

FRAMEWORKS, ASSESSMENTS & DIAGNOSTICS OUR THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES

Leading organisations are moving away from 'generic' business excellence assessments on their own as they are not seen as entirely relevant to their strategy maps nor directly linked to their business outcomes. We at Benchmarking Partnerships, offer more interesting and different dimensions than a single generic focus as well as a focus on the business outcomes themselves.

We also approach this work from a practical and industry driven perspective – rather than the management theory perspective. Some practical managers have likened the Frameworks that have been developed in the past to a "Column of Smoke" that they can't grasp or understand the meaning for their business.

We have done similar work for one of the world's largest resource companies BHP Billiton and other private and public organisations including the Australian Federal Government in researching and advising them of appropriate frameworks (we call them Diagnostics) and assessment processes for their business. In addition we do a whole range of different framework developments and organisational self assessments and external evaluations.

The main focus of what we do is making the frameworks, assessments and evaluations relevant and directly linked to business results and business strategies. In addition, through our benchmarking services we provide organisations with the ability to drill deeply into gap areas to assess priorities for leveraging improvements and also to gain and share knowledge to accelerate improvements. We have our own Framework which is built up from industry needs in both the private and public sectors.

Examples of some of our recent work appear at the end of this document.

Our innovations include:

- Building the frameworks and assessments to make them results or outcome focused and relevant to both leaders and practitioners
- Including elements that are missing or not fully emphasised in existing frameworks eg
 - showing how the framework elements produce outcomes and business results to make them meaningful for senior management
 - a way of directly linking to core business processes to make it meaningful for practitioners
 - and to tie together the framework elements in a meaningful and practical (not theoretical way as with many Frameworks)
 - different ways of assessing and evaluating to suit local needs
 - including categories and criteria that are missing from or not emphasised sufficiently in existing frameworks eg communications (where many frameworks and businesses fall down), recognition and reward to motivate and retain good people, safety, environment, social and project management to bridge the gap between gap identification and successful implementation (a very common failing)
 - a balanced scorecard of outcomes which are triple bottom line focussed or other balanced performance measurement frameworks which suit the organisation / country
 - future required linkages between knowledge management and innovation

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION SETS AND TOOLS BASED ON PRINCIPLES-BASED FRAMEWORKS

OUR EXPERIENCE

Benchmarking is the core business of Benchmarking Partnerships. Benchmarking is a principles-based tool for finding, adapting and implementing outstanding practices to accelerate organisational improvements. After establishing a strategic need (the why), benchmarking comprises measurement (the what), and the practices (the how).

Diagnostic tools are developed by us as part of our core business based on the principles underpinning the strategic need so that organisations can measure performance and identify gaps to learn how to improve. Strengths are also identified so organisations can share best practices.

- ◆ Our benchmarking data collection and analysis predominantly involves diagnostic tools. These have now been conducted across over 800 organisations in over 80 different benchmarking studies. Benchmarking topics have included benchmarking networks and communities of practice regarding staff climate and morale and best practices to address issues arising, business excellence in general, customer service, human resources, customer satisfaction, internal communications, strategic planning, senior executive leadership, food safety, supply chain, contact centres, balanced performance measurement etc.
- ◆ We have also developed diagnostic tools and conducted specific organisational assessments independent of our benchmarking networks/ communities of practice for many organisations including over 30 Federal agencies for the Australian National Audit Office, Hydro Tasmania, Office of the Board of NSW School Studies, Clayton Utz, Australia Post (across a large sample of their customer service Post Office outlets), Boeing Australia (sites Australia-wide including remote areas), over 10 Queensland Public Sector agencies, Country Energy (approx. 3000 people / wide geographic dispersion), Dept. Sustainability and Environment (Vic) – including their clients and regional stakeholders, the NSW Motor Accidents Authority etc.
- ◆ We have also been the Australian Quality Council's (AQC) sole benchmarking delivery partners since AQC began benchmarking in 1993, until the AQC ceased operations in 2002. We have continued to conduct the benchmarking services since then, as we purchased the AQC's benchmarking intellectual property. We have Certificate IV qualifications through AQC in Organisational Self Assessment.
- ◆ Our development of diagnostics also extends to not only the tool itself but also the software to automate the assessment and analysis and reporting of the results. Intelligent bivariat tool design also assists in knowing the leveraged improvement opportunities guiding optimum improvement to best meet strategic needs.
- ◆ Various assessment processes can be used eg remote survey, facilitated diagnostic, qualitative and quantitative, on-line, face to face, etc to suit the organisations' circumstances.

