

Informally Learning from Others to Improve Work Practices

The purpose of this survey is to understand how organizations around the world informally learn (apart from formal training or courses) better practices and adapt them to increase the effectiveness of their own organization.

It should take 30 minutes or less to complete the survey. Responses will be kept completely confidential. Upon completion of the survey, participants will be given a copy of the results and one-month of FREE access to the Business Performance Improvement Resources website (www.BPIR.com).

Thank you.

1. Which industry best describes your organization?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | <input type="radio"/> Financial and Insurance Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Mining | <input type="radio"/> Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Manufacturing | <input type="radio"/> Professional, Scientific and Technical Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services | <input type="radio"/> Administrative and Support Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Construction | <input type="radio"/> Public Order, Safety and Regulatory Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Wholesale Trade | <input type="radio"/> Education and Training |
| <input type="radio"/> Retail Trade | <input type="radio"/> Health Care and Social Assistance |
| <input type="radio"/> Accommodation and Food Services | <input type="radio"/> Arts and Recreation Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Transport, Postal and Warehousing | <input type="radio"/> Other Services |
| <input type="radio"/> Information Media and Telecommunications | |

2. What is the size of your organization?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1-3 employees | <input type="radio"/> 100 - 249 employees |
| <input type="radio"/> 4-7 employees | <input type="radio"/> 250 - 499 employees |
| <input type="radio"/> 8-10 employees | <input type="radio"/> 500 - 999 employees |
| <input type="radio"/> 11 to 49 employees | <input type="radio"/> Over 1,000 employees |
| <input type="radio"/> 50 - 99 employees | |

3. Which category best describes your position within your organization?

- Entry-level
- Staff-level
- Supervisor
- Manager
- Senior Manager
- Director and above

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4. Are your survey answers based on the whole organization, or in some functional areas only? You may select one or more functional areas

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales & Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> R&D |

Other (please specify)

5. Social-Based Activities (Internal & Deliberate):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involved in past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Participated in internal conferences to learn from the work practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Regular face-to-face discussions with members of a best practice group/network within your organization to learn from their work practices e.g. community of practice, innovation team, cross-functional work group, focused group	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Regular face-to-face discussions with colleagues of other units/departments to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emailed colleagues from other units/departments and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Made a phone/Skype call to colleagues from other units/departments and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emailed an internal customer and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Met face-to-face with an internal customer and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emailed an internal supplier and learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Met face-to-face with an internal supplier and learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Attachment to other units/departments to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organized site visits to other units/departments to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Taking part in internal best-practice sharing event/activity and learning from the best practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Accessed our organization's intranet and asked others inside my organization if they had information concerning the work practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Participated in internal formal organization events or activities to learn from the work practices of other units/departments e.g. planning retreats, official launches or inaugural openings	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Actively participated in a discussion in an internal electronic forum or social network	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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and learnt from the work practices of other units/departments

Consulted with a mentor/expert inside your organization to learn from the work practices of other units/departments e.g. mentorship program, assigned peer-to-peer mentoring

Attended presentations/seminar by other units/departments on a regular basis to learn from their work practices

Participated in business excellence assessments or audits and incidentally learnt from the work practices of other units/departments e.g. annual cross-functional audits of units/departments

Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

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6. Social-based Activities (External & Deliberate):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involved in Past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Participated in external conferences to learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Regular face-to-face discussions with members of a best practice group/network or association/club outside your organization to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Regular face-to-face discussions with associates of other organizations to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emailed associates from another organization and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Made a phone/Skype call associates from another organization and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emailed an external customer and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Met face-to-face with an external customer and learnt from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emailed an external supplier and learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Met face-to-face with an external supplier and learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Emailed other stakeholders (partners/shareholders) and learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Met face to face with other stakeholders (partners/shareholders) and learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Attachment to other organizations to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Organized site visits to other organizations to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Taking part in external best-practice sharing event/activity and learning from the best practices of other organizations i.e. global, national, industry level, private and public service organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Accessed our organization's intranet and asked other people inside my organization if they had information concerning the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Participated in external formal organization events or activities to learn from the work practices of other organizations e.g. official launches or inaugural openings, ceremonies	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Actively participated in a discussion in an external electronic forum or social network and learnt from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Consulted with a specialist outside your organization to learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Attended presentations/seminar by other organizations on a regular basis to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Participated in business excellence assessments or audits and incidentally learnt from the work practices of other organizations e.g. excellence certifications, ISO standards, Malcolm Baldrige quality awards or equivalent	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

