

# Intelligent Benchmarking and Beyond

## A 10 step process for using benchmarking to improve results

### Introduction

Intelligent benchmarking isn't just about comparing benchmarking numbers, it's about a process to target problem areas, identify solutions and implement changes that will get better results. Benchmarking is part of the process, including general benchmarking as well as detailed, focused benchmarking that compares processes, resources and systems rather than just numbers. These 10 steps will help guide you to better results:

**1 Identify and Rank Critical Success Areas**  
Before you begin, you need to know what is important to your organization. You support your core business and the things you do will have an impact. Establish the ones with the biggest impact that you have influence over.

**2 Select Areas to Improve**  
Once you have identified the critical success areas, select the ones you can improve. Choose just a couple at first to target and make sure it is a high-impact area that you can make changes to. For the first round, don't waste your time on things you will have a hard time changing or influencing.

**3 Compare Results using Benchmarks**  
Use general benchmarking information to compare results in the area you have selected. Benchmarking can be from industry sources, studies and reports, colleagues and internal comparisons.

**4 Choose Results that are not Superior**  
Carefully assess the results and choose the benchmarked results where your performance is either equal or below the benchmarks. Leave the ones that perform better for later, but you will be able to find improvements in those areas too.

**5 Isolate supporting processes, resources and systems**  
For each of the areas where the results aren't better than the benchmarks, dig deep to identify the processes, resources (including staff, supplies, subcontractors, etc.) and systems that are used or required to get results. These would all support the areas you are focusing on and should be things you can influence or change.

**6 Analyze each process, resource and system for impacts**  
One by one, analyze each of the processes, resources and systems to see where there are bottlenecks, performance problems and other issues that prevent results. Compare what you do to others, ask your staff and suppliers and investigate all possibilities.

**7 Focus on problems**  
The problem areas will become evident and you can then focus on those areas, gathering more information and going into more details as required.

**8 Test your practices against leading practices**  
Collect information, understand what is happening and seek out other direct benchmarking information to compare your practices with. This shouldn't be simple number comparisons, it should include how you are organized, the type of systems you have in place, training you provide and procedures you employ.

**9 Adopt leading practices and change existing practices**  
When you have identified leading practices that are better than yours, develop a plan to adopt them in your organization and create an implementation strategy.

**10 Repeat for other Areas**  
Now that you have found and fixed one critical success area, start again and improve the next critical success area you identified in Step 1.