Examples of Work Done

TOPIC	WHO	DESCRIPTION	COMMENT
Operating Excellence (OE)	BHP Billiton	Developed a diagnostic based on business excellence frameworks and also incorporating best practice mining operations processes. The product included a series of assessment questions for facilitated focus groups for each Foundation Element and each Core Activity process, a scoring tool and examples of best practices. We also helped to develop an executive level diagnostic as well. Included advice on assessment process and incorporation into software analysis tool. Co-developed with BHP Billiton, Oxon data systems (software) and BHP Engineering / Hatch.	BHP Billiton now deploys the diagnostic across its mines worldwide.
Excellence Model	NRMA Limited (Australia's largest general insurance co., financial and motoring services)	Built a tailored excellence model or framework linked to organizational outcomes and core values for NRMA's 4,000 people spread across the states of NSW, Victoria and Queensland. Developed a self assessment process, trained the facilitators and people and facilitated the self assessment across the whole organisation including reporting of key strengths and opportunities to improve. Facilitated development of action planning. Developed and facilitated methods for internal Study Tour to share best practices identified from the self assessment across the organisation and hence accelerate improvements.	The NRMA implemented the action plan with a repeat self assessment planned after six months, then annually, with regular Study Tours.
Excellence Model, Self Assessment and Action Planning	University of Wollongong	Built a tailored excellence model or framework linked to organizational outcomes and core values for a division of the University and developed a self assessment process, trained the people and facilitated the self assessment across the whole organisation including reporting of key strengths and opportunities to improve. Facilitated development of action plan. The excellence model included latest international best practices from across the globe.	The University Division is now implementing the action plan with a repeat self assessment planned after six months, then annually.
Corporate Services	ANSTO-Lucas Heights	Developed diagnostics for customer service and management system within corporate services based on principles of service quality and organisational excellence. Another diagnostic was also developed to benchmark output key performance results for Corporate Services. We administered the diagnostics and reported on the results for ANSTO, giving advice on sampling and also designed internal communications for them.	ANSTO (Aust. Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation) have deployed the diagnostics to help identify improvement opportunities.
Project Management	Over 12 Project Managed Organisations – all industries	Developed diagnostic based on the principles of Project Management and also combining the principles of business excellence. Benchmarking Partnerships facilitated and reported on the deployment of the diagnostic amongst over 12 organisations including Brisbane Water, Defence, Energy Australia, Sydney Water, Gold Coast City Council, Dept. Justice Victoria, Boeing Australia etc	The diagnostic was used by the organisations to identify gaps and strengths to share and learn best practices through our benchmarking method
Communications	Hydro Tasmania	Developed customized internal communications diagnostic for the 6 operating divisions of Hydro Tasmania to identify and report over consecutive years the strategic opportunities to improve and	Example can be made available if requested.

		facilitate good practice communications and action planning with key stakeholders.	
Human Resources	ANAO	Developed, deployed and reported on diagnostic regarding the principles of Human Resource management to benchmark performance across over 30 Commonwealth agencies for the Australian National Audit Office. The diagnostic covered all key aspects of HR management including issues specific to the public sector.	Example can be made available if requested.
Contact Centres	Over 150 Organisations – all industries	Developed diagnostic based on the principles obtained from industry for excellent Contact Centre management and performance and also combining the principles of business excellence. Benchmarking Partnerships facilitated and reported on the deployment of the diagnostic amongst over 150 organisations in 15 national Contact Centre Benchmarking networks over the past decade, plus networks in Asia. We have also undertaken one-off assessments and reports for specific organisations and for Contact Centres amongst NSW Government agencies. Example organisations include Pioneer Electronics, South East Water Ltd, NRMA, Orica, Brambles, Dept. of Emergency Services Qld, Brisbane City Council.	Another diagnostic is also used to benchmark output key performance results for Contact Centres. Examples can be made available if requested.
Energy Efficiency	For large energy users	Developed a diagnostic and assessment process for the Australian Government introducing innovative concepts with a strategic focus.	
Organisational Capability / Staff Climate	Examples - see comments. All industries.	Developed diagnostic based on principles of organisational capability to deliver highly productive value, excellent employee management and also combining the principles of business excellence. Also helped the NSW Government to develop a similar diagnostic for NSW Agencies which we helped the agencies to deploy. We then carry out the reporting and analysis for them. Scope includes principles of EEO, specific change initiatives, customer service, environment, safety, leadership, teamwork, communications, performance management, recruitment, training and development, participation etc	Example organizations - Country Energy (3,000+ people across rural NSW), Office of the Board of School Studies NSW, Clayton Utz, Dept. Primary Industries Vic, Vic Department of Sustainability & Environment, Motor Accidents Authority NSW, Hydro Tasmania, Aust Paper, Aust. Air Express.

Referees can be provided if required.

Best wishes,

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