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Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

7. Social-based Activities (Internal & Incidental):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involvement in past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Ad-hoc face-to-face conversation with colleagues from other units/departments that incidentally helped you to learn from their work practices e.g. coffee corner, lunches, tea-breaks at or post meetings	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Attended informal functions or social activities of other units/departments and incidentally learnt of their work practices e.g. festivity, celebrations, golf game, walk/run	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

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8. Social-based Activities (External & Incidental):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involvement in past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Ad-hoc face-to-face conversation with associates from other organizations that incidentally helped you to learn from their work practices e.g. coffee, lunches	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Attended external informal functions or social activities with customers and incidentally learnt of their work practices e.g. festivity, celebrations, golf game	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Attended informal functions or social activities with suppliers and incidentally learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Attended informal functions or social activities with other stakeholders (partners/shareholders) and incidentally learnt of their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

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9. Non-Social Activities (Internal & Deliberate):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involvement in past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Read regular newsletters of other units/departments to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Read internal books/magazines/circulars regularly to deliberately learn from the work practices of other organizations e.g. annual report, standard operating procedure	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Accessed SharePoint or similar collaborative/learning applications to learn from the work practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Participated in a benchmarking comparison survey inside your organization to deliberately learn from their work practices e.g. sales performance, studying good or smart practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviewed our organization's database/knowledge bank of best practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviewed previous benchmarking projects our organization has undertaken to learn from the work practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

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10. Non-Social Activities (External & Deliberate):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involvement in past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Read regular newsletters of other organizations to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Read external books/magazine to deliberately learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Deliberately researched a topic on the internet to learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Accessed extranet or external websites of other organizations to learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Participated in a benchmarking comparison survey to deliberately learn from the work practices of other organizations e.g. competitors' performance, studying good or smart practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviewed a database/knowledge bank of best practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reviewed previous benchmarking projects our organization has undertaken to learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

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11. Non-Social Activities (Internal & Incidental):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involvement in past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Read responses in an external electronic forum or social network and incidentally learnt from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Observed a critical incident of other units/departments that enabled you to learn from their work practices i.e. a situation or condition which made you question your own work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Found information on SharePoint or other intranet applications which incidentally helped you to learn from the work practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Read internal books/magazines which incidentally helped you to learn from the work practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Read a random internal newsletter which incidentally helped you to learn from the work practices of other units/departments	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

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12. Non-Social Activities (External & Incidental):

Considering the past 4 weeks only, have you been involved in any of the following activities that have enabled you to learn and/or improve your organization's work practices?

a) If "Yes", indicate its effectiveness

b) indicate a "Yes" if the activity was part of a formal structured benchmarking project following a prescribed benchmarking methodology.

	Involvement in past 4 weeks	Level of Effectiveness	Formal Benchmarking Project
Read responses in an external electronic forum or social network and incidentally learnt from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Observed a critical incident of other organizations that enabled you to learn from their work practices i.e. a situation or condition which made you question your own work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Found information on extranet or external websites of other organizations which incidentally helped you to learn from their work practices	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Read external books/magazines which incidentally helped you to learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Read a random external newsletter which incidentally helped you to learn from the work practices of other organizations	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Pls specify any other activities not listed above:

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13. How important is it for your organization to compare the performance levels of a process/activity with other organizations ? Indicate the level of importance for the functional areas you are familiar with.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Whole Organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sales & Marketing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
R&D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

14. How important is it for your organization to follow a structured process for comparing performance levels with other organizations and adapt/implement those better practices? Indicate the level of importance for the functional areas you are familiar with.

	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Whole Organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Finance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sales & Marketing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human Resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
R&D	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

15. To what extent are better practices or processes readily learnt in your organization?

- Not at all
- To a little extent
- To some extent
- To a considerable extent
- To a great extent

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16. To what extent are better practices or processes readily implemented in your organization?

- Not at all
- To a little extent
- To some extent
- To a considerable extent
- To a great extent

17. To what extent does your organization use the activities specified in Q5 to Q12 to obtain information and knowledge to aid in formally organized benchmarking projects?

