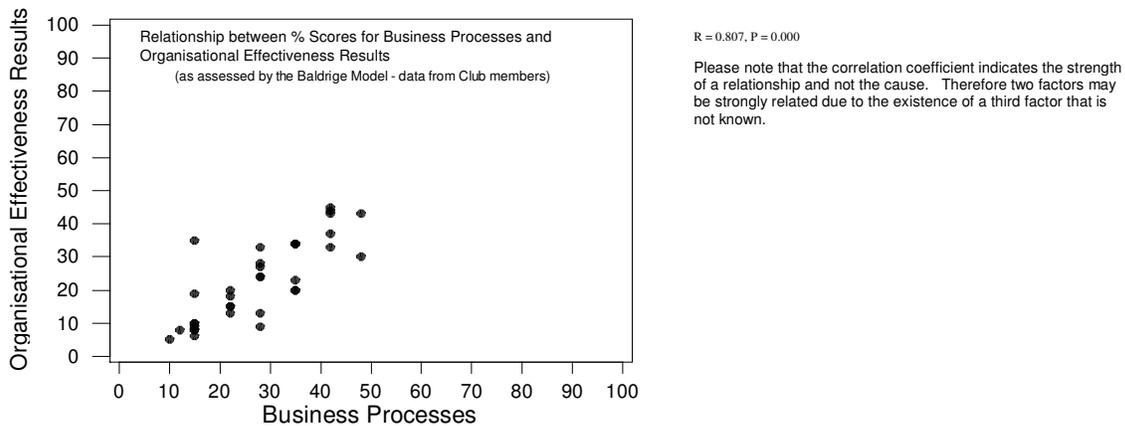
Of interest for Club members is the relationship between Process Management and other CPE Categories. From an analysis of the Club's 2002 self-assessment results significant and strong relationships were identified between the following:

**Table 2:**

Category	Category	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p-value)
Business Processes	Org Effectiveness Results	0.807	P-Value = 0.000
Process Management	Org Effectiveness Results	0.751	P-Value = 0.000
Process Management	Employee Education, Training & Development	0.730	P-Value = 0.000

The strongest relationship is presented in Figure 1 below, and indicates that those organizations that have a well-defined and implemented approach for improving their Business Processes are also more likely to have superior Organisational Effectiveness Results.

**Figure 1:**



**4. The BPIR.com - new partnerships**

**By Daryl McAlinden, COER Marketing Consultant for [www.BPIR.com](http://www.BPIR.com).**

The Human Resources Institute New Zealand (HRINZ) has recently entered into a partnership with the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER) to provide its members with access to the Benchmarking and Performance Improvement Resource (BPIR).

HRINZ is New Zealand's professional organisation for people who are interested or involved in the management and development of human resources. It represents the interests of 1,900 individual members

who work in private and public sector organisations throughout New Zealand, and provides them with education and information services, conferences and seminars, publications, representation at government and official levels, and networking opportunities - to help them develop their professional skills and knowledge as human resources practitioners and key decision makers in their organisations.

Beverley Main, HRINZ's Chief Executive Officer, stated that "For some time now HRINZ has been looking into ways that we can add value to those Institute members who have invested in their future by becoming certificated (professional) members of the Institute. We believe the commitment these members have made to their career and their profession deserves recognition well beyond just having letters after their name."

The HRINZ has purchased a bulk user licence, which will provide free access to the BPIR for all certificated members of the Institute. Beverley and her executive team are deeply committed to helping their members to bring excellence into their roles and to their organisations, and thereby to the profession. "This is a genuine campaign to assist our members in their role as serious human resources practitioners" said Beverley.

Professional members are members who seek and gain the Institute's formal recognition of their skills, knowledge and experience in human resources management and development. The BPIR offers the HRINZ's professional members a wide range of web-based human resource and organisational performance related information that can be used at in-process, operational, and strategic levels. Of particular interest to HRINZ is how the BPIR is unique among on-line resources in two key ways; the breadth, depth, and range of types of information on offer, and the very innovative way that allows users to very quickly drill down to specific areas of interest. Key areas of interest included non-financial measurement, best practices of successful organisations, and tools and techniques with which to influence performance.

General members of HRINZ won't miss out either. HRINZ has negotiated a discounted rate for general members to subscribe to the BPIR. Once a general member becomes certificated, they will be provided with free access to the BPIR.

HRINZ will be strongly promoting this new resource. Beverley stated, "It will certainly help users to become the 'font of all knowledge' for their organisations, whilst greatly improving their own performance. How better to raise the contribution that HR practitioners make to an organisation's success?"

