

COER News

Welcome to the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER) Newsletter – COER News!

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter! We hope you find the information insightful and inspiring.

As we step into an exciting 2025, we wish you a year filled with success, happiness, and growth. We warmly invite you to participate in our upcoming events and activities, as well as those hosted by our valued partners.



We look forward to continuing this journey of excellence together.

Best regards,

Dr. Robin Mann

Director, Centre for Organisational Excellence Research, New Zealand

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COER Research - Feature Article

Think Outside Your Industry: The Power of Creative Benchmarking

Benchmarking is like taking a peek into the playbooks of top performers, uncovering hidden gems of insight, understanding their winning moves, and tailoring those strategies to elevate your own game. Creative Benchmarking involves identifying and exploring best practices from organizations outside your industry but excel in related processes. This article explores examples from the hospital industry. It illustrates how creative benchmarking can assess and refine patient touchpoints, significantly enhancing the patient-centred experience. ---> [Read the article here.](#)

Celebrating Excellence: Congratulations to the International Best Practice Competition (IBPC) 2024 Award Winners!

Visit the BPIR.com to watch the video for the complete list of the IBPC award winners, including the winners of the Organisation-Wide Innovation Award (OWIA) 2024, GBN's Global Benchmarking Award 2024, and Environmental, Social, & Governance (ESG) Excellence Award 2024.

[Watch the Video](#)

Recognition and Inspiration: Honoring the IBPC 2024 Award Recipients from the UAE

To honour their accomplishments, Dr Robin Mann visited the IBPC 2024 winners from UAE for a special-invite celebration in September 2024. Some pictures from the certificate conferring ceremony are shown below. Read the blog for more information on these award recipients.



[Read more](#)



International Best Practice Competition 2025

Early Bird Applications Will Open:
3rd February 2025, Monday

BEST PRACTICE SHARING EXTRAVAGANZA

JUNE - JULY 2025

BEST OF THE BEST - AWARDS SPECTACULAR

JULY - AUGUST 2025

APPLICANT BROCHURE

A Virtual Event

---> [Download Applicant Brochure](#)

Elevate Your Brand!

Compete at the 11th International Best Practice Competition 2025

The Centre for Organisational Excellence Research is pleased to announce that the International Best Practice Competition 2025 will accept best practice entries in 21 categories of excellence, including Leadership, Social and Environmental Responsibility, Strategy and Performance, Customer Focus, Supplier & Partner Relationships, HR, Operational Excellence & Innovation, Asset Management or Automation / Digital Transformation, etc.

For detailed guidance on how to prepare your entry, please visit the official website @<https://bestpracticecompetition.com/>. Here you will find essential resources, such as:

- **Competition Guidelines:** Understand the requirements, and judging criteria to ensure your entry meets the highest standards.
- **Submission Process:** Step-by-step instructions for submitting your best practice, including tips on how to effectively present your best practice.
- **Past Winners and Case Studies**

In Focus: Sustainability

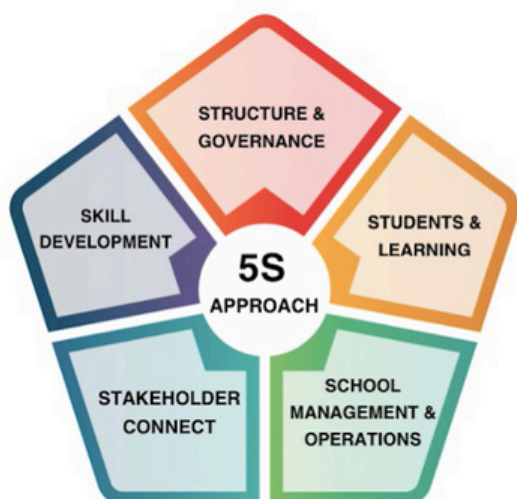
Award-Winning Best Practice from the Education Sector

This best practice was a 7 Star-Winner, and Category Award Winner for Environmental Sustainability at the 10th International Best Practice Competition (IBPC) 2024. This is an operational best practice implemented by the **Global Schools Foundation (GSF), Singapore**. Now fully deployed across all 64 GSF campuses, this framework aims to integrate sustainability principles across all areas of the GSF campuses and emphasises experiential learning and community engagement. Read the complete report for the team presentation and Q&A session with the judges. Visit BPIR.com for access to all the winning and participating entries to the 2024 International Best Practice Competition.

