

## Step 4 and 5 to Establish Your Own Benchmarks

My favourite definition of benchmarking comes from Fad Surfing in the Boardroom by Eileen C. Shapiro:

*"1. Comparison of operations against best-in-class; a superb way to spark new ideas and significant insights when the examples are selected with thought and imagination;*

*2. The basis for great jobs in which the incumbents have no substantive responsibilities other than to gallivant around the world, meet all sorts of interesting people, make occasional proclamations about all the neat things other companies do, and submit appropriate lavish expense reports."*

Benchmarking, to be of any value, must be personal, systemic, ubiquitous and everyone's responsibility within the organisation. Here are the last two steps to establishing your own benchmarks.

### **Step 4 – Keep Improving**

Keep original benchmarks in the front of everyone's mind and compare progress in both comprehensive reports and with more visual graphs and charts. "A picture is worth a thousand words" and most people will appreciate and remember a creative approach to seeing the impact of extra efforts.

Consider a sensible, non-competitive reward and recognition program to strengthen participation and results. (See last week: I-Power)

### **Step 5 – Blow It All Up & Start Again!**

Set annual or bi-annual review workshops that combine people from the original planning and benchmarking meetings and from all levels of responsibility with representation from the newest staff members.

The Mission is to purposefully "blow up" and sweep away whatever processes are presently in place to support them so you can invent entirely new ones from scratch.

Note: This can actually be quite difficult as we are "creatures of habit". Lately I've run several workshops around a tool I recommend and have used for years for this purpose: Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats. The workshop is structured to ensure participants don't get stuck in the same rut and fail to see potential in something completely different.

Benchmarks should become part of your organisational values, with the aim of meeting, sustaining and improving your business results for your customer, your team and your organisation.

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