## **5. NEWS FROM THE NEW ZEALAND BENCHMARKING CLUB**

**by Neil Bleasdale, COER Benchmarking Consultant**

So far, 2003 has been a year of consolidation for the Benchmarking Club. A new member (Livestock Improvement – see below) has joined our ranks, we have published another Best Practice Report from our benchmarking workgroups – Strategy Deployment, and we have expanded our website ([www.nzbc.org.nz](http://www.nzbc.org.nz)) to now include a Members Only section. In addition, over the past year the Club has selected the following topics for benchmarking studies:

- To identify best practices in linking organisational performance to strategy
- To identify best practices in aligning strategic direction, planning and reporting
- To identify best practice in achieving employee buy-in to continuous process improvement

The Club has welcomed Livestock Improvement as our newest member. Livestock Improvement maintains New Zealand's leading breeding programme for dairy herds through artificial insemination programmes and the maintenance of an exclusive nation-wide database for various breeds. The company employs around 1,000 FTE's in 16 locations, and exports to a variety of countries. The company was awarded an NZBEF Progress award in 2000 and a Bronze in 2002. Livestock Improvement already benchmarks in the areas of productivity gain, call centre operations, and in customer satisfaction. Livestock Improvement won a Bronze award in the 2002 New Zealand Business Excellence Quality Awards, and is very committed to attaining world-class performance in all areas of their organisation and business. They bring their own unique strengths to the Club, and have already impressed with their willingness to share some pretty exciting procedures.

In June, we were all shocked at the loss of so many of our friends and colleagues from Crop & Food Research in a plane crash. Dr Robin Mann, the Club's Director, represented the Club at the memorial service that was in Christchurch Cathedral, and the Club was also represented at a similar service in Palmerston North. It was very pleasing to see the Club rally around a member in need, and continuing efforts have been made by the Club to assist Crop & Food Research in their rebuilding.

The Club now has the benefit of a permanent Consultant managing its activities. Neil Bleasdale, previously with one of our members (Accident Compensation Corporation) joined the Club in January. He is primarily responsible for the daily administration of the Club's core process, and has been assisting members on specific issues and problems they have encountered. A new service the Club can now provide is an annual liaison visit to each member, where the member and COER agree on individual performance objectives and the necessary support requirement for the forthcoming year.

The Club's annual Results Sharing Meeting has been revamped for this year. It has been expanded to a day and one half, with the emphasis being given to making it an interactive learning experience. A new innovation is the concept of 'Learning Teams', which has been devised to assist members gain the maximum benefit from their self-assessment and attendance at this meeting. Based on their self-assessment, all members decide what areas they specifically want to learn about, and based on their responses, workshops are arranged to expose as many of these learning objectives as can be fitted into the time available. In addition, time is programmed for the 'Learning Teams' to consolidate/ re-evaluate what they have learnt and to consider how they might go about transferring that knowledge once they had returned to their home locations.

With all this work over the past year, the Club is well poised for 2004.

## **6. LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NZ BENCHMARKING CLUB**

Here is your opportunity to learn more about the NZ Benchmarking Club. We are currently taking bookings for on-site presentations to interested organisations in the Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch areas.

Each presentation will take about 30 minutes (with say around 20 minutes for in depth questioning) and will focus on the benefits and commitments of membership.

The presentations can be pitched at either management or Board levels – you decide.

### Dates:

Auckland	Monday 1 December
	Tuesday 2 December
Hamilton	Wednesday 3 December
Christchurch	Friday 5 December

If any of these dates do not suit, let us know and we can make individual arrangements.

Please contact Neil Bleasdale ([n.bleasdale@massey.ac.nz](mailto:n.bleasdale@massey.ac.nz)) to book your presentation.

## **7. BENCHMARKING FOR BEST PRACTICE CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP**

### **Proven Steps for achieving competitiveness, today and tomorrow**

From the 16th to the 17th of March 2004 Australasia's first Benchmarking Conference will be held. This conference, organised by the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (with its partners Enterprising Manukau, NZ Business Excellence Foundation, Business Excellence Australia, and the Ministry of Economic Development) has the support of key improvement-focussed associations from both sides of the Tasman. Conference sponsors include the Quality Society of Australasia, Australian Organisation for Quality, NZ Institute of Management, Institute of Professional Engineers NZ, Human Resource Institute NZ, Telarc NZ, Smart Manukau, Quality College, Farmers Mutual, Pact, John Robertson and Associates, Industry Training Federation and EMA Northern.

Australasia's Inaugural Conference for benchmarking will be the starting point from which many organisations can begin to fully understand the power of benchmarking and how it can be used to improve their organisation. The conference sessions will focus on how to apply benchmarking and provide examples of practical tools that can be used to fast-track the benchmarking process. Many examples of best practices, identified from benchmarking studies will be given, including best practices in leadership, human resources, strategic planning, and customer focus.

One of the highlights of the conference will be the address given by Dr Robert Camp from the United States. Dr Camp is largely responsible for putting benchmarking at the forefront of management techniques through his work with Rank Xerox in the 1970's/80's and the publication of his best selling business books on

benchmarking (including the first-ever book on benchmarking). Dr Camp will be staying on after the conference to deliver a two-day benchmarking workshop (17 and 18 March 2004) that all delegates are welcome to attend.

Paul Cherrett, from British Telecom, is another presenter with considerable expertise in performance improvement through benchmarking. He has been leading and managing British Telecom's benchmarking projects for over 10 years, and as such has learnt from the best practices of hundreds of organisations from all around the world. He is one of the founders of the UK Benchmarking Institute and as part of this role he has developed strong relationships with other benchmarking associations and experts including the Advanced Benchmarking Group in the US.