GSF Sustainability Framework – 5S Approach to Sustainability



Best Practice Objective: Implementing a robust ESG framework across all our GSG campuses to drive innovative sustainability initiatives, enhance environmental stewardship, and foster a culture of social responsibility and governance excellence.



STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Establishing robust governance mechanisms that effectively address sustainability matters across the organisation.

STUDENTS AND LEARNING

Infusing sustainability concepts across the curriculum spectrum and enabling student-led initiatives aligned with the UNSDGs

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Implementing strategies to curtail energy and water consumption, minimize waste generation, and reduce carbon footprints.

STAKEHOLDER CONNECT

Leading awareness campaigns, engaging in decision-making, community activities, competitions, and feedback mechanisms.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Conducting regular training sessions, workshops, leadership lectures, and seminars equips stakeholders with essential tools.



[Read Report](#)



JIM HARRINGTON

We Miss You!

As we begin promoting the 11th International Best Practice Competition, it is poignant to reflect on the absence of Dr. James Harrington this year. Jim was an unwavering advocate for the competition, inspiring organizations to participate, contributing as an applicant, and serving as a judge. Over the years, he fulfilled all these roles with boundless enthusiasm and unwavering dedication.

No one was a stronger supporter of the International Best Practice Competition than Jim. He frequently called me to offer his help and ensure the competition's success. His passion for excellence and his generosity in sharing his knowledge left a lasting impression on everyone involved.

Prior to his passing in June 2024, Jim was actively assisting two U.S.-based organizations in preparing their submissions for the competition. In 2023, he served as a judge for the competition's Organisation-Wide Innovation Award (the photo of Jim was from the jury session). He also showcased his own expertise by entering the competition with his "TIME (Total Innovation Management Excellence) methodology," which earned first place in the "Innovation Systems and Approaches" category.

Jim's absence will be deeply felt, but his legacy continues to inspire us all as we move forward with this year's competition.

[A Tribute](#)

Benefits of Best Practice Certification Beyond the International Best Practice Competition

Mission

The purpose of the IBPC Best Practice Certification Scheme is to assist, encourage and recognize individuals, teams and organisations that are striving for excellence in their work. The scheme provides a certification mechanism for best practices by organisations from around the world.

Practices that are graded 4 Stars ★ ★ ★ ★ are a best practice at a national level, 5 Stars ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ and above are considered an international best practice, with 7 Stars ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ being the pinnacle achievement. Organisations can be assessed through this scheme in two ways:

- **Enter the International Best Practice Competition (IBPC) – held once a year.**
- **Directly apply for IBPC Best Practice Certification – available all year round.**

Over the past year, we have partnered with numerous organizations to support their journey toward IBPC Best Practice Certification outside of the International Best Practice Competition. This tailored approach has proven highly effective, as it enables COER to work directly with organizations to identify their high-performing practices and provide comprehensive support throughout the certification process.

This service is particularly appealing to organizations preparing for a business excellence assessment or those looking to accelerate their improvement journey. By having key practices assessed and enhanced across all departments or critical processes, these organizations take a significant step toward sustained excellence.

Certification goes beyond validating the quality of your processes—it also develops the skills and capabilities of your teams. Through actionable feedback on strengths and opportunities for improvement, informed by best practice insights, your teams can refine processes and achieve even greater levels of excellence.

Moreover, external recognition and the profiling of your best practices on BPIR.com serves to inspire and motivate your people, energizing them to strive for even higher achievements.

Our Premium Support includes:

- **Expert guidance** on submission writing and presentation.
- **Team preparation** for the Question-and-Answer session with judges.
- **Benchmarking research** conducted by COER's experienced researchers to strengthen your application. This includes providing evidence that your practice qualifies as a best practice and offering ideas for further improvement.

[Apply for IBPC Best Practice Certification](#)

PhD Success – Congratulations to Dr Atif Baig!

Atif Baig successfully passed his PhD viva in October 2024 from the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER) Massey University. Atif's PhD was focused on **"An Exploration of the Organisational Excellence Architecture (OEA) Required to Support an Award-Winning Business Excellence Journey"**.

50 organisations participated including 20+ national award winners. Atif has already published two research papers (please see the next section 'Spotlight on Business Excellence').



Academic Excellence Meets Professional Brilliance!