- Not at all
- To a little extent
- To some extent
- To a considerable extent
- To a great extent

18. What is the level of importance for informally learning work practices from other organizations in order to improve work practices in your organization? Choose one of the following:

Informally learning from others to improve work practices is defined as:

A familiar and flexible way of comparing and learning from better or best practices of other organizations for the purpose of improving work practices in your organization. It is content focused without following a structured methodology. The learning is either intentional or incidental and is sometimes spontaneous, speedier and unconventional. It will ultimately bring about improved practices upon the implementation of its learning.

- Not Important – informally learning from others to improve our work practices is not considered as important. Improvement is solely internally driven.
- Slightly Important – informally learning from others to improve our work practices is rarely encouraged but it does occur occasionally, usually by accident. Rarely are best practices implemented.
- Moderately Important – informally learning from others to improve our work practices is sometimes encouraged and sometimes lead to some best practices being implemented.
- Important –informally learning from others to improve our work practices is strongly encouraged and often occurs leading to many best practices being identified and with a sizeable number being implemented.
- Very Important – informally learning from others to improve our work practices is part of our culture, it is strongly encouraged throughout our organisation, and integrated into our improvement approach so that many best practices are captured, shared and implemented. The management uses such learning to gain a competitive edge and achieve best in class performance.

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19. What is the culture of informally learning from others to improve work practices in your organization? Choose one of the following:

- Little or No Culture - informally learning from others to improve our work practices is hardly seen nor practiced
- Awareness Culture - random informal learning from others but the information is not used to improve work practices beyond the individual level of learning
- Reactive Culture - random and ad-hoc informal learning from others to improve our work practices but limited to areas deemed critical only
- Active Culture - deliberate informal learning from others to improve our work practices. Staff actively take up learning opportunities such as conferences, seminars and learning visits, etc. The new practices learnt are readily shared for adaptation and adoption in these key areas of the organization.
- Pervasive Culture - An integrated system is in place for informally learning from others to improve our work practices and the sharing of these practices for organizational wide implementation. There is very strong buy-in by staff. Incentives/ awards for sharing, adopting and adapting these practices at all levels of the organization. It includes the review and refinement of approaches taken to informally learning from others, measuring its results and sharing them.

20. What is the level of support from management for informally learning from others to improve work practices in your organization? Choose one of the following:

- Not Supported - informally learning from others to improve our work practices is not supported at all
- Little Support – little support from management. Staff are left on their own to informally learning from others to improve work practices
- Supported - limited provision of resources such as conferences, seminars or learning visits, etc. from management to support informal learning from others to improve work practices. Only a very limited number of best practices learnt are adapted to the whole organization
- Strongly Supported - active participation and belief by management that informally learning from others to improve our work practices is cost-effective. There is ample resources and prioritization for implementing best or better practices
- Very Strongly Supported - full support and participation of management. Informally learning from others to improve our work practices is part of the management strategy to improve performance and gain a competitive edge

21. What is the impact of informally learning from others to improve work practices in your organization? Choose one of the following:

- No impact - no benefits of informally learning from others to improve our work practices whatsoever
- Little impact - benefits of informally learning from others to improve our work practices is not known or measured but there is some evidence that learning has taken place
- Some impact - informally learning from others to improve our work practices is known to benefit and is shared qualitatively i.e. stories or narratives but not articulated in quantifiable terms
- Considerable impact - The impact of informally learning from others to improve our work practices is assessed at timely intervals. Efforts to quantify its benefits are made to ensure its continued support and promotion
- Great impact - Value and cost of informally learning from others to improve our work practices can be clearly demonstrated in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Incentives/rewards are given for its continued use

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22. To what extent would a study on "how to improve the effectiveness of informally learning from other organizations to improve work practices" be useful to your organization?

- Not at all
- To a little extent
- To some extent
- To a considerable extent
- To a great extent

23. Thank you for completing the survey. Please choose from the following boxes:

	Yes	No
Would you like a copy of the survey results?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would you like free access to www.BPIR.com (Business Performance Improvement Resource) for one month?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would you like to have a chance to participate in further surveys?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Please provide the following details to receive the survey results and free access to www.BPIR.com

Name:

Company(optional):

Country of work:

Email Address:

Phone(optional):