From Australia there will be a number of speakers including Peter Howes, CEO, HRM Consulting, who will be talking about how benchmarking can be used to improve HR practices, and Darryl Bubner, CEO, of Waveglobal.com, a company that leads the way in assisting organizations to benchmark "innovation". Business Excellence Australia will provide support in a number of the panel discussions and are presently sourcing a Business Excellence Award winner from Australia to present on their leading-edge practices.

From New Zealand, there will be presentations that share best practices identified through New Zealand Benchmarking Club studies in leadership and strategy deployment. Best selling author and consultant, Ian Brookes, will share best practices in customer focus. In addition, NZ Business Excellence Award winners will give presentations. At the evening dinner, Rod Oram, international financial journalist, will make the case for benchmarking and describes the national economic consequences for failing to do so. Finally, the conference has the support of ministers from both sides of the Tasman with Hon Jim Anderton, Minister of Economic Development, presenting on competitiveness issues within NZ and a minister from Australia providing an Australian perspective.

The conference will be held at the Waipuna Hotel in Auckland. **Early bird registrations close on the 12 December 2003.** For more information on the conference visit [www.coer.org.nz/conference/](http://www.coer.org.nz/conference/) or contact Rosemary Hancock, Evenements, [evenements@xtra.co.nz](mailto:evenements@xtra.co.nz)

## 8. FORTHCOMING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

1-2 December, 2004	NZ Benchmarking Club Awareness Day, Auckland
3 December, 2004	NZ Benchmarking Club Awareness Day, Hamilton
5 December, 2004	NZ Benchmarking Club Awareness Day, Christchurch
16-17 March, 2004	Australasia's Inaugural Benchmarking for Best Practices Conference, Auckland NZ
18-19 March, 2004	Benchmarking workshop with Dr Bob Camp, Auckland, NZ
5-7 April 2004	9 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on ISO 9000 & TQM (9-ICIT), Theme: Best Practices, Bangkok, Thailand
24-26 May 2004	58th Annual Quality Congress, Toronto, Canada.

## 9. OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN COER'S TEAM - PHD RESEARCHERS ARE WANTED!

COER is interested in hearing from graduates that are interested in undertaking PhD research on improving organisational performance. At present, COER has the following vacancies for PhD research focusing on:

- The activities of Benchmarking Centres worldwide and approaches to benchmarking to help the New Zealand Benchmarking Club become more effective in delivering a quality service to Club members.
- Identifying methods for effective Action Planning stemming from Business Excellence self-assessments or evaluations. At present little guidance is given on this critical stage of the self-assessment process.
- Determining the relevance of the CPE, and CPE self-assessment, to small organisations (less than 20 employees).
- Analysing the relationships between CPE business enablers and results. This research will prove to be immensely valuable in understanding the inter-relationships between the CPE Categories and Items. Access will be given to COER's database of self-assessment data.
- Developing a benchmarking and performance improvement methodology for New Zealand Benchmarking Club members. Working with Club members the researcher will develop and trial a practical approach to fast-track performance improvement for Club members.
- Best Practices in Performance Measurement. The specific topic will be selected in consultation with the New Zealand Benchmarking Club to ensure that the PhD will have practical relevance.

For all PhD's, scholarships of NZ\$23,000 per annum tax-free will be sought (but can not at this stage be guaranteed). PhD fees of NZ\$1,700 per annum will need to be paid by the student. Only, B+ honours and first-class honours degree holders need apply.

*For more information and an application form contact Dr Robin Mann, Director, COER. Applications need to be received by 30 February 2004. Email: [r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz](mailto:r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz).*

## 10. NEWS OF COER PEOPLE

In June, COER said farewell to Post Doctoral Researcher and COER News editor Seishi Gomibuchi, who left to take up a lectureship at the International Pacific College in Palmerston North. COER wishes Seishi every success in his challenging new role.

## 11. SUBSCRIBE TO COER NEWS

If you would like to receive future copies of this free newsletter and you are not already on our emailing list please send your contact details (including email address) to *Robin Mann, Director, COER, [r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz](mailto:r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz) or visit [www.BPIR.com](http://www.BPIR.com) homepage to register your subscription.* Also, if you want to unsubscribe from COER's mailing list, again please inform Robin.

## 12. FUTURE ISSUES OF COER NEWS

The frequency of publication will depend on the availability of new material. The intention is to publish at least once every six months.

### **Thank you for reading COER NEWS.**

For more information on COER please contact:

Dr Robin Mann, Director, Centre for Organisational Excellence Research ([www.coer.org.nz](http://www.coer.org.nz)), ITE, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Ph: +64 6 350 5445, Fax: +64 6 350 5605, Email: [r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz](mailto:r.s.mann@massey.ac.nz).

### **COER NEWS**

Editors – Nigel Grigg and Robin Mann

Additional contributions from Jo Innes, Neil Bleasdale, Daryl McAlinden and Max Saunders.

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