Seen in the picture are: (center) Dr Atif Baig; L to R - Dr James Lockhart (supervisory team), Dr Nicola Brown (representing the examination panel), Dr Wayne Macpherson (supervisory team) and Dr Robin Mann (supervisory team).

[Read more](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

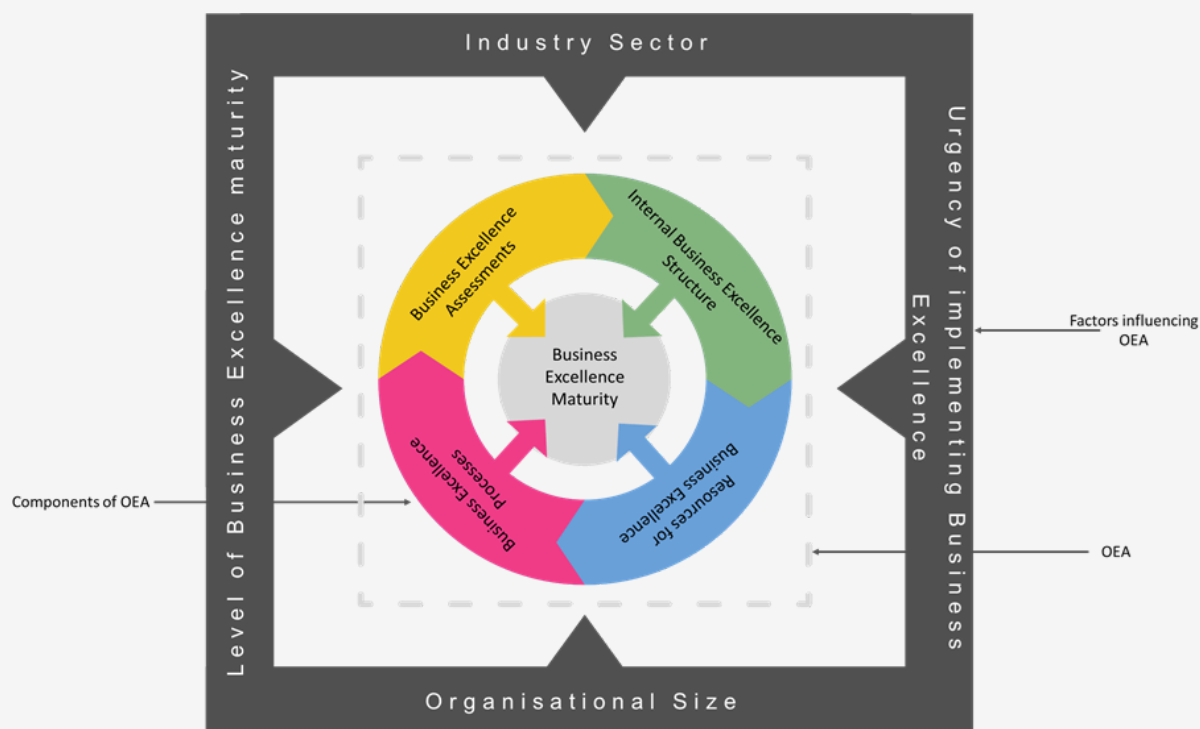
The Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER) are delighted to have two research papers published in 2024.

Business Excellence Assessments – Learning From Award-Winning Organizations, 17 June 2024, *Emerald Insight*

This study identified best practices from Business Excellence (BE) award-winning organizations on the use of their BE self-assessment (internal assessment) and third-party assessment (external assessment including BE award assessments) for organizational improvement. ---> [Know more.](#)

The Development of an Organizational Excellence Architecture (OEA) Model to Support the Implementation of Business Excellence, 14 May 2024, *Emerald Insight*

The purpose of this study was to address a significant gap in the existing literature on business excellence implementation. While numerous studies have explored various aspects of business excellence, there remains a lack of comprehensive research on defining the optimal Organizational Excellence Architecture (OEA) for achieving an award-winning business excellence journey. The absence of a unified framework has resulted in inconsistent practices among organizations. This research, based on data collected from 50 organizations—including 28 national business excellence award winners—across 17 countries, aims to bridge this gap by presenting a refined OEA model. The OEA Conceptual Model offers a unified perspective on BE implementation (refer to the figure below). ---> [Know more.](#)



March 2024



Members of BPIR.com can access one of the case studies researched as part of the 'Business Excellence Assessments' study shared above. **The case study highlights how VAMED-KMB, an Austrian provider of services for hospitals and the healthcare sector, has leveraged business excellence assessments (both self-assessments and external assessments) as a key mechanism for driving continual improvement.** Notably, one of their key customers uses the EFQM Model to assess VAMED's performance, this fosters a strong understanding and relationship between VAMED and its customer. VAMED has been using the EFQM Model since 2003 and won the prestigious EFQM Global Award in 2022.

[Read the Case Study](#)

For **FREE COPIES** of the papers, you can directly contact Atif Baig at atifbaig37@yahoo.com.

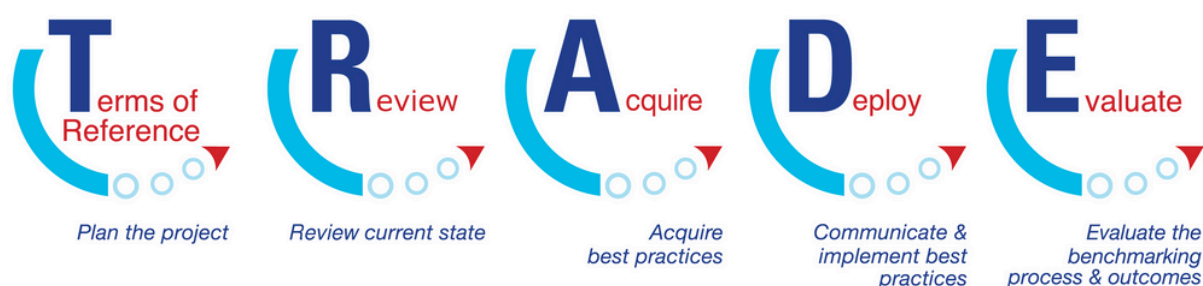
The 6th Cycle of Dubai Government's Executive Program for Benchmarking

Watch video highlights of nine Dubai government entities participating in the 3rd Knowledge Sharing Summit, a key event in the 6th Cycle of the Executive Program for Benchmarking 2024.

Video Highlights

The program is organized by the Dubai Government Executive Program (DGEP) in partnership with the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER). Benchmarking projects showcased included High Electricity Usage Alerts, the development of Digital City Experiences, promoting a Water Refill Culture to reduce single-use plastic water bottles, Next Generation Airspace, creating Dubai's Emission Factor Guideline, Financial Advisor for the Future Government, Sustainability of Dubai Buildings Safety, establishing Advance Rulings for Dubai Customs, and International Mediation best practices.

All projects use the **TRADE Best Practice Benchmarking methodology** as a means to identify and implement best practices. To date, nearly 50 Dubai government projects have used this methodology across previous cycles of the program.



The Final Summit, held on 9th December 2024, featured local and international judges who assessed the quality of each project using the TRADE Benchmarking Certification Scheme's 7-Star Scale. A book of case studies highlighting the purpose, outcomes, and impact of these projects on Dubai, its citizens, and its global leadership in key areas will be published in the coming months.

Leading with Purpose: Business Excellence Australia

Business Excellence Australia hosted the **Horizons of Excellence Conference 2024** on October 17–18, 2024. As part of the event, Dr. Robin Mann facilitated a roundtable discussion titled "**The Power of Benchmarking**," where he shared key strategies for achieving excellence through the effective and appropriate use of benchmarking.



---> Brochure - Australia's Best Practice Competition 2025

The roundtable explored the types of benchmarking practices currently employed by participant organizations and strategies to formalize and enhance these approaches. The discussion then shifted focus to **Australia's Best Practice Competition**, with participants exchanging ideas on how to increase engagement and participation. By doing so, the competition can spotlight more Australian best practices, enabling valuable knowledge-sharing and supporting organizations in their pursuit of business excellence.

Business Excellence Australia will partner with COER to promote the Australian Best Practice Competition in 2025. The top-performing best practices from across Australia will be recognized and celebrated at next year's Gala Dinner, alongside the winners of the Australian Business Excellence Awards.

At this year's Gala Dinner, the **Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia Quality Assurance Programs (RCPAQAP)** was honored with the prestigious **Business Excellence Australia Gold Award** (image). This recognition was well-earned, reflecting their hard work, resilience, and unwavering dedication to the continuous improvement of their practices.



Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award (SKEA)

The Sheikh Khalifa Excellence Award (SKEA) Silver Jubilee Symposium held under the theme "New Quality Thinking" in Abu Dhabi on 23 May 2024, presented the general framework of the new global model for the Award, which contributes to developing performance and enhancing competitiveness in the business sector.



Dr Robin Mann facilitated a panel with **Maha Alsuwaidi**, Senior Consultant at Dubai Government Excellence Program – DGEP, and **Dr. Sayed Ahmed Benraouane**, an international expert on the ISO 42001 AI Management System at Harrington Management Systems, and **Prof. Hadi Eltigani**. Dr Robin gave a presentation on the “In SKEA We Learn” initiative, a new program to be launched in conjunction with the Abu Dhabi Chamber to support benchmarking.

Seen in the image above are (center) **His Excellency Ahmed Khalifa Al Qubaisi**, CEO of the Abu Dhabi Chamber and Member of SKEA Higher Committee, (right) **His Excellency Ibrahim Salman Al Hammadi**, Executive Director of Government Performance & Excellence, and Coordinator General of the Sheikh Khalifa Government Excellence Program (SKGEP), and (left) **Prof. Hadi Eltigani**, SKEA Coordinator General & Higher Committee Member.

[Read More](#)

Upcoming TRADE Benchmarking Training Workshop



Trained in TRADE



Proficiency in TRADE



Mastery in TRADE

Elevate your business performance and stay ahead of the competition. We're excited to announce our upcoming TRADE Best Practice Benchmarking Training Workshop, designed specifically for professionals looking to harness the power of benchmarking for sustainable growth and innovation! Individuals trained in TRADE can advance from benchmarking **"Trained" (Bronze)** to **"Proficiency" (Silver)** to **"Mastery" (Gold)** levels. Recipients of TRADE Certification will receive the coveted digital certificates and badges, recognizing their accomplishment in upgrading themselves with the knowledge of professional benchmarking.

The next series of virtual courses begin on these dates:

- **Training dates:** 20 February, 22 April, 15 July 2025
- **Timing:** 8:00 am to 11:00 am UTC
- Otherwise, we can arrange **virtual courses or in-person courses** to meet your organisation's needs. Normally each course is organised for a maximum of 20 people or 5 project teams.
- TRADE Best Practice Benchmarking is endorsed by the Global Benchmarking Network.

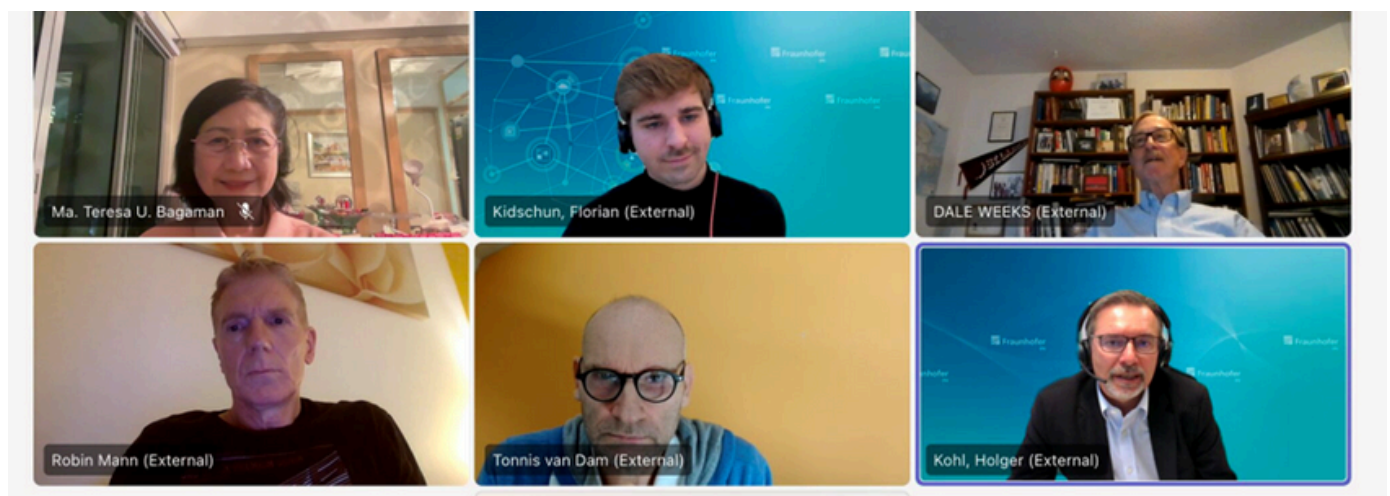
[Register Here](#)

The Re-launch of the Global Benchmarking Network in 2025



Exciting times lie ahead for the **Global Benchmarking Network (GBN)**, as plans for a major relaunch in 2025 were unveiled during the December 2024 meeting (image below). For 30 years—since its founding in 1994 by Dr. Robert Camp (our honorary lifetime president) and other visionary members—the GBN has been a leading international network advancing the body of knowledge in benchmarking.

In 2025, the GBN is reinvigorating its membership and actively welcoming new members to join its mission of promoting the transformative power of benchmarking. As a tool for driving meaningful change through learning from best practices, benchmarking has never been more critical. It holds the key to tackling global challenges such as climate change, sustainability, and the responsible adoption of next-generation technologies.



- GBN members serve as ambassadors of benchmarking in their countries, promoting its use and providing guidance on how to maximize its effectiveness for societal benefit. Our diverse membership spans government bodies, consulting agencies, research institutes, and quality organizations, representing over 20 countries worldwide.
- If your organization is interested in becoming the GBN representative in your country, please contact Dr. Robin Mann, GBN Chairman, at r.s.mann@coer.org.nz
- Further details on the relaunch will be shared in the coming months.

Together, let's drive positive change through benchmarking and best practices.



Zairi International Awards
FOR EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

4th CYCLE
(2024-2025)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications Open to Higher Education Institutions
from Across the Globe (no application fee)

APPLY TODAY!

Last Date to Apply
30th December 2024

Entries Closing Soon: The Zairi International Awards for Excellence in Higher Education

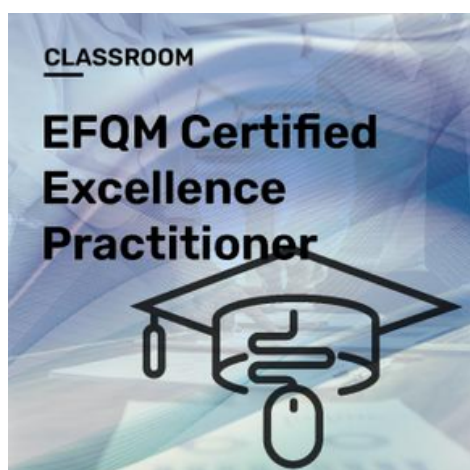
is an excellent opportunity for higher education institutions to apply for this award, serving as a stepping stone toward participating in the International Best Practice Competition (IBPC) later in the year.

Whilst the Entry Deadline states 30 December 2024, you may still enter if you submit your entry within the next 10 days.

[Apply Here](#)

Upcoming Events & Workshops

Below are a series of training courses aimed at helping you leverage solutions for even greater success. Mark your calendars! **Click on the image below for details.**



• EFQM Certified Excellence Practitioner:

Over the three-day course, participants receive comprehensive knowledge and practical skills to implement the EFQM Model within their organisation.

DATE	LOCATION	LANGUAGE
 21.01.2025 - 23.01.2025	Belgium, Online - 9.00-16.30 CET	English

• New Zealand Organisation for Quality Internal Auditor training:

Available face-to-face or online, this comprehensive course equips participants with the essential knowledge and practical skills to conduct effective internal audits of a quality management system to the requirements of ISO 9001. ---> **[Register here.](#)**

COER RESEARCH –

Seeking a New University Partnership

Since its establishment by Dr. Robin Mann in 2001, the Centre for Organisational Excellence Research (COER) has evolved into a leading global research center in business excellence, engaging with businesses both domestically and internationally.

COER'S STRUCTURE:

COER operates through three distinct units:

- **COER Research:** This arm focuses on "Acquiring Knowledge" by administering doctoral research programs in business excellence, benchmarking, productivity, and innovation.
- **BPIR.com Limited:** Serving as the "Knowledge Transfer" arm, it emphasizes "Best Practice Sharing" via its membership website, the Best Practice Improvement Resource www.bpir.com.
- **COER Limited:** The "Consultancy" arm concentrates on "Applying Knowledge," offering consultancy services in business excellence and benchmarking, and organizing the International Best Practice Competition.

INTEGRATION WITH MASSEY UNIVERSITY:

Since COER's establishment at Massey University, New Zealand in 2001, its structure evolved in 2006, with **COER Research** continuing within the university, while **BPIR.com Ltd.** and **COER Ltd.** began operating independently. Despite this shift, a strong collaborative relationship was maintained.

This synergy created mutual benefits: PhD researchers gained direct access to businesses for their studies and practical experience through COER's consultancy projects, while businesses and partners—including business excellence custodians and the **Global Benchmarking Network**—benefited from cutting-edge research in business excellence, benchmarking, and productivity.

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COER'S NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- **New Zealand Benchmarking Club (2000-2004):** Launched to foster benchmarking practices among businesses.
- **[Best Practice Improvement Resource – BPIR.com](#)** (2002-present): Developed as an ongoing platform for best practice sharing.
- **TRADE Best Practice Benchmarking Methodology and Certification** (2004-present): Created and adopted as the preferred benchmarking methodology by numerous companies and governments.
- **Major Reviews and Program Developments:** Conducted significant reviews of business excellence models, such as the Australian Business Excellence Framework (2005), and contributed to the development and delivery of business excellence programs in countries including Mongolia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, Ras Al Khaimah, Taiwan, Tonga, and New Zealand (2001-present).
- **PhD Research Programs and Projects:** Conducted extensive research on national approaches to business excellence across more than 50 countries. This work, undertaken on behalf of a variety of stakeholders (including the Asian Productivity Organisation and Global Excellence Model Council) explored how organizations implement business excellence and leverage benchmarking. The research has resulted in over 50 peer-reviewed journal publications and the successful graduation of 12 PhD students from COER.
- **Publications and Training:** Published over 100 BPIR.com Best Practice Reports on various topics, hundreds of articles, reports, and books ([example](#)), and delivered numerous training courses on benchmarking and business excellence.
- **Conferences:** Founded and co-organized major conferences, including the GBN's International Benchmarking Conference (2006 onwards, now in its 13th cycle), World Congress for TQM in New Zealand (2006), World Business Capability Congress in New Zealand (2012) and the Global Organisational Excellence Congress in UAE (2018).
- **Awards:** Founded the International Best Practice Competition (2012 onwards, now in its 11th cycle), New Zealand Best Practice Competition (2012 onwards, now in its 4th cycle), Organisation-Wide Innovation Award (2017 onwards, now in its 7th cycle), ESG Excellence Award (2022 onwards, now in its 4th cycle), and the GBN Global Benchmarking Award (2012 onwards, now in its 10th cycle).
- **Benchmarking Programs for Governments:** Facilitated major benchmarking programs for governments, including the UAE (2016-2025), Singapore (2008-2009 Jumpstart program, followed by ongoing TRADE Benchmarking Training through the Civil Service College until 2016) and the Philippines (2013 to 2017).

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TRANSITION FROM MASSEY UNIVERSITY:

In April 2024, COER's formal relationship with Massey University concluded following the closure of the Engineering Department, which had been hosting the Centre. This development was part of the university's major restructuring efforts due to financial challenges post-COVID-19. Despite this, Dr. Robin Mann continued to supervise his final student to a successful PhD completion in October 2024.

This decision marked the end of Massey University's 50-year legacy of leadership in the quality management field in Australasia.

COER SEEKS PROGRESSIVE UNIVERSITY PARTNER:

Looking ahead to 2025, COER is seeking a forward-thinking university to host **COER Research**, with the goal of continuing its pioneering work in business excellence, benchmarking, and productivity. The ideal partner institution would provide scholarships for prospective PhD students and could be based anywhere globally, as long as Dr. Robin Mann can supervise students virtually in collaboration with the university's faculty.

Partnership with COER:

- Offers the host university a unique opportunity to establish itself as a leader in business excellence research.
- This collaboration would not only strengthen the university's academic reputation but also provide access to COER's established business services and initiatives, such as the International Best Practice Competition and BPIR.com.
- These activities would enhance the university's profile among businesses, attract a greater number of students, and offer academic staff opportunities to engage directly with the business community.

For more information, or to explore potential partnerships, please contact Dr. Robin Mann, r.s.mann@coer.org.nz.

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Our mailing address is: info@coer.org.nz